

**House Study Bill 776 - Introduced**

HOUSE FILE \_\_\_\_\_  
BY (PROPOSED COMMITTEE ON  
APPROPRIATIONS BILL BY  
CHAIRPERSON MOHR)

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to and making appropriations to the judicial  
2 branch.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

unofficial

1 Section 1. JUDICIAL BRANCH.

2 1. There is appropriated from the general fund of the state  
3 to the judicial branch for the fiscal year beginning July 1,  
4 2026, and ending June 30, 2027, the following amounts, or so much  
5 thereof as is necessary, to be used for the purposes designated:

6 a. For salaries of supreme court justices, appellate court  
7 judges, district court judges, district associate judges,  
8 associate juvenile judges, associate probate judges, judicial  
9 magistrates and staff, state court administrator, clerk of the  
10 supreme court, district court administrators, clerks of the  
11 district court, juvenile court officers, board of law examiners,  
12 board of examiners of shorthand reporters, and commission on  
13 judicial qualifications; receipt and disbursement of child  
14 support payments; reimbursement of the auditor of state for  
15 expenses incurred in completing audits of the offices of the  
16 clerks of the district court during the fiscal year beginning  
17 July 1, 2026; and maintenance, equipment, and miscellaneous  
18 purposes:

19 ..... \$203,691,378

20 b. For deposit in the revolving fund created pursuant to  
21 section 602.1302, subsection 3, for jury and witness fees,  
22 mileage, costs related to summoning jurors, costs and fees for  
23 interpreters and translators, and reimbursement of attorney fees  
24 paid by the state public defender:

25 ..... \$ 3,600,000

26 c. For payment of expenses for court-ordered services  
27 provided to juveniles who are under the supervision of juvenile  
28 court services, which expenses are a charge upon the state  
29 pursuant to section 232.141, subsection 4:

30

31 ..... \$ 3,290,000

32 (1) Of the moneys appropriated in this lettered paragraph, no  
33 more than \$1,556,000 is allocated to provide school-based  
34 supervision of children under chapter 232, of which no more than  
35 \$25,000 may be used for purposes of training.

1 (2) Notwithstanding section 232.141 or any other provision of  
2 law to the contrary, the moneys appropriated in this lettered  
3 paragraph shall be distributed to the judicial districts as  
4 determined by the state court administrator. The state court  
5 administrator shall make the determination of the distribution  
6 amounts within thirty days of the date on which the annual census  
7 data is released.

8 (3) Notwithstanding chapter 232 or any other provision of law  
9 to the contrary, a district or juvenile court shall not order any  
10 service which is a charge upon the state pursuant to section  
11 232.141 if there are insufficient court-ordered services moneys  
12 available in the district court distribution amounts to pay for  
13 the service. The chief juvenile court officer shall encourage  
14 use of the moneys appropriated in this lettered paragraph such  
15 that there are sufficient moneys to pay for all court-ordered  
16 services during the entire fiscal year. The chief juvenile court  
17 officer shall attempt to anticipate potential surpluses and  
18 shortfalls in the distribution amounts and shall cooperatively  
19 request the state court administrator to transfer moneys between  
20 the judicial districts' distribution amounts as prudent.

21 (4) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a  
22 district or juvenile court shall not order a county to pay for  
23 any service provided to a juvenile pursuant to an order entered  
24 under chapter 232 which is a charge upon the state under section  
25 232.141, subsection 4.

26 (5) Of the moneys appropriated in this lettered paragraph, no  
27 more than \$83,000 may be used by the judicial branch for  
28 administration of the requirements under this lettered paragraph.

29 (6) Of the moneys appropriated in this lettered paragraph, an  
30 amount not to exceed the actual cost of the annual membership fee  
31 is allocated to the judicial branch to support the interstate  
32 commission for juveniles in accordance with the interstate  
33 compact for juveniles as provided in section 232.173.

34 (7) Notwithstanding section 8.33, moneys appropriated in this  
35 lettered paragraph that remain unencumbered or unobligated at the

1 close of the fiscal year shall not revert but shall remain  
2 available for expenditure for the purposes designated until the  
3 close of the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2029.

4 d. For juvenile delinquent graduated sanctions services  
5 pursuant to section 232.192:

6

7 ..... \$ 12,253,000

8 (1) Any state moneys saved as a result of efforts by juvenile  
9 court services to earn a federal fund match pursuant to Tit. IV-E  
10 of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018, Pub.  
11 L. No. 115-123, for juvenile court services administration is  
12 appropriated to the judicial branch for purposes of this lettered  
13 paragraph.

14 (2) Notwithstanding section 8.33, moneys appropriated in this  
15 lettered paragraph that remain unencumbered or unobligated at the  
16 close of the fiscal year shall not revert but shall remain  
17 available for expenditure for the purposes designated until the  
18 close of the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2029.

19 2. The judicial branch, except for purposes of internal  
20 processing, shall use the current state budget system, the state  
21 payroll system, and the Iowa finance and accounting system in  
22 administration of programs and payments for services, and shall  
23 not duplicate the state payroll, accounting, and budgeting  
24 systems.

25 3. The judicial branch shall submit monthly financial  
26 statements to the legislative services agency and the department  
27 of management containing all appropriated accounts in the same  
28 manner as provided in the monthly financial status reports and  
29 personal services usage reports of the department of  
30 administrative services. The monthly financial statements must  
31 include a comparison of the dollars and percentage spent of  
32 budgeted versus actual revenues and expenditures on a cumulative  
33 basis for full-time equivalent positions and dollars.

34 4. The judicial branch shall focus efforts upon the  
35 collection of delinquent fines, penalties, court costs, fees,

1 surcharges, or similar amounts.

2 5. It is the intent of the general assembly that the offices  
3 of the clerks of the district court operate in all 99 counties  
4 and be accessible to the public as much as is reasonably possible  
5 in order to address the relative needs of the citizens of each  
6 county. An office of the clerk of the district court shall be  
7 open regular courthouse hours.

8 6. In addition to the requirements for transfers under  
9 section 8.39, the judicial branch shall not change the  
10 appropriations from the amounts appropriated to the judicial  
11 branch in this Act unless notice of the revisions is given to the  
12 legislative services agency prior to the effective date. The  
13 notice must include information on the judicial branch's  
14 rationale for making the changes and details concerning the  
15 workload and performance measures upon which the changes are  
16 based.

17 7. The judicial branch shall submit a semiannual update to  
18 the legislative services agency and department of management  
19 specifying the amounts of fines, surcharges, and court costs  
20 collected using the Iowa court information system since the last  
21 report. The judicial branch shall continue to facilitate the  
22 sharing of vital sentencing and other information with other  
23 state departments and governmental agencies involved in the  
24 criminal justice system through the Iowa court information  
25 system.

26 8. The judicial branch shall provide a report to the general  
27 assembly and department of management by January 1, 2027,  
28 concerning the amounts received and expended from the court  
29 technology and modernization fund created in section 602.8108,  
30 subsection 7, during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and  
31 ending June 30, 2026, and the plans for expenditures from the  
32 fund during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending  
33 June 30, 2027.

34 Sec. 2. CIVIL TRIALS — LOCATION. Notwithstanding any  
35 provision to the contrary, for the fiscal year beginning July 1,

1 2026, and ending June 30, 2027, if all parties in a case agree,  
2 a civil trial including a jury trial may take place in a county  
3 contiguous to the county with proper jurisdiction, even if the  
4 contiguous county is located in an adjacent judicial district or  
5 judicial election district. If the trial is moved pursuant to  
6 this section, court personnel shall treat the case as if a change  
7 of venue occurred.

8 Sec. 3. TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT. Notwithstanding section  
9 602.1509, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending  
10 June 30, 2027, a judicial officer may waive travel reimbursement  
11 for any travel outside the judicial officer's county of residence  
12 to conduct official judicial business.

13 Sec. 4. JUDICIAL OFFICER — UNPAID LEAVE. Notwithstanding  
14 the annual salary rates for judicial officers established by  
15 2025 Iowa Acts, chapter 158, section 6, for the fiscal year  
16 beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027, the supreme  
17 court may by order place all judicial officers on unpaid leave  
18 status on any day employees of the judicial branch are placed  
19 on temporary layoff status. The biweekly pay of the judicial  
20 officers shall be reduced accordingly for the pay period in  
21 which the unpaid leave date occurred in the same manner as for  
22 noncontract employees of the judicial branch. Through the course  
23 of the fiscal year, the judicial branch may use an amount equal  
24 to the aggregate amount of salary reductions due to the judicial  
25 officer unpaid leave days for any purpose other than for judicial  
26 salaries.

27 Sec. 5. IOWA COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK. It is the intent of  
28 the general assembly that the judicial branch utilize the Iowa  
29 communications network or other secure electronic communications  
30 in lieu of traveling for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026,  
31 and ending June 30, 2027.

32 EXPLANATION

33 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with  
34 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

35 This bill relates to and makes appropriations to the judicial

1 branch.

2 The bill appropriates moneys from the general fund of the  
3 state for FY 2026-2027 to the judicial branch for salaries,  
4 receipt and disbursement of child support payments, reimbursement  
5 of the auditor of state, maintenance, equipment, miscellaneous  
6 purposes, deposit in the revolving fund created pursuant  
7 to Code section 602.1302(3) for certain purposes, payment  
8 of court-ordered juvenile services, and juvenile delinquent  
9 graduated sanctions services.

10 The bill provides that a civil trial including a jury trial  
11 may take place in a county contiguous to the county with proper  
12 jurisdiction if all the parties in a case agree. If a trial  
13 is moved to another county that is located in another judicial  
14 district or judicial election district, the judicial officers  
15 serving the judicial district or judicial election district  
16 receiving the case shall preside over the case.

17 The bill permits a judicial officer to waive travel  
18 reimbursement for any travel outside the judicial officer's  
19 county of residence to conduct official business.

20 The bill allows a judicial officer to be placed on unpaid  
21 leave on any day a court employee is required to furlough.  
22 The bill provides that if a judicial officer is placed on  
23 unpaid leave, the salary of the judicial officer shall be  
24 reduced accordingly for the pay period in which the unpaid leave  
25 occurred. The bill provides that the judicial branch may use  
26 an amount equal to the aggregate amount of the salary reductions  
27 due to judicial officer unpaid leave for any purpose other than  
28 judicial salaries.

29 The bill states legislative intent that the judicial  
30 branch utilize the Iowa communications network or other secure  
31 electronic communications in lieu of traveling.