

HCS HBs 373 & 435 -- JUDICIAL CIRCUITS

SPONSOR: Elmer

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 11 to 1.

Beginning in 2020, and every 20 years thereafter, within the first 30 days of the regular legislative session, this substitute requires the Missouri Supreme Court to submit to both houses of the General Assembly a circuit realignment plan for the alteration of the geographical boundaries and territorial jurisdiction of the circuit courts subject to the requirements in Article V of the Missouri Constitution. The Supreme Court must establish rules and standards to implement these changes. The substitute specifies the criteria that must be used when redrawing the judicial boundaries. Once submitted to both houses, a plan will become effective January 1 of the year following the legislative session unless it is disapproved within 60 days of its submission by a majority vote of the members of each house.

The substitute repeals the current geographical boundaries and territorial jurisdiction of the judicial circuits effective December 31, 2019. The total number of circuits in existence as of December 31, 2019, must not be altered, and any plan increasing or reducing the number of circuits must be null and void.

These provisions cannot be construed as eliminating any family courts in existence as of December 31, 2019.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill allows an analysis to be performed when there is an opening in a circuit to determine whether the opening should be filled in that circuit or if another circuit could use the position more based on workload data.

Testifying for the bill were Representatives Cox and Elmer.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.