

House Bill 298

By: Representatives Stephens of the 164th and Petrea of the 166th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend an Act providing for a chief judge of the Recorder's Court of Chatham County,
2 approved March 31, 1987 (Ga. L. 1987, p. 5156), as amended, particularly by an Act
3 approved March 27, 1998 (Ga. L. 1998, p. 3557), so as to revise the responsibilities of the
4 chief judge; to revise the method of selection of the chief judge; to provide for a court
5 administrator; to provide for the hiring and discharge of same; to provide for the court
6 administrator's responsibilities; to require the court administrator to provide a bond; to
7 provide personnel policies and procedures of employees of the court; to authorize the
8 adoption of rules, policies, or regulations; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting
9 laws; and for other purposes.

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

11 **SECTION 1.**

12 An Act providing for a chief judge of the Recorder's Court of Chatham County, approved
13 March 31, 1987 (Ga. L. 1987, p. 5156), as amended, particularly by an Act approved March
14 27, 1998 (Ga. L. 1998, p. 3557), is amended by revising Section 1 as follows:

15 "SECTION 1.

16 (a)(1) There shall be a chief judge of the Recorder's Court of Chatham County.

17 (2) The chief judge shall have the following responsibilities:

18 (A) Acting as the head of the court in all official functions;

19 (B) Consulting with the court administrator in the preparation of an annual budget for
20 the court, which shall be submitted to both the city manager of the City of Savannah
21 and the county manager of Chatham County;

22 (C) Submitting an annual report on the operations of the court to both the Mayor and
23 Aldermen of the City of Savannah and the Chatham County Board of Commissioners,
24 which annual report shall include such data as may be outlined in any

- 25 intergovernmental agreement or memorandum of understanding between the city and
26 the county that funds the operations of the court;
- 27 (D) Consulting with the city manager and county manager in the hiring and termination
28 of the court administrator; and
- 29 (E) Performing such other duties as may be required by law.
- 30 (3) The chief judge of the court shall not have any authority or responsibility for the
31 assignment of cases or caseloads.
- 32 (4) The chief judge of the court shall be chosen as follows:
- 33 (A) The chief judge in office on the effective date of this Act shall remain as chief
34 judge for the remainder of the current term of office as of that date; and
- 35 (B) Thereafter, the chief judge shall be elected by the other judges of the court holding
36 office. The position of chief judge shall be elected every two years with no limit on the
37 number of terms an individual may serve.
- 38 (5) The chief judge may be removed at any time by a majority vote of the other judges
39 of the court holding office.
- 40 (b)(1) There shall be a court administrator of the Recorder's Court of Chatham County.
- 41 (2) The court administrator shall be an employee of the City of Savannah and shall report
42 to the city manager as a city department head so long as the city funds at least one-half
43 of the court's operations. Should the city no longer fund at least one-half of the court's
44 operations, then the court administrator shall become an employee of the county and
45 report to and be supervised by the county manager.
- 46 (3) The city manager and the county manager shall consult on the hiring and discharge
47 of the court administrator, but the ultimate decision on whether to hire or discharge an
48 individual for the position of court administrator shall rest with manager of the
49 governmental entity that employs the court administrator.
- 50 (4) The court administrator shall be responsible for:
- 51 (A) Hiring, supervising, and disciplining all employees of the court other than the
52 judges;
- 53 (B) Managing the dockets of the court, assigning all cases to judges, scheduling
54 hearings, and administering all operations of the court;
- 55 (C) Maintaining such management reports as may be requested by the city manager or
56 the county manager and submitting such reports to both managers;
- 57 (D) Submitting an annual budget to both managers, after consulting with the chief
58 judge on the preparation of such budget; and
- 59 (E) Performing such other duties as may be assigned by the manager of the
60 governmental entity that employs the administrator.

61 (5) The court administrator shall be bonded in the amount of \$100,000.00 in the same
62 manner and method as the Clerk of the Superior Court of Chatham County. The cost of
63 the premium for the bond shall be borne by the court.

64 (c) All employees of the court shall be employees of the City of Savannah and shall be
65 subject to the personnel policies and procedures of the city, provided that the City of
66 Savannah and Chatham County may if expedient provide by intergovernmental agreement
67 that such employees shall be employees of Chatham County.

68 (d) The judges of the court may adopt rules, policies, or regulations not inconsistent with
69 this Act or other applicable law upon a majority vote of the judges seated."

70 **SECTION 2.**

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