

1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act allowing a study by the National Center for State Courts of a senior judge system for the circuit*
3 *and district courts of the Commonwealth. Report.*

4 [H 1435]

5 Approved

6 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

7 **1. § 1.** *The Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia may contract with an*
8 *independent entity such as the National Center for State Courts to study the feasibility and effect of*
9 *implementing a senior judge system for the circuit and district courts of the Commonwealth. Under such*
10 *a system, a specified number of retired circuit and district judges would become senior judges who sit*
11 *for a specified amount of time each year in return for a portion of the current compensation of active*
12 *judges, eliminating the need for substitute judges and special justices and for the reliance on recalled*
13 *retired judges.*

14 *Technical assistance for the study shall be provided by the Office of the Executive Secretary of the*
15 *Supreme Court of Virginia. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance for this study,*
16 *upon request.*

17 *The Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia shall submit an executive*
18 *summary of its progress towards meeting the objectives of this section on the feasibility of implementing*
19 *a senior judge system to the General Assembly by November 15, 2014. If a study is conducted, the*
20 *report shall include (i) recommendations for the number of senior judges required and the minimum*
21 *amount of time each senior judge would be required to sit in order to eliminate the need for substitute*
22 *judges and special justices and to eliminate the reliance on recalled retired judges; (ii) the fiscal impact*
23 *of a senior judge system in order to weigh the costs and benefits of such a system; (iii)*
24 *recommendations for how a senior judge system should be structured to allow for more equitable and*
25 *efficient allocation of judicial resources within and among the judicial circuits and districts; (iv) the*
26 *improvements to the administration of justice resulting from such a system, including but not limited to*
27 *more efficient and consistent adjudication in all courts through the use of a constant group of judges, in*
28 *contrast to the more random, unsystematic use of substitute judges, special justices, and recalled retired*
29 *judges; (v) recommendations for the method used to select, designate, and compensate senior judges,*
30 *including the appropriate duration of such service; and (vi) recommendations for the most effective*
31 *procedure to transition to a senior judge system.*

32 *The executive summary and report shall be submitted for publication as a report document as*
33 *provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of*
34 *legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.*

ENROLLED

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