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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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Office

H.B. 283
135th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

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Version: As Reported by House Civil Justice

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Pizzulli and Schmidt

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: Yes

Robert Meeker, Senior Budget Analyst

Highlights

- The state will see increased judicial salary expenses totaling \$915,859 over the five-year period from 2025 through 2029 (\$161,709 in CY 2025 plus annual salary adjusted increments each year, reaching \$191,060 in 2029).
- Adams County will see increased annual salary expenses for the court of common pleas increase ranging from \$255,035 to \$255,638, or \$1.3 million over the five-year period from 2025 through 2029, including salary costs for one additional judge and other support staff. The county may also see an increase in one-time and ongoing costs for courtroom construction, equipment, and supplies.

Detailed Analysis

The bill creates a new judgeship of the Adams County Common Pleas Court to be elected in 2024 with the term beginning February 9, 2025.¹ The newly added judge and their successors will have jurisdiction over the probate and juvenile divisions of the court beginning on February 9, 2029. Between the date of the additional judge's term start date in 2025 and February 9, 2029, both judges of the Adams County Court of Common Pleas will have jurisdiction over all divisions of the court.

¹ The bill includes an emergency clause to accommodate election filing deadlines for the 2024 general election.

Judicial salary

Under continuing Ohio law, a judge of the courts of common pleas receives a portion of their compensation from the state and a portion from the county:

- **State share** – The state pays an amount set by statute less the portion paid by the county as described below. In 2025, the statutory salary for a common pleas judge is \$163,792. Subtracting the portion paid by Adams County the state would pay \$158,846 for an additional judge in 2025 (\$163,792 - \$4,946) for a full year. State judicial salary costs are paid by the Supreme Court via GRF line item 005321, Operating Expenses – Judiciary/Supreme Court.
- **County share** – The county pays a portion equal to 18¢ per capita as determined by the latest federal census (currently the 2020 census) with a minimum of \$3,500 and a maximum of \$14,000. Based on a 2020 population of 27,477, Adams County would pay \$4,946 for one additional judge over the course of a full year.
- **Prorated calculation for CY 2025** – Because the additional term begins on February 9, 2025, both portions will be reduced in that year by 39 days, or 10.7%, making the base salary for the reduced period \$146,921; \$141,849 paid by the state and \$4,417 paid by Adams County.

The table below shows the salary for one common pleas court judge in Adams County from 2025 through 2029 and beyond.^{2, 3} The table also reflects a contribution to the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) as well as a 1.7% annual pay increase through 2028 as required under S.B. 296 of the 132nd General Assembly.

Annual Compensation Cost of One Common Pleas Judge in Adams County CYs 2025-2029 and Beyond					
Funding Source	2025*	2026	2027	2028	2029 and Beyond**
Local base salary	\$4,417	\$4,946	\$4,946	\$4,946	\$4,946
14% OPERS contribution	\$618	\$692	\$692	\$692	\$692
Local Total	\$5,035	\$5,638	\$5,638	\$5,638	\$5,638
State base salary	\$141,850	\$161,713	\$164,629	\$167,597	\$167,597
14% OPERS contribution	\$19,859	\$22,640	\$23,048	\$23,464	\$23,464
State Total	\$161,709	\$184,352	\$187,677	\$191,060	\$191,060

² The statutory annual salary will remain at the 2028 level in future years barring any additional salary modifications by the General Assembly.

³ The county-paid portion of the statutory annual salary will remain at the current amount until the results of the 2030 U.S. Census are published.

Annual Compensation Cost of One Common Pleas Judge in Adams County CYs 2025-2029 and Beyond					
Funding Source	2025*	2026	2027	2028	2029 and Beyond**
Compensation Total	\$166,744	\$189,991	\$193,315	\$196,698	\$196,698

*Salary based on 326 days (365 - 39 = 326) beginning February 9, 2025.

**1.75% annual pay increases under S.B. 296 of the 134th General Assembly end in 2028; base salary will remain level after 2028 unless changed by statute.

Health insurance costs and other administrative costs are not included in the compensation estimates above. A common pleas judge may elect health insurance coverage under either the state or the county. For FY 2024, the Supreme Court reports employer costs of \$8,224 for single coverage and \$22,573 for family coverage. These costs often fluctuate from year to year.

County costs

In addition to judicial pay, Adams County may incur costs to hire additional staff and to provide additional resources for a second judge including a courtroom, office, and equipment. Adams County officials estimate ongoing personnel costs of approximately \$250,000 per year for additional staff to include an additional bailiff and general office staff. As of this writing, the county does not have a cost estimate for additional courtroom space or equipment should those resources be needed.

Election costs

The Adams County Board of Elections could incur some more ballot printing costs if another page needs to be printed for each ballot as a result of this additional race. In this situation, the Board of Elections would likely incur 30¢ to 40¢ in additional printing costs per ballot. In 2020, the Adams County Board of Elections spent approximately \$3,800 in printing costs for the general election, costing 34¢ per ballot. As of October 31, 2023, approximately 17,000 voters are registered in Adams County.