



ARIZONA STATE SENATE
Fifty-Second Legislature, Second Regular Session

REVISED
FACT SHEET FOR H.B. 2537

supreme court justices; number

Purpose

Increases the number of Justices on the Arizona Supreme Court from five to seven.

Background

The Arizona Supreme Court has administrative supervision over all state courts (A.Z. Const. art. 6 § 3). The Supreme Court's primary judicial duties are to review appeals and provide rules of procedure for all Arizona courts (A.Z. Const. art. 6 § 5). The Supreme Court 1) may choose to review a court of appeals decision when a party files a petition for review; 2) hears the appeal when the superior court imposes a death sentence; 3) regulates activities of the State Bar of Arizona and oversees admission of new attorneys to the practice of law; 4) reviews charges of misconduct against attorneys and has the authority to suspend or disbar them; and 5) serves as the final decision-making body when disciplinary recommendations are filed against Arizona judges by the Commission on Judicial Conduct.

The Arizona Supreme Court originally consisted of three Justices from its inception in 1912 until 1949, when it was increased to five Justices (Laws 1949, Chapter 135). The Arizona Constitution now requires the Arizona Supreme Court to consist of a minimum of five Justices; however, the Legislature may increase that number (A.Z. Const. art. 6 § 2). Justices hold office for a regular term of six years (A.Z. Const. art. 6 § 4). A Supreme Court Justice must be admitted to the practice of law in Arizona and be a resident for the 10 years immediately before taking office, cannot practice law or hold any other political office or public employment, cannot campaign except for himself or herself and must retire at the age of 70.

According to the Arizona Supreme Court, the total ongoing cost for two chambers would be \$900,000 with an additional \$84,400 in one-time cost. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 12-119.05, if a Justice resides outside of Maricopa County, the person's permanent physical address is the person's duty post, which would add an additional \$25,000 per year, per Justice, in travel. Additionally, Justices earn \$155,000 annually. The FY 2017 Baseline includes approximately \$13 million and 100.7 FTE positions for the Arizona Supreme Court's operating budget.

Provisions

1. Increases, from five to seven, the number of Justices on the Arizona Supreme Court.

2. Makes technical changes.
3. Becomes effective on the general effective date.

Revision

- Adds fiscal information to the *Background* section.

House Action

JUD	2/10/16	DP	4-1-0-1
3 rd Read	2/24/16		33-26-1

Prepared by Senate Research

March 15, 2016

AW/rf