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[HF 2719](#) – Judicial Performance Information (LSB6772HV)

Staff Contact: Nathan Moore (515.725.0155) [nathan.moore@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:nathan.moore@legis.iowa.gov)

Fiscal Note Version – New

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## Description

[House File 2719](#) requires the State Court Administrator to annually collect and publish specified performance information for each district court judge, district associate judge, full-time associate juvenile judge, and full-time associate probate judge.

Performance information must include data relating to pretrial discretion such as bond-setting and release decisions, sentencing outcomes, appellate reversals, and courtroom efficiency metrics. The Bill also requires the Judicial Branch to create and maintain a website that includes county and name search functionality, individual judge performance data, judicial district average statistics, and personal statements for each judge.

## Background

The Judicial Branch collects case data through the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS), but the system is designed for document management and case tracking, not for statistical or data analysis for visualization or publishing. Reports are periodically published with combined statistical information, including the Iowa [Judicial Branch Annual Report](#), which provides statewide and judicial district data.

Judicial officers are subject to retention elections. The Judicial Branch makes the [retention election voter's guide](#) available to voters, which includes judicial officer biographical information, and the Iowa State Bar Association prepares [performance evaluation summaries](#). Detailed judge-specific performance metrics relating to bond-setting practices, sentencing variance, appellate reversal rates, or time-to-ruling statistics are not currently required to be compiled and published. The Judicial Branch provides online resources like court opinions and summary caseload statistics, but it does not provide a searchable dashboard for judge-specific performance.

## Assumptions

- Sentencing recommendations and statutory sentencing guidelines are not centrally captured in EDMS.
- Additional programming would be required to standardize bond, sentencing, and appellate outcome data across judicial districts.
- Case assignment practices differ across judicial districts. Case statistics are not consistently tracked or attributed to individual judges because cases may be handled by multiple judges between case inception and disposition.
- Total implementation of HF 2719 will take approximately 2.5 to 4 years:
  - System design and requirement gathering: 6-9 months
  - EDMS modifications and testing: 12-18 months
  - Pilot program in select districts: 6-12 months
  - Statewide rollout and training: 6-9 months

- The Judicial Branch proposed implementing the Bill in three phases.
  - Phase one, the pilot program, will select two to three judicial districts with differing methods of assignment, and implement a subset of performance metrics.
  - Phase two will refine data collection requirements based on pilot findings and implement EDMS modifications.
  - Phase three will assess the quality and consistency of statewide data, and make system refinements to develop and employ the website and searchable performance dashboard.

### **Fiscal Impact**

House File 2719 is expected to result in increased costs to the Judicial Branch.

The estimated one-time cost is between \$1.3 million and \$2.1 million, with an estimated implementation timeline from 2.5 to 4 years. These costs would include the following:

- Modification to the EDMS – \$1.0 million to \$1.5 million.
- Website development – \$100,000 to \$250,000.
- Training and process administration – \$150,000 to \$300,000.

The annual ongoing costs are estimated to be \$350,000 to \$700,000 per year. These costs include the following:

- Additional staffing for data analysis and web support – \$200,000 to \$400,000 annually.
- Ongoing maintenance – \$150,000 to \$300,000 annually.

### **Source**

Judicial Branch

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/s/ Jennifer Acton

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The Fiscal Note for this Bill was prepared pursuant to [Joint Rule 17](#) and the Iowa Code. Data used in developing this Fiscal Note is available from the Fiscal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency upon request.

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