

House Bill 1578 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representatives Rhodes of the 120<sup>th</sup>, Williams of the 145<sup>th</sup>, Holmes of the 129<sup>th</sup>, Mathis of the 144<sup>th</sup>, Belton of the 112<sup>th</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To provide for the designation of the chief judge of the Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit; to provide  
2 for terms of office; to provide for filling vacancies in such office; to provide for related  
3 matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

5 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

6 (a) There shall be one superior court judge designated as the chief judge of the Ocmulgee  
7 Judicial Circuit. That judge shall handle all duties assigned by law to the chief judge of the  
8 circuit, as well as any duties agreed upon by the other judges of the circuit. The chief judge  
9 shall serve a four-year term and shall be selected on a rotating basis according to seniority  
10 on the court as determined pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

11 (b) Seniority for purposes of designating a chief judge pursuant to subsection (a) of this  
12 section shall be determined from the day that a judge is sworn into office. Should two or  
13 more judges have been sworn in on the same day, the judge who first became a member of  
14 the State Bar of Georgia shall be the most senior.

15 (c) The term of the chief judge serving on the effective date of this Act shall end on  
16 December 31, 2024, after which the most senior judge who was not serving as chief judge  
17 on December 31, 2024 shall serve as chief judge.

18 (d) Thereafter, the most senior judge who has not previously served as chief judge shall be  
19 the chief judge for the next term, unless that person chooses not to serve, in which case the  
20 judge with the next most seniority shall serve as chief judge.

21 (e) In the event that a judge, upon becoming eligible to serve as chief judge, chooses not to  
22 serve as chief judge, that judge shall decline the opportunity in writing provided to the  
23 current chief judge at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the next term of a chief judge.

24 (f) In the event that a judge serving as chief judge becomes unwilling or unable to complete  
25 his or her term, the next most senior judge shall immediately begin serving as chief judge for  
26 the remainder of that calendar year and the next four years beginning January 1 of the  
27 following year, and the next new term shall begin upon completion of that four-year term.

28 (g) Once all judges of the circuit have served or had the opportunity to serve as chief judge,  
29 the rotation shall begin again with the most senior judge serving as chief judge.

30 **SECTION 2.**

31 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.