

1 ENGROSSED SENATE  
2 BILL NO. 1173

By: Hall and Rosino of the  
Senate

3 and

4 Wallace and Caldwell (Trey)  
5 of the House

6  
7 An Act relating to courts; amending 20 O.S. 2021,  
8 Section 122, which relates to number of special  
9 judges in each judicial administrative district;  
10 making language gender neutral; updating statutory  
11 language; adding two special judges to be appointed  
12 in certain district; providing an effective date; and  
13 declaring an emergency.

14 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

15 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 20 O.S. 2021, Section 122, is  
16 amended to read as follows:

17 Section 122. The number of special judges that may be appointed  
18 in each judicial administrative district shall be determined as  
19 follows:

20 1. A special judge shall be appointed on the basis of one  
21 special judge for each county within the administrative district  
22 with a population of at least twenty-four thousand (24,000), as  
23 determined by the 1960 Federal Decennial Census. An additional  
24 special judge shall be appointed for each additional fifty thousand  
(50,000) in population in a county within the administrative  
district, as determined by the 1960 Federal Decennial Census. Such

1 appointment may be made from any county in the administrative  
2 district. Such appointments shall be made by the district judges in  
3 their respective judicial administrative districts. Any judge of a  
4 special sessions court shall be one of the special judges for the  
5 balance of his or her term and shall be within the number prescribed  
6 for ~~said~~ such district.

7 2. In addition to the special judges that may be appointed  
8 pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 1 of this section, there  
9 shall be:

- 10 a. one (1) special judge appointed in the Northwest-  
11 Panhandle Judicial Administrative District comprised  
12 of District Court Judicial Districts Numbers One (1),  
13 Two (2) and Four (4), to serve in Custer County~~†~~†
- 14 b. one (1) special judge appointed in the Oklahoma-  
15 Canadian Counties Judicial Administrative District  
16 comprised of District Court Judicial District Number  
17 Seven (7)~~†~~†
- 18 c. ~~three (3)~~ beginning July 1, 2024, five (5) special  
19 judges appointed in the Tulsa-Pawnee Counties Judicial  
20 Administrative District comprised of District Court  
21 Judicial District Number Fourteen (14)~~†~~†
- 22 d. beginning January 11, 1999, one (1) special judge  
23 appointed in the Northeastern Judicial Administrative  
24 District comprised of District Court Judicial

- 1 Districts Numbers Ten (10), Eleven (11), Twelve (12)  
2 and Thirteen (13), to serve in Rogers County~~†,‡~~
- 3 e. one (1) special judge appointed in the ~~North-Central~~  
4 North-Central Judicial Administrative District  
5 comprised of District Court Judicial District Numbers  
6 Eight (8), Nine (9) and Twenty-three (23), to serve in  
7 Lincoln and Pottawatomie Counties~~†,‡~~
- 8 f. beginning January 1, 2006, one (1) special judge  
9 appointed in the ~~East-Central~~ East-Central Judicial  
10 Administrative District comprised of District Court  
11 Judicial District Numbers Fifteen (15), Eighteen (18)  
12 and Twenty-four (24), to serve in Pittsburg and  
13 McIntosh Counties~~†,‡~~
- 14 g. beginning January 1, 2006, one (1) special judge  
15 appointed in the Northeastern Judicial Administrative  
16 District comprised of District Court Judicial District  
17 Numbers Ten (10), Eleven (11), Twelve (12) and  
18 Thirteen (13), to serve in Washington County~~†,‡~~ and
- 19 h. beginning January 1, 2007, one (1) special judge  
20 appointed in the Southeastern Judicial Administrative  
21 District comprised of District Court Judicial District  
22 Numbers Sixteen (16), Seventeen (17), Nineteen (19),  
23 and Twenty-five (25), to serve in ~~LeFlore~~ Le Flore  
24 County.

1           3. If a vacancy occurs in the office of associate district  
2 judge, or if an associate district judge becomes unable to perform  
3 the duties of his or her office, as determined by the presiding  
4 judge of the judicial administrative district, a special judge may  
5 be appointed within the judicial administrative district to hold  
6 office for the duration of ~~said~~ such vacancy or incapacity. After  
7 the vacancy is filled, or after the associate district judge becomes  
8 able to perform the duties of his or her office, the special judge  
9 shall have the power to act in regard to any case which he or she  
10 has already tried, but the presiding judge of the judicial  
11 administrative district may transfer such a case to any other judge  
12 in the judicial administrative district.

13           4. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court may authorize the  
14 appointment of such additional special judges as may be necessary  
15 for the proper administration of justice. Such additional special  
16 judges shall be appointed after application by a majority of the  
17 district judges of a judicial administrative district, stating the  
18 reason why an additional special judge is needed. Such additional  
19 judges need not be based upon population figures.

20           SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2024.

21           SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
22 of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby  
23 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and  
24 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

