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69th Legislature 2025 SB 284.1

1	SENATE BILL NO. 284							
2	INTRODUCED BY G. HERTZ							
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4	A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING LAWS RELATED TO DISTRICT							
5	COURTS; COMBINING THE 10TH AND 14TH JUDICIAL DISTRICTS; PROVIDING AN ADDITIONAL JUDG							
6	TO THE 13TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT; AMENDING SECTIONS 3-5-101 AND 3-5-102, MCA; PROVIDING A							
7	TRANSITION; AND PROVIDING EFFECTIVE DATES."							
8								
9	WHERE	AS, the workload in the 10th Judicial District is equal to 0.7 of a fulltime judge, and the						
10	workload in the 14th Judicial District is equal to 0.4 of a fulltime judge, and combined they are equal to 1.1 of a							
11	fulltime judge lower than the workload in almost every other judicial district; and							
12	WHEREAS, Yellowstone County's 13th Judicial District currently has the workload equivalent of 13.9							
13	judges with only 8 full-time judges working today.							
14								
15	BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:							
16								
17	Section 1. Section 3-5-101, MCA, is amended to read:							
18	"3-5-101	. Judicial districts defined. In this state, there are 22 $\underline{21}$ judicial districts, distributed as						
19	follows:							
20	(1)	1st district: Lewis and Clark and Broadwater Counties;						
21	(2)	2nd district: Silver Bow County;						
22	(3)	3rd district: Deer Lodge, Granite, and Powell Counties;						
23	(4)	4th district: Missoula and Mineral Counties;						
24	(5)	5th district: Beaverhead, Jefferson, and Madison Counties;						
25	(6)	6th district: Park and Sweet Grass Counties;						
26	(7)	7th district: Dawson, McCone, Richland, Prairie, and Wibaux Counties;						
27	(8)	8th district: Cascade County;						
28	(9)	9th district: Teton, Pondera, Toole, and Glacier Counties;						



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69th Legislature 2025 SB 284.1

1	(10)	10th district: Fergus, <u>Golden Valley,</u> Judith Basin, <u>Meagher, Musselshell,</u> and Petroleum <u>, and</u>						
2	Wheatland Cou	tland Counties;						
3	(11)	11th district: Flathead County;						
4	(12)	12th district: Liberty, Hill, and Chouteau Counties;						
5	(13)	13th district: Yellowstone County;						
6	(14)	14th district: Meagher, Wheatland, Golden Valley, and Musselshell Counties;						
7	<del>(15)</del> (14	(15)(14)15th 14th district: Roosevelt, Daniels, and Sheridan Counties;						
8	<del>(16)</del> (15	(16)(15)16th 15th district: Custer, Carter, Fallon, Powder River, Garfield, Treasure, and Rosebud						
9	Counties;	ties;						
10	<del>(17)</del> (16	(17)(16)17th 16th district: Phillips, Blaine, and Valley Counties;						
11	<del>(18)</del> (17	(18)(17)18th 17th district: Gallatin County;						
12	<del>(19)</del> (18	(19)(18)19th 18th district: Lincoln County;						
13	<del>(20)</del> (19	(20)(19)20th 19th district: Lake and Sanders Counties;						
14	<del>(21)</del> (20	(21)(20)21st 20th district: Ravalli County;						
15	<del>(22)</del> (21	(22)(21)22nd 21st district: Stillwater, Carbon, and Big Horn Counties."						
16								
17	Sectio	Section 2. Section 3-5-102, MCA, is amended to read:						
18	"3-5-10	2. Number of judges. In each judicial district, there must be the following number of judges of						
19	the district coul	t:						
20	(1)	in the 2nd, 7th, 16th, 20th, and 21st districts, two judges each;						
21	(2)	in the 1st, 8th, and 18th districts, four judges each;						
22	(3)	in the 4th and 11th districts, five judges each;						
23	(4)	in the 13th district, eight nine judges; and						
24	(5)	in all other districts, one judge each."						
25								
26	NEW S	SECTION. Section 3. Transition. (1) If a vacancy in the 10th or the 14th judicial district occurs						
27	on or after [the	effective date of this section], then:						
28	(a)	the governor may not appoint a person to fill the vacancy in the 10th or the 14th district and the						



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69th Legislature 2025 SB 284.1

1	remaining	iudae will	serve the	newly	configured	10th	district:	and
	remaining	Juage wiii	SCI VC LIIC	TIC VVI y	corniguica	10111	district,	ana

(b) the governor shall appoint a person to fill the additional judge position in the 13th district using the process outlined in 3-1-901 through 3-1-905. The appointment must be confirmed by the senate and is subject to the provisions of 3-1-906 for senate confirmation and 3-1-907 for the length of the appointee's initial term.

(2) An election for a full 6-year term for the ninth judge in the 13th district must be held at the general election held in November 2030.

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NEW SECTION. Section 4. Effective dates -- contingent effective date. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2), [this act] is effective on passage and approval.

- (2) (a) [Sections 1 and 2] are effective January 6, 2031, or on occurrence of the contingency described in subsection (2)(b), whichever occurs first.
- (b) If a vacancy in the 10th or the 14th judicial district occurs on or after [the effective date of this section], then [sections 1 and 2] are effective on the date the vacancy occurs.

15 - END -

