



**House Judiciary Reported Substitute for SB178**

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A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

Relating to courts; to create the Speedy Trial Act; to authorize the Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court to appoint visiting judges in certain circumstances; to provide a process for requesting a visiting judge appointment; to provide for the powers of a visiting judge; to provide for the compensation and support of a visiting judge; and to create the Speedy Trial Fund and provide for the use of monies in the fund.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the Speedy Trial Act.

Section 2. (a) The Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, upon request from the Attorney General or a district attorney, may appoint a sitting or retired circuit judge to temporarily serve in a given circuit as a visiting judge for a specific case or cases arising from one or more violent crimes, as defined in Section 12-25-32, Code of Alabama 1975.

(b) A request submitted pursuant to this section shall include both of the following:

(1) The specific criminal case assigned to the Attorney



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29 General or district attorney's office that he or she believes  
30 needs a visiting judge.

31 (2) The reasons the Attorney General or district  
32 attorney believes that the case needs a visiting judge.

33 (c) (1) The Chief Justice shall make a determination on  
34 a qualifying request made pursuant to this section within 30  
35 days after receipt of the request.

36 (2) If the Chief Justice determines that approving the  
37 request would serve the public interest, he or she shall  
38 appoint a visiting judge. The Chief Justice may take into  
39 account the availability of funds when making a determination.

40 (3) A visiting judge shall serve until the final  
41 adjudication of the matter for which he or she was appointed.

42 (d) A visiting judge appointment shall confer on the  
43 visiting judge all powers, authority, and jurisdiction of the  
44 respective judgeship to which he or she has been appointed.

45 (e) (1) A visiting judge shall be paid all actual and  
46 necessary expenses as approved by the Chief Justice.

47 (2) A retired judge appointed as a visiting judge may  
48 be entitled to compensation pursuant to Sections 12-18-10 or  
49 12-18-61, Code of Alabama 1975.

50 (f) A county shall provide adequate courtroom space for  
51 hearings and trials set by a visiting judge.

52 (g) (1) A sitting judge appointed as a visiting judge  
53 may assign his or her official court reporter for hearings and  
54 trials set by the judge in the host circuit.

55 (2) If a special roving reporter is available in the  
56 host circuit, a visiting judge may request to have the special



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57 roving reporter assigned to his or her hearings and trials in  
58 the host circuit.

59 (3) If the options provided in subdivisions (1) and (2)  
60 are not available, a visiting judge may request a special  
61 court reporter for hearings and trials set by a visiting  
62 judge.

63 (4) If the options provided in subdivisions (1) through  
64 (3) are not available, the Attorney General or a district  
65 attorney may contract with a court reporter for hearings and  
66 trials set by a visiting judge.

67 (h) (1) A visiting judge shall make every effort to  
68 conduct jury trials during the host circuit's scheduled jury  
69 weeks.

70 (2) On motion from the Attorney General or district  
71 attorney, a visiting judge may empanel an additional jury if  
72 required to expedite the administration of justice.

73 (3) The prohibition against empaneling a special jury  
74 in a capital murder case in Section 12-16-100, Code of Alabama  
75 1975, is superseded if the special jury is empaneled in  
76 accordance with this subsection.

77 (i) The Speedy Trial Fund is created in the State  
78 Treasury. Monies in the fund, at the discretion of the Chief  
79 Justice, may be used exclusively for expenses authorized by  
80 this section and shall be budgeted and allotted in accordance  
81 with Sections 41-4-80 through 41-4-96 and Sections 41-19-1  
82 through 41-19-12, Code of Alabama 1975.

83 **Section 3. The presiding circuit judge of each circuit,**  
84 **in his or her discretion and the best interests of justice,**



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85 may reassign a case to any other circuit or district judge in  
86 the circuit without regard to division or specialty.

87 Section 4. This act shall become effective on June 1,  
88 2025.