119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To amend title 28, United States Code, to authorize additional judges for the circuit and district courts, to require a study on the composition of certain judicial circuits, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. YOUNG (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. LEE, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. KIM, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CRAPO, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend title 28, United States Code, to authorize additional judges for the circuit and district courts, to require a study on the composition of certain judicial circuits, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Judicial Understaffing Delays Getting Emergencies Solved Act of 2026'' or the ''JUDGES Act of 2026''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Article III of the Constitution of the United States gives Congress the power to establish judgeships in the district courts of the United States.

(2) Congress has not created a new district court judgeship since 2003 and has not enacted comprehensive judgeship legislation since 1990.

(3) This represents the longest period of time since district courts of the United States were established in 1789 that Congress has not authorized any new permanent district court judgeships.

(4) By the end of fiscal year 2026, filings in the district courts of the United States had increased by 78 percent since the last comprehensive judgeship legislation.

(5) As of September 30, 2026, there were 592,534 pending cases in the district courts of the United States, with an average of 608 weighted case filings per judgeship over a 12-month period.

(6) To deal with increased filings in the district courts of the United States, the Judicial Conference of the United States requested the creation of 2 permanent judgeships in the courts of appeals and 69 new district court judgeships in its 2025 report.

SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL DISTRICT JUDGES FOR THE DISTRICT COURTS.

(a) 2029.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate—

(A) 1 additional district judge for the district of Arizona;

(B) 2 additional district judges for the eastern district of California;

(C) 2 additional district judges for the central district of California;

(D) 1 additional district judge for the district of Delaware;

(E) 2 additional district judges for the middle district of Florida;

(F) 1 additional district judge for the southern district of Florida;

(G) 1 additional district judge for the northern district of Georgia;

(H) 1 additional district judge for the southern district of Indiana;

(I) 1 additional district judge for the northern district of Iowa;

(J) 1 additional district judge for the district of New Jersey;

(K) 1 additional district judge for the southern district of New York;

(L) 1 additional district judge for the eastern district of Oklahoma;

(M) 1 additional district judge for the middle district of Tennessee;

(N) 1 additional district judge for the eastern district of Texas; and

(O) 2 additional district judges for the western district of Texas.

(2) TABLES.—The table contained in section 133(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking the item relating to Arizona and inserting the following:

"Arizona ..... 14";

(B) by striking the items relating to California and inserting the following:

"California:
Northern 14
Eastern 8
Central 30
Southern ..... 13";

(C) by striking the item relating to Delaware and inserting the following:

"Delaware ..... 5";

(D) by striking the items relating to Florida and inserting the following:

"Florida:
Northern 4
Middle 17
Southern ..... 19";

(E) by striking the items relating to Georgia and inserting the following:

"Georgia:
Northern 12
Middle 4
Southern ..... 3";

(F) by striking the items relating to Indiana and inserting the following:

"Indiana:
Northern 5
Southern ..... 6";

(G) by striking the items relating to Iowa and inserting the following:

"Iowa:
Northern 3
Southern ..... 3";

(H) by striking the item relating to New Jersey and inserting the following:

"New Jersey ..... 18";

(I) by striking the items relating to New York and inserting the following:

"New York:
Northern 5
Southern 29
Eastern 15
Western ..... 4";

(J) by striking the items relating to Oklahoma and inserting the following:

"Oklahoma:
Northern 3
Eastern 2
Western 6
Northern, Eastern, and Western ..... 1";

(K) by striking the items relating to Tennessee and inserting the following:

"Tennessee:
Eastern 5
Middle 5
Western ..... 5"; and

(L) by striking the items relating to Texas and inserting the following:

"Texas:
Northern 12
Southern 19
Eastern 9
Western ..... 15".

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This subsection shall take effect on January 21, 2029.

(b) 2031.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate—

(A) 1 additional district judge for the northern district of California;

(B) 1 additional district judge for the eastern district of California;

(C) 3 additional district judges for the central district of California;

(D) 1 additional district judge for the district of Colorado;

(E) 2 additional district judges for the middle district of Florida;

(F) 1 additional district judge for the southern district of Florida;

(G) 1 additional district judge for the northern district of Georgia;

(H) 1 additional district judge for the district of Idaho;

(I) 1 additional district judge for the district of Nebraska;

(J) 1 additional district judge for the district of New Jersey;

(K) 1 additional district judge for the eastern district of New York;

(L) 1 additional district judge for the eastern district of Oklahoma;

(M) 1 additional district judge for the northern district of Oklahoma;

(N) 1 additional district judge for the southern district of Texas;

(O) 1 additional district judge for the eastern district of Texas; and

(P) 1 additional district judge for the western district of Texas.

(2) TABLES.—The table contained in section 133(a) of title 28, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a) of this section, is amended—

(A) by striking the items relating to California and inserting the following:

"California:
Northern 15
Eastern 9
Central 33
Southern ..... 13";

(B) by striking the item relating to Colorado and inserting the following:

"Colorado ..... 8";

(C) by striking the items relating to Florida and inserting the following:

"Florida:
Northern 4
Middle 19
Southern ..... 20";

(D) by striking the items relating to Georgia and inserting the following:

"Georgia:
Northern 13
Middle 4
Southern ..... 3";

(E) by striking the item relating to Idaho and inserting the following:

"Idaho ..... 3";

(F) by striking the item relating to Nebraska and inserting the following:

"Nebraska	4";

(G) by striking the item relating to New Jersey and inserting the following:

"New Jersey	19";

(H) by striking the items relating to New York and inserting the following:

"New York:	
Northern	5
Southern	29
Eastern	16
Western	4";

(I) by striking the items relating to Oklahoma and inserting the following:

"Oklahoma:	
Northern	4
Eastern	3
Western	6
Northern, Eastern, and Western	1"; and

(J) by striking the items relating to Texas and inserting the following:

"Texas:	
Northern	12
Southern	20
Eastern	10
Western	16".

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This subsection shall take effect on January 21, 2031.

(c) 2033.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate—

(A) 1 additional district judge for the district of Arizona;

(B) 1 additional district judge for the northern district of California;

(C) 1 additional district judge for the eastern district of California;

(D) 3 additional district judges for the central district of California;

(E) 1 additional district judge for the district of Delaware;

(F) 2 additional district judges for the middle district of Florida;

(G) 1 additional district judge for the northern district of Georgia;

(H) 1 additional district judge for the district of New Jersey;

(I) 1 additional district judge for the western district of New York;

(J) 1 additional district judge for the northern district of Texas; and

(K) 2 additional district judges for the western district of Texas.

(2) TABLES.—The table contained in section 133(a) of title 28, United States Code, as amended by subsections (a) and (b) of this section, is amended—

(A) by striking the item relating to Arizona and inserting the following:

"Arizona ..... 15";

(B) by striking the items relating to California and inserting the following:

"California:
Northern 16
Eastern 10
Central 36
Southern ..... 13";

(C) by striking the item relating to Delaware and inserting the following:

"Delaware ..... 6";

(D) by striking the items relating to Florida and inserting the following:

"Florida:
Northern 4
Middle 21
Southern ..... 20";

(E) by striking the items relating to Georgia and inserting the following:

"Georgia:
Northern 14
Middle 4
Southern ..... 3";

(F) by striking the item relating to New Jersey and inserting the following:

"New Jersey	20";

(G) by striking the items relating to New York and inserting the following:

"New York:	
Northern	5
Southern	29
Eastern	16
Western	5"; and

(H) by striking the items relating to Texas and inserting the following:

"Texas:	
Northern	13
Southern	20
Eastern	10
Western	18".

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This subsection shall take effect on January 21, 2033.

(d) 2035.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate—

(A) 1 additional district judge for the district of Arizona;

(B) 1 additional district judge for the eastern district of California;

(C) 4 additional district judges for the central district of California;

(D) 1 additional district judge for the district of Colorado;

(E) 1 additional district judge for the northern district of Florida;

(F) 1 additional district judge for the middle district of Florida;

(G) 1 additional district judge for the southern district of Florida;

(H) 1 additional district judge for the northern district of Georgia;

(I) 1 additional district judge for the district of New Jersey;

(J) 1 additional district judge for the eastern district of New York;

(K) 1 additional district judge for the southern district of New York;

(L) 1 additional district judge for the southern district of Texas; and

(M) 1 additional district judge for the western district of Texas.

(2) TABLES.—The table contained in section 133(a) of title 28, United States Code, as amended by subsections (a), (b), and (c) of this section, is amended—

(A) by striking the item relating to Arizona and inserting the following:

"Arizona ..... 16";

(B) by striking the items relating to California and inserting the following:

"California:
Northern 16
Eastern 11
Central 40
Southern ..... 13";

(C) by striking the item relating to Colorado and inserting the following:

"Colorado ..... 9";

(D) by striking the items relating to Florida and inserting the following:

"Florida:
Northern 5
Middle 22
Southern ..... 21";

(E) by striking the items relating to Georgia and inserting the following:

"Georgia:
Northern 15
Middle 4
Southern ..... 3";

(F) by striking the item relating to New Jersey and inserting the following:

"New Jersey ..... 21";

(G) by striking the items relating to New York and inserting the following:

"New York:	
Northern	5
Southern	30
Eastern	17
Western	5"; and

(H) by striking the items relating to Texas and inserting the following:

"Texas:	
Northern	13
Southern	21
Eastern	10
Western	19".

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This subsection shall take effect on January 21, 2035.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section and the amendments made by this section—

(A) for each of fiscal years 2029 and 2030, $19,671,783;

(B) for each of fiscal years 2031 and 2032, $40,088,468;

(C) for each of fiscal years 2033 and 2034, $57,800,353;

(D) for fiscal year 2035, $78,421,355; and

(E) for fiscal year 2036 and each fiscal year thereafter, the amount determined under paragraph (2).

(2) INFLATION ADJUSTMENT.—For each fiscal year described in paragraph (1)(E), the amount au-

thorized to be appropriated for such fiscal year shall be the amount authorized to be appropriated for the previous fiscal year, as increased by the percentage by which—

(A) the Consumer Price Index for the previous fiscal year; exceeds

(B) the Consumer Price Index for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year described in subparagraph (A).

(3) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ''Consumer Price Index'' means the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (all items, United States city average), published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor.

SEC. 4. TECHNICAL CORRECTION TO ORGANIZATION OF UTAH DISTRICT COURTS.

Section 125(2) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking ''and Monticello..'' and inserting ''and Monticello.''.

SEC. 5. ORGANIZATION OF TEXAS DISTRICT COURTS.

Section 124(b)(2) of title 28, United States Code, is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (3), by inserting ''and College Station'' before the period at the end.

SEC. 6. ORGANIZATION OF CALIFORNIA DISTRICT COURTS.

Section 84(d) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''and El Centro'' after ''at San Diego''.

SEC. 7. ADDITIONAL JUDGES FOR THE CIRCUIT COURTS.

(a) ADDITIONAL JUDGESHIPS.—

(1) 2029.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The President shall appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, 1 additional circuit judge for the Ninth Judicial Circuit of the United States.

(B) TABLES.—The table in section 44(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to the Ninth Circuit and inserting in the following:

''Ninth	30''.

(C) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This paragraph shall take effect on January 21, 2029.

(2) 2035.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The President shall appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, 1 additional circuit judge for the Ninth Judicial Circuit of the United States.

(B) TABLES.—The table in section 44(a) of title 28, United States Code, as amended by

paragraph (1) of this subsection, is amended by striking the item relating to the Ninth Circuit and inserting the following:

"Ninth ..... 31".

(C) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This paragraph shall take effect on January 21, 2035.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section and the amendments made by this section—

(A) for fiscal year 2029, $984,017;

(B) for each of fiscal years 2030 through 2034, the amount determined under paragraph (2);

(C) for fiscal year 2035, $2,169,785; and

(D) for fiscal year 2036, and each fiscal year thereafter, the amount determined under paragraph (2).

(2) INFLATION ADJUSTMENT.—For each fiscal year described in subparagraph (B) or (D) of paragraph (1), the amount authorized to be appropriated for such fiscal year shall be the amount authorized to be appropriated for the previous fiscal year, as increased by the percentage by which—

(A) the Consumer Price Index for the previous fiscal year; exceeds

(B) the Consumer Price Index for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year described in subparagraph (A).

(3) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ''Consumer Price Index'' means the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (all items, United States city average), published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor.

SEC. 8. STUDY OF CIRCUIT COURT REORGANIZATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Judicial Conference of the United States, in consultation with, and based on empirical study conducted by, an entity determined appropriate by the Judicial Conference, shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report on the potential costs and efficiencies of splitting the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit to create 2 or more smaller circuit courts of appeals, as may be appropriate for the expeditious and effective disposition of the caseload of the circuit courts of appeals.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under subsection (a) shall examine the initial and continuing costs

and efficiencies that would be associated with splitting the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, which shall include potential costs and efficiencies related to the administrative and operational structure of the resulting circuit courts of appeals, courthouse requirements, judgeship needs, staffing requirements, technological requirements, administrative and operational budgets, and other relevant factors.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administrative Office of the United States Courts such sums as may be necessary to carry out this section, not to exceed $1,840,000.

(2) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to this subsection shall remain available until expended.

SEC. 9. GAO REPORTS.

(a) JUDICIAL CASELOADS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and make publicly available a report—

(1) evaluating—

(A) the accuracy and objectiveness of case-related workload measures and methodologies used by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts for district courts of the United States and courts of appeals of the United States;

(B) the impact of non-case-related activities of judges of the district courts of the United States and courts of appeals of the United States on judicial caseloads; and

(C) the effectiveness and efficiency of the policies of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts regarding senior judges; and

(2) providing any recommendations of the Comptroller General with respect to the matters described in paragraph (1).

(b) DETENTION SPACE.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report assessing—

(1) the needs of Federal agencies for detention space;

(2) efforts by Federal agencies to acquire detention space; and

(3) any challenges in determining and acquiring detention space.

SEC. 10. BIENNIAL ARTICLE III JUDGESHIP RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and every 2 years thereafter, the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, in consultation with the Judicial Conference of the United States, shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives, and make publicly available on the website of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts free of charge, a report containing the recommendations of the Judicial Conference of the United States regarding judgeships, to be known as the ''Article III Judgeship Recommendations of the Judicial Conference of the United States''.

(b) CONTENTS.—Each report under subsection (a) shall contain the summaries and all related appendixes supporting the recommendations of the Judicial Conference of the United States regarding judgeships, including—

(1) the process used by the Judicial Conference in developing the recommendations;

(2) any caseload and methodology changes;

(3) judgeship surveys with recommendations; and

(4) specific information about each court for which the Judicial Conference recommends additional judgeships.