

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2020 REGULAR SESSION

Committee Substitute

for

Committee Substitute

for

Senate Bill 597

SENATORS TRUMP, WOELFEL, ROMANO, UNGER,

LINDSAY, PALUMBO, AND PLYMALE, *original sponsors*

[Originating in the Committee on Finance; reported on

February 12, 2020]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §50-1-3 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; to amend
2 and reenact §51-1-10a of said code; to amend and reenact §51-2-13 of said code; and to
3 amend and reenact §51-2A-6 of said code, all relating generally to salaries and pensions
4 of magistrates, justices of the Supreme Court of Appeals, circuit judges, and family court
5 judges; and adopting and codifying the 2019 recommendations of the Judicial
6 Compensation Commission as to salary increases for magistrates, justices of the
7 Supreme Court of Appeals, circuit judges, and family court judges.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

CHAPTER 50. MAGISTRATE COURTS.

ARTICLE I. COURTS AND OFFICERS.

§50-1-3. Salaries of magistrates.

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

2 ~~(1) The West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals has held that a salary system for~~
3 ~~magistrates which is based upon the population that each magistrate serves does not violate the~~
4 ~~equal protection clause of the Constitution of the United States;~~

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

8 ~~(3) The Administrative Office of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia has stated~~
9 ~~that the utilization of a two-tiered salary schedule for magistrates is no longer an equitable and~~
10 ~~rational manner by which magistrates should be compensated for work performed;~~

11 ~~(4) Organizing the two tiers of the salary schedule into one tier for magistrates serving less~~
12 ~~than seven thousand three hundred in population and a second tier for magistrates serving seven~~
13 ~~thousand three hundred or more in population is no longer rational and equitable given current~~
14 ~~statistical information relating to population and caseload; and~~

15 ~~(5) That, by January 1, 2017, all magistrates should be compensated equally.~~

16 ~~(b) The salary of each magistrate shall be paid by the state. Magistrates who serve fewer~~
17 ~~than seven thousand three hundred in population shall be paid annual salaries of \$51,125 and~~
18 ~~magistrates who serve seven thousand three hundred or more in population shall be paid annual~~
19 ~~salaries of \$57,500.~~

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

24 ~~(d) Notwithstanding any provision of this code to the contrary, the amendments made to~~
25 ~~this section during the 2013 First Extraordinary Session are effective upon passage and are~~
26 ~~retroactive to January 1, 2013.~~

27 ~~(e) On or before July 1, 2013, the Joint Committee on Government and Finance shall~~
28 ~~request a study by the National Center for State Courts, working in conjunction with the~~
29 ~~Administrative Office of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia, to review the weighted~~
30 ~~case loads in each of the magistrate courts in this state, and present recommendations as to how~~
31 ~~the present resources and personnel in the magistrate court system could be better apportioned~~
32 ~~to equitably and timely meet the collective needs of the magistrate court system in West Virginia.~~
33 ~~Based on the findings and data generated by that study, the National Center for State Courts shall~~
34 ~~make recommendations as to the equitable redistribution of personnel and resources, by~~
35 ~~temporary or permanent reassignment, to better meet the needs and weighted loads that are~~
36 ~~demonstrated to exist in the various magistrate courts in this state. This study shall be presented~~
37 ~~to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance no later than December 1, 2014, and shall~~
38 ~~include recommendations and proposed legislation resulting from such study and shall also~~
39 ~~include a plan to continue the efficient delivery of justice by the magistrate court system and the~~
40 ~~justification for equalization of pay for all magistrates. As a part of the submitted study, the plan~~

41 shall consider the reassignment of magistrates or the extension of their duties and jurisdiction to
42 include holding court or delivering services to adjacent counties with higher caseloads, as part of
43 their regular duties, or being on call as needed to serve other needs in other adjacent counties or
44 within the same judicial circuit.

45 ~~On or before January 15, 2015, the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia shall~~
46 ~~present its recommendations to the Legislature regarding how to allocate or assign a maximum~~
47 ~~of one hundred fifty eight magistrates throughout this state to improve the magistrate process,~~
48 ~~and more equitably distribute the magistrate court resources to efficiently and effectively meet the~~
49 ~~needs of the citizens of this state~~

50 ~~(f) Notwithstanding any provision of this code to the contrary, beginning January 1, 2017,~~
51 ~~all~~ (a) All magistrates shall be compensated equally and the annual salary of all magistrates
52 shall be \$57,500.

53 (b) Notwithstanding any provisions of this code to the contrary, consistent with the 2019
54 recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Commission beginning July 1, 2020, the annual
55 salary of a magistrate shall be \$62,769, and beginning July 1, 2021, the annual salary of a
56 magistrate shall be \$68,038.

CHAPTER 51. COURTS AND THEIR OFFICERS.

ARTICLE 1. SUPREME COURT OF APPEALS.

§51-1-10a. Salary of justices.

1 ~~The salary of each of the justices of the Supreme Court of Appeals shall be \$95,000 per~~
2 ~~year: *Provided*, That beginning July, 1, 2005, the salary of each of the justices of the Supreme~~
3 ~~Court shall be \$121,000: *Provided, however*, That beginning Beginning July 1, 2011, the annual~~
4 ~~salary of a justice of the Supreme Court shall be \$136,000: *Provided*, That consistent with the~~
5 ~~2019 recommendation of the Judicial Compensation Commission, beginning July 1, 2020, the~~

6 annual salary of a justice of the Supreme Court of Appeals shall be \$148,450, and beginning July
7 1, 2021, the annual salary of a justice of the Supreme Court of Appeals shall be \$160,901.

ARTICLE 2. CIRCUIT COURTS; CIRCUIT JUDGES.

§51-2-13. Salaries of judges of circuit courts.

1 The salaries of the judges of the various circuit courts shall be paid solely out of the State
2 Treasury. No county, county commission, board of commissioners, or other political subdivision
3 shall supplement or add to such salaries.

4 ~~The annual salary of all circuit judges shall be \$90,000 per year: *Provided*, That beginning~~
5 ~~July 1, 2005, the annual salary of all circuit judges shall be \$116,000 per year: *Provided, however*,~~
6 ~~That beginning Beginning July 1, 2011, the annual salary of a circuit court judge shall be~~
7 ~~\$126,000: *Provided*, That consistent with the 2019 recommendation of the Judicial Compensation~~
8 ~~Commission, beginning July 1, 2020, the annual salary of a circuit judge shall be \$137,535, and~~
9 ~~beginning July 1, 2021, the annual salary of a circuit court judge shall be \$149,070.~~

ARTICLE 2A. FAMILY COURTS.

§51-2A-6. Compensation and expenses of family court judges and their staffs.

1 ~~(a) A family court judge is entitled to receive as compensation for his or her services an~~
2 ~~annual salary of \$62,500: *Provided*, That beginning July 1, 2005, a family court judge is entitled~~
3 ~~to receive as compensation for his or her services an annual salary of \$82,500: *Provided*,~~
4 ~~however, That beginning Beginning July 1, 2011, the annual salary of a family court judge shall~~
5 ~~be \$94,500: *Provided*, That consistent with the 2019 recommendation of the Judicial~~
6 ~~Compensation Commission, beginning July 1, 2020, the annual salary of a family court judge shall~~
7 ~~be \$104,215, and beginning July 1, 2021, the annual salary of a family court judge shall be~~
8 ~~\$113,930.~~

9 (b) The secretary-clerk of the family court judge is appointed by the family court judge and
10 serves at his or her will and pleasure. The secretary-clerk of the family court judge is entitled to

11 receive an annual salary of \$27,036: *Provided*, That on and after July 1, 2006, the annual salary
12 of the secretary-clerk shall be established by the Administrative Director of the Supreme Court of
13 Appeals, but may not exceed \$39,000. In addition, any person employed as a secretary-clerk to
14 a family court judge on the effective date of the enactment of this section during the sixth
15 extraordinary session of the Legislature in the year 2001 who is receiving an additional \$500 per
16 year up to 10 years of a certain period of prior employment under the provisions of the prior
17 enactment of §51-2A-8 of this code during the second extraordinary session of the Legislature in
18 the year 1999 shall continue to receive such additional amount. Further, the secretary-clerk will
19 receive such percentage or proportional salary increases as may be provided by general law for
20 other public employees and is entitled to receive the annual incremental salary increase as
21 provided in §5-5-1 *et seq.* of this code.

22 (c) The family court judge may employ not more than one family case coordinator who
23 serves at his or her will and pleasure. The annual salary of the family case coordinator of the
24 family court judge shall be established by the Administrative Director of the Supreme Court of
25 Appeals but may not exceed \$36,000: *Provided*, That on and after July 1, 2006, the annual salary
26 of the family case coordinator of the family court judge may not exceed \$51,000. The family case
27 coordinator will receive such percentage or proportional salary increases as may be provided by
28 general law for other public employees and is entitled to receive the annual incremental salary
29 increase as provided in §5-5-1 *et seq.* of this code.

30 (d) The sheriff or his or her designated deputy shall serve as a bailiff for a family court
31 judge. The sheriff of each county shall serve or designate persons to serve so as to assure that
32 a bailiff is available when a family court judge determines the same is necessary for the orderly
33 and efficient conduct of the business of the family court.

34 (e) Disbursement of salaries for family court judges and members of their staffs are made
35 by or pursuant to the order of the Director of the Administrative Office of the Supreme Court of
36 Appeals.

37 (f) Family court judges and members of their staffs are allowed their actual and necessary
38 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. The expenses and compensation will be
39 determined and paid by the Director of the Administrative Office of the Supreme Court of Appeals
40 under such guidelines as he or she may prescribe, as approved by the Supreme Court of Appeals.

41 ~~(g) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, family court judges are not eligible to~~
42 ~~participate in the retirement system for judges under the provisions of §51-9-1 et seq. of this code~~