

SB 1541 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Judiciary

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/5, 2/6, 2/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure adds judicial positions to specific counties over the next 16 months.

Detailed Summary:

The Act creates one additional circuit court judge position in Jackson County, and one additional circuit court judge position in Washington County in July 2024. It also creates one additional circuit court judge position in Clackamas County in July 2025.

REVENUE: *Indeterminate*

FISCAL: *Fiscal impact issued*

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Jackson, Washington and Clackamas have growing communities and are severely understaffed
- Clackamas county would receive their judicial position in 2025 because it is waiting for the courthouse to be finished
- OJD Judicial workload study; study showed Washington County needs four additional judges
- The unrepresented criminal defendant crisis has increased judge workloads; requires extra coordination
- Interpretation needs have increased, which increases hearing length
- Clackamas county has 11 judges, and is the third largest county in Oregon with 10 percent of the state's population
- The practice of stacking trials and continuing them; associated costs, permanency delays; public safety concerns
- Access to justice delayed

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The number of judicial positions allocated to each county is determined by the Legislature and specified in ORS 3.012. According to the US Census Bureau, Jackson County has a population of approximately 221,644 and has 10 judges. Washington County has a population of approximately 600,176 and has 15 judges. Clackamas County has a population of approximately 423,177 and has 11 judges. HB 1541 would add one judge to each of these counties.