



Legislative Council Staff

Research Note

Version: Final

Date: 6/22/2016

Bill Number

Senate Bill 16-153

Sponsors

Senator Crowder
Representative Wilson

Short Title

County Court Judge Residence
Preferences

Research Analyst

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Status

This research note reflects the final version of the bill, which was signed by the Governor on May 27, 2016, and became effective on August 10, 2016.

Summary

This bill encourages a judicial district nominating commission, when making recommendations for a vacant county judgeship, to give preference to attorneys who are licensed to practice in Colorado and reside within the county in which the vacancy occurs.

Background

The Colorado Constitution provides that each county court shall have one or more judges. Section 13-6-202, C.R.S., sets the number of judges in each county. Both the Colorado Constitution and Colorado law require judges to be qualified electors of their counties while they are serving as judges, but there is no requirement that applicants for judgeships be electors. In larger counties (classified in Section 13-6-201, C.R.S., as class A and B counties), county judges must be admitted to practice law in Colorado. In smaller counties, classes C and D, county judges are required to have graduated high school or have successfully completed a high school equivalency exam. County judges are appointed by the Governor, who makes the appointment from a list of candidates prepared by a judicial district nominating commission. County judges serve four year terms, and are subject to retention elections. Certain county judge requirements do not apply to judges for the city and county of Denver.

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Senate Action

Senate Judiciary Committee (March 28, 2016). The committee received no testimony on the bill, and referred the bill, unamended, to the Senate Committee of the Whole, with a recommendation that it be placed on the consent calendar.

Senate second reading (March 30, 2016). The Senate Committee of the Whole passed the bill on second reading.

Senate third reading (March 31, 2016). The Senate adopted the bill on third reading.

House Action

House Judiciary Committee (April 14, 2016). At the hearing, a representative of the Judicial Branch testified on the bill from a neutral perspective. The committee referred the bill, unamended, to the House Committee of the Whole.

House second reading (April 18, 2016). The House Committee of the Whole passed the bill, unamended, on second reading.

House third reading (April 19, 2016). The House adopted the bill, unamended, on third reading.

Relevant Research

Legislative Council Staff, *Colorado Judges*, Issue Brief, November 2016:
<http://tinyurl.com/hzatj46> (pdf.)