

JUDICIAL DISTRICTS AND NUMBERS OF DISTRICT COURT JUDGES

LEGISLATOR NOTICE

The Legislative Services Division is required to offer a brief history on the subject matter of a bill draft request prior to drafting. (5-4-105, MCA; [Chapter 309, Laws of 2017](#)) The history must include related legislation introduced over the last five sessions and hyperlinks to the bill, hearing information, and fiscal notes. The links below open to the page showing the status and history of bills introduced on this topic in the past. The bill text and any related fiscal notes can be accessed through the link at the top of that page.

Legislation can be complex and this history is not intended to be exhaustive. Please contact the drafter of the requested bill for more information.

Background Materials and Research

Topic Summary: [Article VII, section 6](#), of the Montana Constitution requires the Legislature to divide whole counties into judicial districts and to set the number of district court judges in each district. Each county has one district court. The district courts are grouped into 22 judicial districts served by 51 judges. The district court judges are elected to 6-year terms in nonpartisan elections. The governor appoints a replacement if a vacancy occurs. [Title 3, chapter 5, MCA](#), contains laws pertaining to district courts. See the primer for Judicial Elections for additional information specific to election or selection of judges and judges.

Legislative Services Division Materials:

[Final Report](#) of the 2015-2016 Judicial Redistricting Commission

[Montana Judicial Districts map](#)

[Recent Legislative History of Montana Judicial Districts](#), September 2015

Other Materials:

[Court Statistics](#) -- Office of the Court Administrator

Introduced Legislation

2021 -- None

DISTRICT COURT JUDGES AND JUDICIAL DISTRICTS

2019

[Senate Bill No. 203](#) -- (S) Died in Standing Committee -- AN ACT ADDING ONE JUDGE TO THE 18TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT; PROVIDING FOR THE ELECTION OF THE ADDITIONAL JUDGE; AMENDING SECTION 3-5-102, MCA; PROVIDING FOR CONTINGENT VOIDNESS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

2017

[House Bill No. 44](#) -- Chapter Number Assigned -- AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING LAWS RELATED TO DISTRICT COURT JUDGES; ADDING JUDGES TO CERTAIN JUDICIAL DISTRICTS; PROVIDING FOR THE APPOINTMENT AND ELECTION OF THE ADDITIONAL JUDGES; AMENDING SECTION 3-5-102, MCA; PROVIDING FOR CONTINGENT VOIDNESS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

[House Bill No. 314](#) -- (H) Died in Standing Committee -- AN ACT INCREASING THE NUMBER OF DISTRICT COURT JUDGES; PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL JUDGES IN THE 4TH AND 13TH JUDICIAL DISTRICTS TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR; AMENDING SECTION 3-5-102, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

2015

[House Bill No. 631](#) -- (H) Missed Deadline for Appropriation Bill Transmittal -- AN ACT REVISING JUDICIAL DISTRICT LAWS; CREATING A JUDICIAL DISTRICT FOR MINERAL AND SANDERS COUNTIES; PROVIDING FOR AN ADDITIONAL DISTRICT COURT JUDGE IN THE NEWLY CREATED 23RD DISTRICT; PROVIDING FOR ONE ADDITIONAL DISTRICT COURT JUDGE IN EACH OF THE EXISTING 7TH AND 13TH JUDICIAL DISTRICTS; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AMENDING SECTIONS 3-5-101 AND 3-5-102, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

[House Bill No. 430](#) -- Chapter Number Assigned -- AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN INTERIM JUDICIAL REDISTRICTING COMMISSION; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE.

2013 -- None

2011 -- None

2009

[Senate Bill No. 158](#) -- Chapter Number Assigned -- AN ACT INCREASING THE NUMBER OF DISTRICT COURT JUDGES; PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL JUDGES IN THE 1ST, 11TH, AND 13TH JUDICIAL DISTRICTS TO BE ELECTED AT THE NOVEMBER 2010 GENERAL ELECTION; AMENDING SECTION 3-5-102, MCA; AND PROVIDING A DELAYED EFFECTIVE DATE.

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