

**DRAFT ONLY  
NOT APPROVED FOR  
INTRODUCTION**

HOUSE BILL NO.

Unified court system.

Sponsored by: Joint Judiciary Interim Committee

A BILL

for

1 AN ACT relating to courts; establishing a unified court  
2 system for Wyoming courts; specifying the administrative  
3 role of the Wyoming supreme court; specifying that the  
4 chief justice of the Wyoming supreme court is the  
5 administrative head of all Wyoming courts; making  
6 conforming amendments; authorizing rulemaking; requiring a  
7 report; and providing for effective dates.

8

9 *Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:*

10

11 **Section 1.** W.S. 5-1-112 is created to read:

12

13 **5-1-112. Unified court system.**

1

2 The courts of Wyoming shall constitute a unified judicial  
3 system for operation and administration. The supreme court  
4 shall make and promulgate rules governing the  
5 administration of all courts, including rules governing  
6 practice and procedure in civil and criminal cases in all  
7 courts, pursuant to W.S. 5-2-113 through 5-2-118. The chief  
8 justice of the supreme court shall be the administrative  
9 head of all courts.

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11 \*\*\*\*\*  
12 \*\*\*\*\*

13 STAFF COMMENT

14

15 The Committee may wish to consider whether an amendment to  
16 Article 5 of the Constitution would be a more appropriate  
17 place to establish a unified court system. One possible  
18 amendment is included below:

19

20 Article 5, Section 1 How judicial power vested;  
21 unified court.

22

23 The judicial power of the state shall be vested in the  
24 senate, sitting as a court of impeachment, in a supreme  
25 court, district courts, and such subordinate courts as the  
26 legislature may, by general law, establish and ordain from  
27 time to time. The courts of Wyoming shall constitute a  
28 unified judicial system for operation and administration.  
29 The supreme court shall make and promulgate rules governing  
30 the administration of all courts, including rules governing  
31 practice and procedure in civil and criminal cases in all  
32 courts. The chief justice of the supreme court shall be the  
33 administrative head of all courts.

34

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1 Alternatively, the Committee may wish to consider whether  
2 amending (or repealing) the provisions dealing with  
3 administrative and fiscal control and budget submittal  
4 would be sufficient to accomplish the Committee's  
5 objectives in considering this bill draft.

6  
7 \*\*\*\*\*  
8 \*\*\*\*\*  
9

10 Section 2. W.S. 5-3-102(b) and 5-3-113 are amended to  
11 read:

12  
13 5-3-102. Number of judges; distribution among  
14 districts; concurrent jurisdiction.

15  
16 (b) ~~The district courts shall be free of~~  
17 ~~administrative and fiscal control by the supreme court.~~

18 There shall be a judicial conference comprised of all  
19 district judges which shall meet no less than twice per  
20 year. The conference shall coordinate improvement efforts  
21 with the judicial administrative conference and shall  
22 report to the joint judiciary interim committee of such  
23 efforts annually on or before November 1. ~~The conference~~  
24 ~~shall adopt rules governing the organization and procedures~~  
25 ~~of the conference which shall be published in the court~~  
26 ~~rules volume of the Wyoming statutes. The conference shall~~  
27 ~~adopt rules, which shall be binding on all of the district~~

1 ~~judges, governing the administration of the district courts~~  
2 ~~to include, without limitation, personnel, fiscal and~~  
3 ~~budgetary policy except technology which shall be done to~~  
4 ~~provide an integrated statewide system in accordance with~~  
5 ~~the efforts of the judicial technology task force. The~~  
6 ~~judicial conference shall also adopt suitable rules to~~  
7 ~~provide for division of the work between the judges in~~  
8 ~~multi judge districts.~~ The judicial conference shall keep  
9 minutes of all meetings which, ~~along with all rules adopted~~  
10 ~~by the conference,~~ shall be filed with the supreme court  
11 and be made available to the public.

12

13 **5-3-113. District courts budget submittal.**

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15 ~~All~~ The supreme court shall submit one (1) budget for the  
16 operation of all district courts, itemized by district,  
17 ~~shall submit standard and supplemental budget requests to~~  
18 the legislature not later than November 1 of the year  
19 preceding the fiscal year in which the standard or  
20 supplemental budget is to take effect. The ~~district courts~~  
21 supreme court shall ~~prepare all personal services budget~~  
22 ~~requests using the same methods and practices as the~~  
23 executive branch submit the district courts' budget in the

1 same manner as provided for the supreme court budget in  
2 W.S. 5-2-123.

3

4       **Section 3.** Nothing in this act shall be construed to  
5 affect any previous or current budget enacted or  
6 implemented before or on the effective date of this section  
7 unless the legislature directs otherwise through subsequent  
8 legislation.

9

10       **Section 4.**

11

12       (a) On and after the effective date of this section,  
13 the chief justice of the Wyoming supreme court shall  
14 consult with the judicial conference of district judges on  
15 the assumption of administrative and fiscal control of the  
16 district courts by the supreme court. The supreme court and  
17 the judicial conference shall report to the joint judiciary  
18 interim committee and the joint appropriations committee  
19 not later than November 1, 2022 on the supreme court's  
20 assumption of administrative and fiscal control over the  
21 district courts, including whether any further legislation  
22 is necessary for the creation of a unified court system in  
23 Wyoming. The supreme court may take any action necessary to

1 implement a unified court system in Wyoming, including  
2 amending or adopting any rules to govern the organization  
3 and procedures of the district courts. Nothing in this  
4 subsection shall be construed to prohibit the supreme court  
5 from adopting the current rules of the judicial conference  
6 governing the organization and procedures of the conference  
7 and of the district courts.

8

9 (b) The supreme court may adopt any rules necessary to  
10 implement the provisions of this act.

11

12 **Section 5.**

13

14 (a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this  
15 section, this act is effective July 1, 2023.

16

17 (b) Sections 4 and 5 of this act are effective  
18 immediately upon completion of all acts necessary for a  
19 bill to become law as provided by Article 4, Section 8 of  
20 the Wyoming Constitution.

21

22

(END)