

2. *Distribution of Judgeships.* The Seventh Judicial District is the largest geographic judicial district in New Mexico (see attached map). By having residency requirements -- two judgeships in Socorro and one in Torrance counties -- would ensure that the judges in this district are more geographically distributed among the population centers on some equitable basis. Historically, they have been concentrated in a single area (Socorro county). However, it is unclear whether caseload would be equitably distributed under these requirements.

2. *Elections.* If judges continue to be appointed and elected district-wide, there will be a larger number of attorneys to vote and choose from compared to the selection of attorneys if the requirements are limited to one county.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

A decrease in overnight travel expenses may occur, along with per diem and mileage, if judgeships are distributed geographically throughout the district. No dollar decrease is being indicated in the table however, since the amount of saving may be less than one thousand dollars.

In changing residency requirements for judges in the Seventh Judicial District, the question arises whether the resources needed for a judge in Torrance county is available: accessible courthouse, office space, law books, staff, equipment, etc. (These resources are already available in Socorro.) If new resources are needed for Torrance county, then there will be a significant impact to the general fund. Additional information is needed on this issue before a further assessment can be made.

RELATIONSHIP

SB442 relates to SB147 regarding residency requirements for the 7th Judicial District.

QUESTIONS

1. By redistributing the judgeships of the Seventh Judicial District, how will it affect court operations? Will it affect court efficiency and scheduling? Caseload management? Expediency of hearings?

CMH/prr