

April 10, 2003

H 1218. JUDICIAL BRANCH BUDGET REFORM. TO REINFORCE THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIAL BRANCH AS A SEPARATE AND COORDINATE BRANCH OF STATE GOVERNMENT AND TO ENSURE THE FISCAL INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE JUDICIAL BRANCH, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE STATE JUDICIAL COUNCIL. Substantially the same as S 726 introduced on 4/3/03. Provides that all General Fund appropriations for the continuing operations of the judicial branch shall be made to four categories: personnel, operating expenses, equipment, and other. Authorizes the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, after consultation with and upon the advice of the State Judicial Council, to expend the appropriated funds in the manner the Director deems to be best calculated to maintain and advance the effective and efficient operation of the judicial branch. Creates a Position Reserve that shall include all funding required for the additional assistant and deputy clerks of superior court, magistrates, judicial support staff, assistant district attorneys, and prosecutorial support staff required statewide to keep up with the increased workload of the courts in each fiscal year. Creates an Equipment Replacement Reserve that shall include all funding required for the replacement and upgrade of equipment each fiscal year. Provides that any credit balance remaining in the General Fund appropriation for operations each year may be carried forward to the next fiscal year and used for one-time expenditures. Authorizes the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, after consultation with and upon the advice of the State Judicial Council, to establish, abolish, allocate and reallocate all personnel positions within the judicial branch, subject to specified limitations and with the exception of several named positions including all justices and judges, district attorneys, clerks of superior court, and others. Requires Governor to consult with the Chief Justice before making any reductions or revisions to the judicial branch appropriations and to attempt to follow the Chief Justice's recommendations regarding reductions or revisions in appropriations. Makes conforming changes to various parts of Chapters 7A, 143, and 120.

Intro. by Culpepper, Kiser.

Ref. to Appropriations	GS 7A, 143, 120
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