

Senate Bill 63

By: Senators Bulloch of the 11th, Goggans of the 7th and Golden of the 8th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Code Section 15-6-2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
2 number of superior court judges for each judicial circuit, so as to create a new fifth superior
3 court judgeship for the Southern Judicial Circuit; to provide for the initial appointment,
4 election, and term of office of such judge; to provide for the qualifications and for the
5 compensation, salary, and expense allowance of such judge to be paid by the State of
6 Georgia and the counties comprising the judicial circuit; to provide for jurors; to authorize
7 the judges of said circuit to divide and allocate the work and duties thereto and provide for
8 the duties of the chief judge and presiding judges; to provide for powers, duties, and
9 responsibilities of judges of said circuit; to provide for additional court reporters and
10 personnel and the compensation of such reporters and personnel; to declare inherent
11 authority; to provide effective dates; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

13 SECTION 1.

14 Code Section 15-6-2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the number of
15 superior court judges for each judicial circuit, is amended by striking paragraph (35) and
16 inserting in lieu thereof the following:

17 "(35) Southern Circuit 45"

18 SECTION 2.

19 One additional judge of the superior courts is added to the Southern Judicial Circuit, thereby
20 increasing to five the number of judges of said circuit.

21 SECTION 3.

22 Said additional judge shall be appointed by the Governor for a term beginning July 1, 2005,
23 and continuing through December 31, 2006, and until his or her successor is elected and
24 qualified; such judge shall take office on the date of his or her appointment by the Governor.

1 His or her successor shall be elected in the manner provided by law for the election of judges
2 of the superior courts of this state at the nonpartisan judicial election in 2006, for a term of
3 four years beginning on January 1, 2007, and until his or her successor is elected and
4 qualified. Future successors shall be elected at the nonpartisan judicial election each four
5 years after such election for terms of four years and until their successors are elected and
6 qualified. They shall take office on the first day of January following the date of the election.

7 **SECTION 4.**

8 The additional judge of the superior courts of the Southern Judicial Circuit of Georgia shall
9 have and may exercise all powers, duties, dignity, jurisdiction, privileges, and immunities
10 of the present judges of the superior courts of this state. Any of the judges of the Southern
11 Judicial Circuit may preside over any cause, whether in their own or in other circuits, and
12 perform any official act as judge thereof, including sitting on appellate courts as provided by
13 law.

14 **SECTION 5.**

15 The qualifications of such additional judge and his or her successors and his or her
16 compensation, salary, and expense allowance from the State of Georgia and from the
17 counties of the superior courts of the Southern Judicial Circuit shall be the same as are now
18 provided by law for all other superior court judges. The provisions, if any, enacted for the
19 supplementation by the counties of said circuit of the salary of the judges of the superior
20 courts of the Southern Judicial Circuit shall also be applicable to the additional judge
21 provided for by this Act.

22 **SECTION 6.**

23 All writs and processes in the superior courts of the Southern Judicial Circuit shall be
24 returnable to the terms of said superior courts as they are now fixed and provided by law, or
25 as they may hereafter be fixed or determined by law, and all terms of said courts shall be held
26 in the same manner as though there were but one judge, it being the intent and purpose of this
27 Act to provide five judges equal in jurisdiction and authority to attend and perform the
28 functions, powers, and duties of the judges of said superior courts and to direct and conduct
29 all hearings and trials in said courts.

30 **SECTION 7.**

31 Upon and after qualification of the additional judge of the superior court of the Southern
32 Judicial Circuit, the five judges of said court may adopt, promulgate, amend, and enforce
33 such rules of practice and procedure in consonance with the Constitution and laws of the

1 State of Georgia as they deem suitable and proper for the effective transaction of the business
2 of the court; and, in transacting the business of the court and in performing their duties and
3 responsibilities, they shall share, divide, and allocate the work and duties to be performed by
4 each. In the event of a disagreement among the judges in respect hereof, the majority shall
5 rule, or failing a majority, the decision of the senior judge in point of service, who shall be
6 known as the chief judge, shall be controlling.

7 **SECTION 8.**

8 The drawing and impaneling of all jurors, whether grand, petit, or special, may be by any of
9 the judges of the superior court of said circuit; and they, or any one of them, shall have full
10 power and authority to draw and impanel jurors for service in said courts so as to have jurors
11 for the trial of cases before any of said judges separately or before each of them at the same
12 time.

13 **SECTION 9.**

14 The five judges of the Southern Judicial Circuit shall be authorized and empowered to
15 appoint an additional court reporter for such circuit, whose compensation shall be as now or
16 hereafter provided by law.

17 **SECTION 10.**

18 All writs, processes, orders, subpoenas, and any other official paper issuing out of the
19 superior courts of the Southern Judicial Circuit may bear teste in the name of any judge of
20 the Southern Judicial Circuit, and when issued by and in the name of any judge of said circuit
21 shall be fully valid and may be heard and determined before the same or any other judge of
22 said circuit. Any judge of said circuit may preside over any case therein and perform any
23 official act as judge thereof.

24 **SECTION 11.**

25 Upon request of any judge of the circuit, the governing authorities of the counties comprising
26 the Southern Judicial Circuit are authorized to furnish the judges of said circuit with suitable
27 courtrooms and facilities, office space, telephones, furniture, office equipment, supplies, and
28 such personnel as may be considered necessary by the court to the proper function of the
29 court. All of the expenditures authorized in this Act are declared to be an expense of the
30 court and payable out of the county treasury as such.

SECTION 12.

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2 Nothing in this Act shall be deemed to limit or restrict the inherent powers, duties, and
3 responsibilities of superior court judges provided by the Constitution and statutes of the State
4 of Georgia.

SECTION 13.

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6 (a) For purposes of making the initial appointment of the judge to fill the superior court
7 judgeship created by this Act, this Act shall become effective upon its approval by the
8 Governor or its becoming law without such approval.
9 (b) For all other purposes, this Act shall become effective July 1, 2005.

SECTION 14.

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11 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.