

Senate Fiscal Agency  
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**SFA****BILL ANALYSIS**

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Senate Bill 824 (Substitute S-1 as passed by the Senate)  
Sponsor: Senator Philip E. Hoffman  
Committee: Judiciary

Date Completed: 2-25-98

### **RATIONALE**

The Jackson County Probate Court currently is authorized to have two judges. The two judges' caseloads evidently are below the statewide average for probate judges. One of Jackson County's probate judges will be retiring effective April 1, 1998, and the Jackson County board of commissioners has passed a resolution supporting legislation to eliminate that judicial position. Even with the one remaining probate court judge, the judicial caseload for Jackson County reportedly will continue to be below the statewide average. Some people believe that Jackson County's statutory authorization to have two probate court judges should be deleted.

to have two judges of probate.

Legislative Analyst: P. Affholter

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would result in savings to the State and the County of Jackson. The State currently pays \$119,582 in salary and fringe benefits for each full-time probate judge. The county also would realize savings from reduced support staff costs and amounts that are allocated for health insurance for judges at the local level.

Fiscal Analyst: B. Bowerman

### **CONTENT**

The bill would amend the Revised Judicature Act to remove Jackson County from the list of counties currently authorized to have two probate judges. Upon the bill's effective date, then, Jackson County would be authorized to have only one probate judge.

MCL 600.803

### **ARGUMENTS**

*(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)*

#### **Supporting Argument**

Although Jackson County is authorized to have two probate judges, the county's probate court caseload apparently is below the statewide average. The county's board of commissioners reportedly supports eliminating one of the judicial positions, effective upon the retirement of one judge who is scheduled to leave office on April 1, 1998. The RJA should be amended to remove Jackson County from the list of counties authorized

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.