

Senate File 2486 - Introduced

SENATE FILE 2486
BY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(SUCCESSOR TO SSB 3185)

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 \$202,691,378

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 Sec. 6. Section 602.1202, Code 2026, is amended to read as
33 follows:

34 **602.1202 Judicial council.**

35 1. A judicial council is established, consisting of the chief

1 judges of the judicial districts, the chief judge of the court
2 of appeals, and the chief justice who shall be the chairperson.
3 The council shall convene not less than twice each year at times
4 and places as ordered by the chief justice. The council shall
5 advise the supreme court with respect to the supervision and
6 administration of the judicial branch.

7 2. A meeting of the judicial council in which the judicial
8 retirement system is discussed shall not be held as a closed
9 session under section 21.5.

10 Sec. 7. Section 602.9102, Code 2026, is amended to read as
11 follows:

12 **602.9102 Administered by court administrator.**

13 1. The court administrator shall be vested with authority is
14 authorized to administer the system and related reports and may
15 promulgate rules therefor not inconsistent with ~~the provisions of~~
16 this article.

17 2. The state court administrator shall advise the judicial
18 council on all determinations made by the state court
19 administrator concerning the judicial retirement system.

20 EXPLANATION

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

23 This bill relates to and makes appropriations to the judicial
24 branch.

25 The bill appropriates moneys from the general fund of the
26 state for FY 2026-2027 to the judicial branch for salaries,
27 receipt and disbursement of child support payments, reimbursement
28 of the auditor of state, maintenance, equipment, miscellaneous
29 purposes, deposit in the revolving fund created pursuant
30 to Code section 602.1302(3) for certain purposes, payment
31 of court-ordered juvenile services, and juvenile delinquent
32 graduated sanctions services.

33 The bill provides that a civil trial including a jury trial
34 may take place in a county contiguous to the county with proper
35 jurisdiction if all the parties in a case agree. If a trial

1 is moved to another county that is located in another judicial
2 district or judicial election district, the judicial officers
3 serving the judicial district or judicial election district
4 receiving the case shall preside over the case.

5 The bill permits a judicial officer to waive travel
6 reimbursement for any travel outside the judicial officer's
7 county of residence to conduct official business.

8 The bill allows a judicial officer to be placed on unpaid
9 leave on any day a court employee is required to furlough.
10 The bill provides that if a judicial officer is placed on
11 unpaid leave, the salary of the judicial officer shall be
12 reduced accordingly for the pay period in which the unpaid leave
13 occurred. The bill provides that the judicial branch may use
14 an amount equal to the aggregate amount of the salary reductions
15 due to judicial officer unpaid leave for any purpose other than
16 judicial salaries.

17 The bill states legislative intent that the judicial
18 branch utilize the Iowa communications network or other secure
19 electronic communications in lieu of traveling.

20 Under current law, governmental bodies, including a council
21 created by state statute, are subject to Code chapter 21
22 (official meetings open to public). Under certain circumstances,
23 a governmental body may hold a closed session (Code section
24 21.5). The bill provides that a judicial council meeting in
25 which the judicial retirement system is discussed shall not
26 be held as a closed session. The bill requires the state
27 court administrator to advise the judicial council on all
28 determinations made by the state court administrator concerning
29 the judicial retirement system.