

SB284 INTRODUCED



1 SB284
2 YMZG422-1
3 By Senator Singleton
4 RFD: Judiciary
5 First Read: 10-Feb-26



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4 SYNOPSIS:

5 Under existing law, the Chief Justice and eight
6 associate justices of the Alabama Supreme Court are
7 elected by popular vote from the state at large.

8 Under existing law, the judges of the Court of
9 Criminal Appeals and the Court of Civil Appeals are
10 elected by popular vote from the state at large.

11 Under existing law, the presiding judge of the
12 Court of Criminal Appeals is elected from the members
13 of the court.

14 Under existing law, the presiding judge of the
15 Court of Civil Appeals automatically goes to the
16 longest serving judge on the court.

17 This bill would provide that the Chief Justice
18 of the Supreme Court and the presiding judges of the
19 Court of Criminal Appeals and Court of Civil Appeals be
20 elected by popular vote from the state at large.

21 This bill would provide for the election of
22 associate justices of the Supreme Court and judges of
23 the appellate courts by district and would provide for
24 the districts.

25 Under existing law, the seats on the Supreme
26 Court and the Courts of Appeals have been given place
27 names.

28 This bill would modify the place names for

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29 certain existing seats on the Supreme Court and Courts
30 of Appeals.

31 This bill would also repeal the existing law
32 relating to the selection of the presiding judge of the
33 Courts of Appeals.

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36 A BILL

37 TO BE ENTITLED

38 AN ACT

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40 Relating to courts; to amend Sections 12-2-1, 12-3-2,
41 12-3-3, 17-6-48, and 17-6-48.1, Code of Alabama 1975, to
42 further provide for the election of justices of the Supreme
43 Court and judges of the appellate courts; and to repeal
44 Sections 12-3-4 and 12-3-5, Code of Alabama 1975.

45 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

46 Section 1. Sections 12-2-1, 12-3-2, 12-3-3, 17-6-48,
47 and 17-6-48.1, Code of Alabama 1975, are amended to read as
48 follows:

49 "§12-2-1

50 (a) The Supreme Court, except as otherwise provided,
51 shall consist of a chief justice and eight associate justices,
52 who shall be elected by the qualified electors of the state at
53 the general elections as provided by law for the election of
54 members of the House of Representatives in Congress and who
55 shall hold their offices for the term of six years from the
56 first Monday after the second Tuesday in January next



57 succeeding their election and until their successors are
58 elected and qualified. Subject to ~~the provisions of the~~
59 Constitution respecting filling of vacancies in judicial
60 offices, members of the Supreme Court shall be elected as
61 follows: The Chief Justice and three associate justices shall
62 be elected at the general election in November, 1976, two
63 associate justices shall be elected at the general election in
64 November, 1978, and three associate justices shall be elected
65 at the general election in November, 1980. Thereafter members
66 of the Supreme Court shall be elected in the general election
67 next preceding the expiration of the respective term for which
68 the incumbent holds office.

69 (b) (1) Notwithstanding subsection (a), commencing with
70 the 2028 General Election, justices of the Supreme Court shall
71 be elected as follows:

72 a. The chief justice shall be elected from the state at
73 large in the 2030 General Election.

74 b. The associate justice in Place 1, as provided in
75 Section 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2030 General
76 Election from the first State Board of Education District, as
77 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

78 c. The associate justice in Place 2, as provided in
79 Section 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2030 General
80 Election from the second State Board of Education District, as
81 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

82 d. The associate justice in Place 3, as provided in
83 Section 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2030 General
84 Election from the third State Board of Education District, as



85 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

86 e. The associate justice in Place 4, as provided in
87 Section 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2030 General
88 Election from the fourth State Board of Education District, as
89 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

90 f. The associate justice in Place 5, as provided in
91 Section 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2028 General
92 Election from the fifth State Board of Education District, as
93 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

94 g. The associate justice in Place 6, as provided in
95 Section 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2028 General
96 Election from the sixth State Board of Education District, as
97 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

98 h. The associate justice in Place 7, as provided in
99 Section 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2032 General
100 Election from the seventh State Board of Education District,
101 as provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

102 i. The associate justice in Place 8, as provided in
103 Section 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2032 General
104 Election from the eighth State Board of Education District, as
105 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

106 (2) All justices elected pursuant to this subsection
107 shall serve a six-year term of office.

108 (3) A vacancy in the office of a justice of the Supreme
109 Court shall be filled as provided by Section 153 of the
110 Constitution of Alabama of 2022.

111 (4) A candidate for associate justice for a district
112 shall have been a qualified elector of this state and a



113 resident of the district for at least one year prior to the
114 qualification deadline date for candidacy in addition to other
115 qualifications which may be prescribed by general law.

116 (5) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to
117 terminate the term of a justice in office on January 1, 2027.

118 ~~(b)~~(c) Persons elected to the Supreme Court, or
119 appointed to fill a vacant term of office on the Supreme
120 Court, after January 1, 2010, must have been licensed by the
121 Alabama State Bar Association a combined total of 10 years or
122 more, or by any other state bar association for a combined
123 total of 10 years or more, prior to beginning a term of office
124 or appointment to serve a vacant term of office."

125 "§12-3-2

126 (a) (1) The offices of the three judges of the Court of
127 Criminal Appeals that were filled in the general election of
128 1970 pursuant to Act No. 987 of the 1969 Regular Session of
129 the Legislature shall be filled by election from the state at
130 large in the general election held each six years thereafter,
131 or as the end of the term of such office may thereafter occur
132 pursuant to the Constitution.

133 ~~(b)~~(2) The offices of the two judges of the Court of
134 Criminal Appeals that were filled in the general election of
135 1972 pursuant to Act No. 75 of the 1971 Third Special Session
136 of the Legislature shall be filled by election from the state
137 at large in the general election held each six years
138 thereafter, or as the end of the term of such office may
139 thereafter occur pursuant to the Constitution.

140 (b) (1) Notwithstanding subsection (a), commencing with



141 the 2028 General Election, judges shall be elected as follows:

142 a. The presiding judge shall be elected from the state
143 at large at the 2028 General Election.

144 b. The judge in Place 1, as provided in Section
145 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2030 General Election from
146 the first and second State Board of Education Districts, as
147 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

148 c. The judge in Place 2, as provided in Section
149 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2030 General Election from
150 the fourth and fifth State Board of Education Districts, as
151 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

152 d. The judge in Place 3, as provided in Section
153 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2030 General Election from
154 the third and sixth State Board of Education Districts, as
155 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

156 e. The judge in Place 4, as provided in Section
157 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2032 General Election from
158 the seventh and eighth State Board of Education Districts, as
159 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

160 (2) A vacancy in the office of a judge shall be filled
161 as provided by Section 153 of the Constitution of Alabama of
162 2022.

163 (3) A candidate for associate judge for a district
164 shall have been a qualified elector of this state and a
165 resident of the district for at least one year prior to the
166 qualification deadline date for candidacy in addition to other
167 qualifications which may be prescribed by general law.

168 (4) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to



169 terminate the term of a judge in office on January 1, 2027.

170 (c) The presiding judge of the Court of Criminal
171 Appeals may ~~from time to time~~ designate panels of three judges
172 to decide cases submitted to ~~said the~~ court~~s~~, provided~~s~~ that
173 the concurrence of three of the five judges shall be required
174 for each decision."

175 "§12-3-3

176 (a) The offices of the judges of the Court of Civil
177 Appeals that were filled at the general election in 1972 for
178 terms of two, four~~s~~ and six years pursuant to Act No. 987 of
179 the 1969 Regular Session of the Legislature~~shall~~, at the
180 general election immediately preceding the expiration of said
181 respective terms, shall be filled by election from the state
182 at large for terms of six years, and shall likewise be filled
183 by election from the state at large each six years thereafter,
184 or as the end of the term of each such office may thereafter
185 occur pursuant to the Constitution.

186 (b) (1) Notwithstanding subsection (a), commencing with
187 the 2028 General Election, judges shall be elected as follows:

188 a. The presiding judge shall be elected from the state
189 at large at the 2028 General Election.

190 b. The judge in Place 1, as provided in Section
191 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2030 General Election from
192 the first and second State Board of Education Districts, as
193 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

194 c. The judge in Place 2, as provided in Section
195 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2030 General Election from
196 the fourth and fifth State Board of Education Districts, as



197 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

198 d. The judge in Place 3, as provided in Section
199 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2030 General Election from
200 the third and sixth State Board of Education Districts, as
201 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

202 e. The judge in Place 4, as provided in Section
203 17-6-48.1, shall be elected in the 2032 General Election from
204 the seventh and eighth State Board of Education Districts, as
205 provided in Chapter 3 of Title 16.

206 (2) A vacancy in the office of a judge shall be filled
207 as provided by Section 153 of the Constitution of Alabama of
208 2022.

209 (3) A candidate for associate judge for a district
210 shall have been a qualified elector of this state and a
211 resident of the district for at least one year prior to the
212 qualification deadline date for candidacy in addition to other
213 qualifications which may be prescribed by general law.

214 (4) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to
215 terminate the term of a judge in office on January 1, 2027.

216 ~~(b) In the event the number of judges on the court is~~
217 ~~increased to more than three, unless otherwise provided by the~~
218 ~~act increasing the number of judges, the Governor shall make~~
219 ~~appointments of the additional judges so that, as nearly as~~
220 ~~may be, one third of the members of such court shall be~~
221 ~~elected each second year."~~

222 "§17-6-48

223 In all primary and general elections of ~~associate~~
224 ~~justices of the Supreme Court of Alabama, justices of the~~



225 ~~courts of appeals of Alabama~~, judges of the circuit and
226 district courts, and associate members of the public service
227 commission, ~~wherein~~ where two or more ~~of such justices~~,
228 judges ~~or~~ or officers are ~~to be~~ elected at the same time, each
229 of ~~such~~ the places to be filled shall be designated by number
230 by the Secretary of State."

231 "§17-6-48.1

232 (a) Beginning with the 2022 statewide election, the
233 following offices on the supreme court, court of criminal
234 appeals, and court of civil appeals shall be permanently
235 identified as follows:

236 (1) The supreme court:

237 a. The office of associate justice identified as "Place
238 No. 1" on the 2018 statewide election ballot shall be "Place
239 1" on the supreme court.

240 b. The office of associate justice identified as "Place
241 No. 2" on the 2018 statewide election ballot shall be "Place
242 2" on the supreme court.

243 c. The office of associate justice identified as "Place
244 No. 3" on the 2018 statewide election ballot shall be "Place
245 3" on the supreme court.

246 d. The office of associate justice identified as "Place
247 No. 4" on the 2018 statewide election ballot shall be "Place
248 4" on the supreme court.

249 e. The office of associate justice identified as "Place
250 No. 1" on the 2016 statewide election ballot shall be "Place
251 5" on the supreme court.

252 f. The office of associate justice identified as "Place



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253 No. 2" on the 2016 statewide election ballot shall be "Place
254 6" on the supreme court.

255 g. The office of associate justice identified as "Place
256 No. 3" on the 2016 statewide election ballot shall be "Place
257 7" on the supreme court.

258 h. The office of associate justice identified as "Place
259 No. 1" on the 2014 statewide election ballot shall be "Place
260 8" on the supreme court.

261 (2) a. The court of criminal appeals:

262 ~~a.1.~~ The office of judge identified as "Place No. 1" on
263 the 2018 statewide election ballot shall be "Place 1" on the
264 court of criminal appeals.

265 ~~b.2.~~ The office of judge identified as "Place No. 2" on
266 the 2018 statewide election ballot shall be "Place 2" on the
267 court of criminal appeals.

268 ~~c.3.~~ The office of judge identified as "Place No. 3" on
269 the 2018 statewide election ballot shall be "Place 3" on the
270 court of criminal appeals.

271 ~~d.4.~~ The office of judge identified as "Place No. 1" on
272 the 2014 statewide election ballot shall be "Place 4" on the
273 court of criminal appeals.

274 ~~e.5.~~ The office of judge identified as "Place No. 2" on
275 the 2014 statewide election ballot shall be "Place 5" on the
276 court of criminal appeals.

277 b. Commencing with the 2028 General Election, the court
278 of criminal appeals:

279 1. The office of judge identified as "Place No. 1" on
280 the 2030 election ballot shall be "Place 1" on the court of



281 criminal appeals.

282 2. The office of judge identified as "Place No. 2" on
283 the 2030 election ballot shall be "Place 2" on the court of
284 criminal appeals.

285 3. The office of judge identified as "Place No. 3" on
286 the 2030 election ballot shall be "Place 3" on the court of
287 criminal appeals.

288 4. The office of judge identified as "Place No. 4" on
289 the 2032 election ballot shall be "Place 4" on the court of
290 criminal appeals.

291 c. Beginning on January 1, 2027, until the date the
292 presiding judge is elected statewide, as provided in Section
293 12-2-1, the judge in Place 4 shall continue to serve as the
294 presiding judge.

295 (3) a. The court of civil appeals:

296 a.1. The office of judge identified as "Place No. 1" on
297 the 2018 statewide election ballot shall be "Place 1" on the
298 court of civil appeals.

299 b.2. The office of judge identified as "Place No. 2" on
300 the 2018 statewide election ballot shall be "Place 2" on the
301 court of civil appeals.

302 c.3. The office of judge identified as "Place No. 3" on
303 the 2018 statewide election ballot shall be "Place 3" on the
304 court of civil appeals.

305 d.4. The office of judge identified as "Place No. 1" on
306 the 2014 statewide election ballot shall be "Place 4" on the
307 court of civil appeals.

308 e.5. The office of judge identified as "Place No. 2" on

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309 the 2014 statewide election ballot shall be "Place 5" on the
310 court of civil appeals.

311 b. Commencing with the 2028 General Election, the court
312 of civil appeals:

313 1. The office of judge identified as "Place No. 1" on
314 the 2030 election ballot shall be "Place 1" on the court of
315 civil appeals.

316 2. The office of judge identified as "Place No. 2" on
317 the 2030 election ballot shall be "Place 2" on the court of
318 civil appeals.

319 3. The office of judge identified as "Place No. 3" on
320 the 2030 election ballot shall be "Place 3" on the court of
321 civil appeals.

322 4. The office of judge identified as "Place No. 4" on
323 the 2032 election ballot shall be "Place 4" on the court of
324 civil appeals.

325 c. Beginning on January 1, 2027, until the date the
326 presiding judge is elected statewide, as provided in Section
327 12-2-1, the judge in Place 4 shall continue to serve as the
328 presiding judge.

329 (b) The clerks of the supreme court, the court of civil
330 appeals, and the court of criminal appeals shall provide
331 written notification of election ballot placement to the
332 Secretary of State and make the same available to any
333 political party's executive director."

334 Section 2. Nothing in the amendatory language added on
335 January 1, 2027, to Sections 12-2-1, 12-3-2, or 12-3-3, Code
336 of Alabama 1975, is intended to affect how a judgeship is

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337 filled upon a vacancy of a seat before the end of the term for
338 that judgeship.

339 Section 3. Sections 12-3-4 and 12-3-5 of the Code of
340 Alabama 1975, relating to the presiding judges of the Courts
341 of Appeals and the residency requirements of a judge, are
342 repealed.

343 Section 4. This act shall become effective on January
344 1, 2027, and shall be contingent on the ratification of a
345 constitutional amendment to amend Section 152 of the
346 Constitution of Alabama of 2022 providing that associate
347 justices of the Alabama Supreme Court and judges of the courts
348 of appeals shall be elected by districts.