



Testimony to the Twenty-Ninth State Legislature, 2017 Session

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair

Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

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State Capitol, Conference Room 016

by

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Bill No. and Title: Senate Bill No. 276, Relating to Judges.

Purpose: Changes the composition of judges of the intermediate appellate court, circuit courts, district courts, and family courts.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary opposes this measure.

Currently, the law establishes, among others, the following judicial positions: 5 associate judges on the intermediate court of appeals; 25 circuit court judges and 14 district court judges in the First Circuit; 4 circuit court judges and 3 district court judges in the Second Circuit; 4 circuit court judges and 3 district court judges in the Third Circuit; and 2 circuit court judges and 2 district court judges in the Fifth Circuit; the law, also, establishes divisions within the circuit and district courts.

This bill strikes out the numbers that quantify the above, and eliminates the divisions within each circuit. Thus, in its current form, the bill provides for no intermediate court of appeals associate judges, no circuit court judges, and no district court judges. While a future draft of the bill is likely to include numbers, the Judiciary is unable to evaluate or determine the eventual bill's effect on court operations. Accordingly, the Judiciary opposes the measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.