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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

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House

The Committee on Judiciary (Brandes) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause
and insert:

Section 1. Section 25.025, Florida Statutes, is created to
read:

25.025 Headquarters.—

(1) (a) A Supreme Court justice who permanently resides
outside Leon County shall, if he or she so requests, have a
district court of appeal courthouse, a county courthouse, or
other appropriate facility in his or her district of residence



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12 designated as his or her official headquarters pursuant to s.
13 112.061. This official headquarters may serve only as the
14 justice's private chambers.

15 (b) A justice for whom an official headquarters is
16 designated in his or her district of residence under this
17 subsection is eligible for subsistence at a rate to be
18 established by the Chief Justice for each day or partial day
19 that the justice is at the headquarters of the Supreme Court for
20 the conduct of the business of the court. In addition to the
21 subsistence allowance, a justice is eligible for reimbursement
22 for transportation expenses as provided in s. 112.061(7) for
23 travel between the justice's official headquarters and the
24 headquarters of the Supreme Court for the conduct of the
25 business of the court.

26 (c) Payment of subsistence and reimbursement for
27 transportation expenses relating to travel between a justice's
28 official headquarters and the headquarters of the Supreme Court
29 shall be made to the extent appropriated funds are available, as
30 determined by the Chief Justice.

31 (2) The Chief Justice shall coordinate with each affected
32 justice and other state and local officials as necessary to
33 implement paragraph (1)(a).

34 (3)(a) This section does not require a county to provide
35 space in a county courthouse for a justice. A county may enter
36 into an agreement with the Supreme Court governing the use of
37 space in a county courthouse.

38 (b) The Supreme Court may not use state funds to lease
39 space in a district court of appeal courthouse, county
40 courthouse, or other facility to allow a justice to establish an



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41 official headquarters pursuant to subsection (1).

42 Section 2. Subsection (9) of section 26.031, Florida
43 Statutes, is amended to read:

44 26.031 Judicial circuits; number of judges.—The number of
45 circuit judges in each circuit shall be as follows:

JUDICIAL CIRCUIT	TOTAL
(9) Ninth.....	<u>45</u> 43

49 Section 3. Section 34.01, Florida Statutes, is amended to
50 read:

51 34.01 Jurisdiction of county court.—

52 (1) County courts shall have original jurisdiction:

53 (a) In all misdemeanor cases not cognizable by the circuit
54 courts. ~~†~~

55 (b) Of all violations of municipal and county ordinances. ~~†~~

56 (c) 1. Of all actions at law filed on or before December 31,
57 2019, in which the matter in controversy does not exceed the sum
58 of \$15,000, exclusive of interest, costs, and attorney
59 attorney's fees, except those within the exclusive jurisdiction
60 of the circuit courts. ~~† and~~

61 2. Of all actions at law filed on or after January 1, 2020,
62 in which the matter in controversy does not exceed the sum of
63 \$50,000, exclusive of interest, costs, and attorney fees, except
64 those within the exclusive jurisdiction of the circuit courts.

65 This limit must be adjusted every 5 years after January 1, 2020,
66 to reflect the rate of inflation or deflation as indicated in
67 the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, U.S. City
68 Average, All Items, or successor reports as reported by the
69 United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics,



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70 or its successor. Such adjustments must be rounded to the
71 nearest \$5,000.

72 (d) Of disputes occurring in the homeowners' associations
73 as described in s. 720.311(2)(a), which shall be concurrent with
74 jurisdiction of the circuit courts.

75
76 The party instituting an action at law under subparagraph (c)2.
77 in which the amount in controversy exceeds \$15,000 shall pay the
78 filing fees and service charges in the same amounts and in the
79 same manner as provided in s. 28.241, and the party appealing
80 any judgment on such action shall pay the filing fees and
81 service charges in the same amounts and in the same manner as
82 provided in s. 35.22. The clerk of court shall remit the fees as
83 provided in those sections.

84 (2) The county courts shall have jurisdiction previously
85 exercised by county judges' courts other than that vested in the
86 circuit court by s. 26.012, except that county court judges may
87 hear matters involving dissolution of marriage under the
88 simplified dissolution procedure pursuant to the Florida Family
89 Law Rules of Procedure or may issue a final order for
90 dissolution in cases where the matter is uncontested, and the
91 jurisdiction previously exercised by county courts, the claims
92 court, small claims courts, small claims magistrates courts,
93 magistrates courts, justice of the peace courts, municipal
94 courts, and courts of chartered counties, including but not
95 limited to the counties referred to in ss. 9, 10, 11, and 24,
96 Art. VIII of the State Constitution of 1885, as preserved by s.
97 (6)(e), Art. VIII of the State Constitution of 1968.

98 (3) Judges of county courts shall also be committing trial



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99 court judges. Judges of county courts shall be coroners unless
100 otherwise provided by law or by rule of the Supreme Court.

101 (4) Judges of county courts may hear all matters in equity
102 involved in any case within the jurisdictional amount of the
103 county court, except as otherwise restricted by the State
104 Constitution or the laws of Florida.

105 (5) A county court is a trial court.

106 Section 4. Subsections (9), (12), (17), and (28) of section
107 34.022, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

108 34.022 Number of county court judges for each county.—The
109 number of county court judges in each county shall be as
110 follows:

112 COUNTY	TOTAL
113 (9) Citrus.....	<u>2</u> ±
114 (12) Columbia.....	<u>2</u> ±
115 (17) Flagler.....	<u>2</u> ±
116 (28) Hillsborough.....	<u>19</u> ±7

117 Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.

118
119 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

120 And the title is amended as follows:

121 Delete everything before the enacting clause
122 and insert:

123 A bill to be entitled
124 An act relating to courts; creating s. 25.025, F.S.;
125 authorizing certain Supreme Court Justices to have an
126 appropriate facility in their district of residence
127 designated as their official headquarters; providing



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128 that an official headquarters may serve only as a
129 justice's private chambers; providing that such
130 justices are eligible for a certain subsistence
131 allowance and reimbursement for certain transportation
132 expenses; requiring that such allowance and
133 reimbursement be made to the extent appropriated funds
134 are available, as determined by the Chief Justice;
135 requiring the Chief Justice to coordinate with certain
136 persons in implementing designations of official
137 headquarters; providing that a county is not required
138 to provide space for a justice in a county courthouse;
139 authorizing counties to enter into agreements with the
140 Supreme Court for the use of county courthouse space;
141 prohibiting the Supreme Court from using state funds
142 to lease space in a facility to allow a justice to
143 establish an official headquarters; amending s.
144 26.031, F.S.; adding judges to the Ninth Judicial
145 Circuit Court; amending s. 34.01, F.S.; increasing the
146 limit of the amount in controversy in certain actions
147 at law under which the county court has original
148 jurisdiction of such actions; providing for
149 adjustments to the limit at specified intervals due to
150 inflation or deflation; specifying filing fees,
151 services charges, and a requirement for the clerk of
152 court's remittal of such fees in actions in which the
153 amount in controversy exceeds a specified amount;
154 amending s. 34.022, F.S.; adding judges to certain
155 county courts; providing an effective date.