

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:

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
5 much thereof as is necessary, to be used for the purposes
6 designated:

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

20 \$202,691,378

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

26 \$ 3,600,000

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

31 \$ 3,290,000

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 232.173.

2 (7) Notwithstanding section 8.33, moneys appropriated in
3 this lettered paragraph that remain unencumbered or unobligated
4 at the close of the fiscal year shall not revert but shall
5 remain available for expenditure for the purposes designated
6 until the close of the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2029.

7 d. For juvenile delinquent graduated sanctions services
8 pursuant to section 232.192:

9 \$ 12,253,000

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

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

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

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

1 dollars.

2 4. The judicial branch shall focus efforts upon the
3 collection of delinquent fines, penalties, court costs, fees,
4 surcharges, or similar amounts.

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

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

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

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

1 ending June 30, 2027.

2 Sec. 2. CIVIL TRIALS — LOCATION. Notwithstanding any
3 provision to the contrary, for the fiscal year beginning July
4 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027, if all parties in a case
5 agree, a civil trial including a jury trial may take place in a
6 county contiguous to the county with proper jurisdiction, even
7 if the contiguous county is located in an adjacent judicial
8 district or judicial election district. If the trial is moved
9 pursuant to this section, court personnel shall treat the case
10 as if a change of venue occurred.

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

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

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

35 Sec. 6. Section 602.1202, Code 2026, is amended to read as

1 follows:

2 **602.1202 Judicial council.**

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

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

13 Sec. 7. Section 602.9102, Code 2026, is amended to read as
14 follows:

15 **602.9102 Administered by court administrator.**

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

20 2. The state court administrator shall advise the
21 judicial council on all determinations made by the state court
22 administrator concerning the judicial retirement system.

23 EXPLANATION

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

26 This bill relates to and makes appropriations to the
27 judicial branch.

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

1 The bill provides that a civil trial including a jury trial
2 may take place in a county contiguous to the county with proper
3 jurisdiction if all the parties in a case agree. If a trial
4 is moved to another county that is located in another judicial
5 district or judicial election district, the judicial officers
6 serving the judicial district or judicial election district
7 receiving the case shall preside over the case.

8 The bill permits a judicial officer to waive travel
9 reimbursement for any travel outside the judicial officer's
10 county of residence to conduct official business.

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

20 The bill states legislative intent that the judicial
21 branch utilize the Iowa communications network or other secure
22 electronic communications in lieu of traveling.

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