

H. B. 2434

(By Delegates Miley, Pethtel, White, Moore,
L. Phillips, Boggs, Barill, P. Smith and Jones)

[Introduced February 14, 2013; referred to the
Committee on the Judiciary then Finance.]

**FISCAL
NOTE**

A BILL to amend and reenact §50-1-3, §50-1-8, §50-1-9 and §50-1-9a
of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, all relating
generally to the magistrate court system; providing
compensation for magistrates, magistrate assistants,
magistrate court clerks and magistrate court deputy clerks;
and authorizing judges to appoint magistrate court clerks in
certain circumstances.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That §50-1-3, §50-1-8, §50-1-9 and §50-1-9a of the Code of
West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended and reenacted, all to
read as follows:

ARTICLE 1. COURTS AND OFFICERS.

§50-1-3. Salaries of magistrates.

~~(a)~~ The Legislature finds and declares that:

~~(1) The West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals has held that~~

1 ~~a salary system for magistrates which is based upon the population~~
2 ~~that each magistrate serves does not violate the equal protection~~
3 ~~clause of the Constitution of the United States;~~

4 ~~(2) The West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals has held that~~
5 ~~a salary system for magistrates which is based upon the population~~
6 ~~that each magistrate serves does not violate section thirty-nine,~~
7 ~~article VI of the Constitution of West Virginia;~~

8 ~~(3) The utilization of a two-tiered salary schedule for~~
9 ~~magistrates is an equitable and rational manner by which~~
10 ~~magistrates should be compensated for work performed;~~

11 ~~(4) Organizing the two tiers of the salary schedule into one~~
12 ~~tier for magistrates serving less than eight thousand four hundred~~
13 ~~in population and the second tier for magistrates serving eight~~
14 ~~thousand four hundred or more in population is rational and~~
15 ~~equitable given current statistical information relating to~~
16 ~~population and caseload; and~~

17 ~~(5) That all magistrates who fall under the same tier should~~
18 ~~be compensated equally.~~

19 ~~(b) The salary of each magistrate shall be paid by the state.~~
20 ~~Magistrates who serve fewer than eight thousand four hundred in~~
21 ~~population shall be paid annual salaries of thirty thousand six~~
22 ~~hundred twenty five dollars and magistrates who serve eight~~
23 ~~thousand four hundred or more in population shall be paid annual~~
24 ~~salaries of thirty seven thousand dollars: *Provided,* That on and~~

1 ~~after the first day of July, two thousand three, magistrates who~~
2 ~~serve fewer than eight thousand four hundred in population shall be~~
3 ~~paid annual salaries of thirty three thousand six hundred twenty~~
4 ~~five dollars and magistrates who serve eight thousand four hundred~~
5 ~~or more in population shall be paid annual salaries of forty~~
6 ~~thousand dollars: *Provided, however, That on and after the first*~~
7 ~~day of July, two thousand five, magistrates who serve fewer than~~
8 ~~eight thousand four hundred in population shall be paid annual~~
9 ~~salaries of forty three thousand six hundred twenty five dollars~~
10 ~~and magistrates who serve eight thousand four hundred or more in~~
11 ~~population shall be paid annual salaries of fifty thousand dollars.~~
12 ~~*Provided further, That on and after the first day of July, 2011,*~~
13 ~~magistrates who serve fewer than eight thousand four hundred in~~
14 ~~population shall be paid annual salaries of \$51,125 and magistrates~~
15 ~~who serve eight thousand four hundred or more in population shall~~
16 ~~be paid annual salaries of \$57,500.~~

17 ~~(c) For the purpose of determining the population served by~~
18 ~~each magistrate, the number of magistrates authorized for each~~
19 ~~county shall be divided into the population of each county. For the~~
20 ~~purpose of this article, the population of each county is the~~
21 ~~population as determined by the last preceding decennial census~~
22 ~~taken under the authority of the United States government.~~

23 All magistrates shall be compensated equally. Beginning July
24 1, 2013, the annual salary of all magistrates is \$57,500.

1 **§50-1-8. Magistrate court clerks; salaries; duties; duties of**
2 **circuit clerk.**

3 (a) In each county, ~~having three or more magistrates~~ the judge
4 of the circuit court or the chief judge of the circuit court, if
5 there is more than one judge of the circuit court, shall appoint a
6 magistrate court clerk. ~~In all other counties the judge may~~
7 ~~appoint a magistrate court clerk or may by rule require the duties~~
8 ~~of the magistrate court clerk to be performed by the clerk of the~~
9 ~~circuit court, in which event the circuit court clerk is entitled~~
10 ~~to additional compensation in the amount of \$2,500 per year. The~~
11 magistrate court clerk serves at the will and pleasure of the
12 circuit judge.

13 (b) Magistrate court clerks shall be ~~paid a monthly salary by~~
14 ~~the state. Magistrate court clerks serving magistrates who serve~~
15 ~~less than eight thousand four hundred in population shall be paid~~
16 ~~up to \$26,436 per year and magistrate court clerks serving~~
17 ~~magistrates who serve eight thousand four hundred or more in~~
18 ~~population shall be paid up to \$31,344 per year: *Provided,* That on~~
19 ~~and after July 1, 2006, magistrate court clerks serving magistrates~~
20 ~~who serve less than eight thousand four hundred in population shall~~
21 ~~be paid up to \$31,436 per year and magistrate court clerks serving~~
22 ~~magistrates who serve eight thousand four hundred or more in~~
23 ~~population shall be paid up to \$36,344 per year: *Provided,*~~
24 ~~however, That on and after July 1, 2007, magistrate court clerks~~

1 ~~servicing magistrates who serve less than eight thousand four hundred~~
2 ~~in population shall be paid up to \$36,436 per year and magistrate~~
3 ~~court clerks servicing magistrates who serve eight thousand four~~
4 ~~hundred or more in population shall be paid up to \$41,344 per year:~~
5 ~~Provided further, That after the effective date of this section,~~
6 ~~any general salary increase granted to all state employees, whose~~
7 ~~salaries are not set by statute, expressed as a percentage increase~~
8 ~~or an "across-the-board" increase, may also be granted to~~
9 ~~magistrate court clerks. For the purpose of determining the~~
10 ~~population served by each magistrate, the number of magistrates~~
11 ~~authorized for each county shall be divided into the population of~~
12 ~~each county. The salary of the magistrate court clerk shall be~~
13 ~~established by the judge of the circuit court, or the chief judge~~
14 ~~of the circuit court if there is more than one judge of the circuit~~
15 ~~court, within the limits set forth in this section compensated~~
16 ~~equally.~~

17 (c) Beginning July 1, 2013, the annual salary of all
18 magistrate court clerks is \$44,720. After the effective date of
19 this section, a general salary increase granted to state employees,
20 whose salaries are not set by statute, expressed as a percentage
21 increase or an "across-the-board" increase, may also be granted to
22 magistrate court clerks.

23 ~~(c)~~ (d) In addition to other duties that may be imposed by the
24 provisions of this chapter or by the rules of the Supreme Court of

1 Appeals or the judge of the circuit court or the chief judge of the
2 circuit court if there is more than one judge of the circuit court,
3 it is the duty of the magistrate court clerk to establish and
4 maintain appropriate dockets and records in a centralized system
5 for the magistrate court, to assist in the preparation of the
6 reports required of the court and to carry out on behalf of the
7 magistrates or chief magistrate if a chief magistrate is appointed,
8 the administrative duties of the court.

9 ~~(d)~~ (e) The magistrate court clerk ~~or if there is no~~
10 ~~magistrate court clerk in the county, the clerk of the circuit~~
11 ~~court,~~ may issue all manner of civil process and require the
12 enforcement of subpoenas and subpoenas duces tecum in magistrate
13 court.

14 **§50-1-9. Magistrate assistants; salary; duties.**

15 (a) In each county there shall be one magistrate assistant for
16 each magistrate. Each magistrate assistant shall be appointed by
17 the magistrate under whose authority and supervision and at whose
18 will and pleasure he or she shall serve. The assistant ~~shall~~ may
19 not be a member of the immediate family of any magistrate and ~~shall~~
20 may not have been convicted of a felony or ~~any~~ a misdemeanor
21 involving moral turpitude and ~~shall~~ must reside in the State of
22 West Virginia. For the purpose of this section, "immediate family"
23 means the relationships of mother, father, sister, brother, child
24 or spouse.

1 (b) A magistrate assistant shall have the duties, clerical or
2 otherwise, assigned by the magistrate and prescribed by the rules
3 of the Supreme Court of Appeals or the judge of the circuit court
4 or the chief judge of the circuit court if there is more than one
5 judge of the circuit court. In addition to these duties,
6 magistrate assistants shall perform and are accountable to the
7 magistrate court clerks with respect to the following duties:

8 (1) The preparation of summons in civil actions;

9 (2) The assignment of civil actions to the various
10 magistrates;

11 (3) The collection of all costs, fees, fines, forfeitures and
12 penalties which are payable to the court;

13 (4) The submission of moneys, along with an accounting of the
14 moneys, to appropriate authorities as provided by law;

15 (5) The daily disposition of closed files which are to be
16 located in the magistrate clerk's office;

17 (6) All duties related to the gathering of information and
18 documents necessary for the preparation of administrative reports
19 and documents required by the rules of the Supreme Court of Appeals
20 or the judge of the circuit court or the chief judge of the circuit
21 court if there is more than one judge of the circuit court;

22 (7) All duties relating to the notification, certification and
23 payment of jurors serving pursuant to the terms of this chapter;

24 (8) All other duties or responsibilities whereby the

1 magistrate assistant is accountable to the magistrate court clerk
2 as determined by the magistrate.

3 (c) Magistrate assistants shall be ~~paid a monthly salary by~~
4 ~~the state. Magistrate assistants serving magistrates who serve~~
5 ~~less than eight thousand four hundred in population shall be paid~~
6 ~~up to \$23,148 per year and magistrate assistants serving~~
7 ~~magistrates who serve eight thousand four hundred or more in~~
8 ~~population shall be paid up to \$26,244 per year: *Provided, That on*~~
9 ~~and after July 1, 2006, magistrate assistants serving magistrates~~
10 ~~who serve less than eight thousand four hundred in population shall~~
11 ~~be paid up to \$28,148 per year and magistrate assistants serving~~
12 ~~magistrates who serve eight thousand four hundred or more in~~
13 ~~population shall be paid up to \$31,244 per year: *Provided,*~~
14 ~~however, That on and after July 1, 2007, magistrate assistants~~
15 ~~serving magistrates who serve less than eight thousand four hundred~~
16 ~~in population shall be paid up to \$33,148 per year and magistrate~~
17 ~~assistants serving magistrates who serve eight thousand four~~
18 ~~hundred or more in population shall be paid up to \$36,244 per year:~~
19 ~~*Provided further, That after the effective date of this section,*~~
20 ~~any general salary increase granted to all state employees, whose~~
21 ~~salaries are not set by statute, expressed as a percentage increase~~
22 ~~or an "across the board" increase, may also be granted to~~
23 ~~magistrate assistants. For the purpose of determining the~~
24 ~~population served by each magistrate, the number of magistrates~~

1 ~~authorized for each county shall be divided into the population of~~
2 ~~each county. The salary of the magistrate assistant shall be~~
3 ~~established by the magistrate within the limits set forth in this~~
4 ~~section compensated equally.~~

5 (d) Beginning July 1, 2013, the annual salary of all
6 magistrate assistants is \$39,348. After the effective date of this
7 section, a general salary increase granted to state employees,
8 whose salaries are not set by statute, expressed as a percentage
9 increase or an "across-the-board" increase, may also be granted to
10 magistrate assistants.

11 **§50-1-9a. Magistrate court deputy clerks; duties; salary.**

12 (a) Whenever required by workload and upon the recommendation
13 of the judge of the circuit court, or the chief judge of the
14 circuit court if there is more than one judge of the circuit court,
15 the Supreme Court of Appeals may, by rule, provide for the
16 appointment of magistrate court deputy clerks, not to exceed
17 seventy-two in number. The magistrate court deputy clerks shall be
18 appointed by the judge of the circuit court, or the chief judge if
19 there is more than one judge of the circuit court, to serve at his
20 or her will and pleasure under the immediate supervision of the
21 magistrate court clerk.

22 (b) Magistrate court deputy clerks shall have the duties,
23 clerical or otherwise, as may be assigned by the magistrate court
24 clerk and as may be prescribed by the rules of the Supreme Court of

1 Appeals or the judge of the circuit court or the chief judge if
2 there is more than one judge of the circuit court. Magistrate
3 court deputy clerks may also exercise the power and perform the
4 duties of the magistrate court clerk as may be delegated or
5 assigned by the magistrate court clerk.

6 (c) A magistrate court deputy clerk may not be an immediate
7 family member of ~~any~~ a magistrate, magistrate court clerk,
8 magistrate assistant or judge of the circuit court within the same
9 county, may not have been convicted of a felony or ~~any~~ a
10 misdemeanor involving moral turpitude and must reside in this
11 state. For purposes of this subsection, "immediate family member"
12 means a mother, father, sister, brother, child or spouse.

13 (d) Magistrate court deputy clerks shall be ~~paid an annual~~
14 ~~salary by the state on the same basis and in the same amounts~~
15 ~~established for magistrate assistants in each county, as provided~~
16 ~~in section nine of this article~~ compensated equally.

17 (e) Beginning July 1, 2013, the annual salary of all
18 magistrate court deputy clerks is \$39,348. After the effective
19 date of this section, a general salary increase granted to state
20 employees, whose salaries are not set by statute, expressed as a
21 percentage increase or an "across-the-board" increase, may also be
22 granted to magistrate court deputy clerks.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide compensation of

equal amount to all magistrates, magistrate assistants, magistrate court clerks and magistrate court deputy clerks within their respective job titles.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from the present law, and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.