



BILL & AMENDMENT SUMMARY

Judicial Branch FY 2018 Budget HF 645/SF 508

Status of Bill: House Floor
 Committee: Justice Systems Budget Subcomm (5-4)
 Appropriations (14-9)
 Lead Democrats: Rep. T. Taylor
 Floor Manager: Rep. Worthan
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Background

The Judicial Branch was subject to a \$3 million cut to their FY 2017 appropriation as a result of the mid-year de-appropriations, reducing their appropriation from \$181.7 million to \$178.7 million. The reduction was all from their operating budget, not from the Jury & Witness Revolving Fund.

The Judicial Branch took various steps to address the funding shortfall including: holding open judgeships vacancy for an average of six months, established a hiring freeze with limited exemptions, put a moratorium on specialty courts, and closing the courts for one day on May 26. The judges and magistrates will not be participating in the closure, but it will apply to the other court staff.

Fiscal year 2019 is funded at half of the FY 2018 amount.

The Senate passed over their bill, so the House will bring up HF 645, adopt the conforming amendment H-1376, and then substitute for SF 508.

FY 2018 Budget

The proposed FY 2018 budget for the Judicial Branch is \$178.7 million, which is status quo compared to the revised estimated FY 2017. This represents a \$3 million reduction compared to FY 2016. The line item for the Jury & Witness Revolving Fund has not changed from FY 2016 or FY 2017 and remains at \$3.1 million.

The State Court Administrator reports that having this reduced status quo budget will result in more difficult decisions to be made, because court services cannot operate on this reduced budget. Specialty courts are at risk of being reduced or eliminated, and there are already over 100 vacancies.

	Actual FY 14	Actual FY 15	Actual FY 16	Revised Est. FY 17	Proposed FY 2018	Proposed FY 18 v. Rev. Est. FY 17
Judicial Branch						
Operations	\$ 165,586,747	\$ 171,486,612	\$ 178,686,612	\$ 175,686,612	\$ 175,686,612	\$ -
Jury & Witness Fee Revolving Fund	\$ 3,100,000	\$ 310,000	\$ 3,100,000	\$ 3,100,000	\$ 3,100,000	\$ -
Total Judicial Branch	\$ 168,686,747	\$ 174,586,612	\$ 181,786,612	\$ 178,786,612	\$ 178,786,612	\$ -

Amendment Summary

H-1376 to HF 645 by Worthan – This amendment is a strikeafter, which contains all of the same language of the original bill, and adds new language.

Adds language that will allow the Supreme Court to increase the annual salary rates, by not more than 2.5%, for judges and magistrates. It is estimated that this would cost \$1.1 million.

Language is added to require the Director of the Department of Management, for FY 2019, to submit the budget that was requested by the Judicial Branch, without any changes. The Director cannot include any portion of the budget request that contains salary rate increases for Judicial positions.

Lastly, a new Division III is added that permits the Judicial Branch to make policy and procedure changes for FY 2018 and 2019 that will enable the courts to efficiently and effectively administer justice throughout the state. Changes are allowed to be made to operation requirements for the clerks of district courts, apportionment requirements of certain judicial officers, District Judges, District Associate Judges, and the appointment of court reporters. If changes are made, the Court Administrator is required to submit a report detailing those changes to the chairpersons of the Justice Budget Subcommittee and the Legislative Services Agency by October 2, 2017, and October 1, 2018.