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Comptroller's Office Releases Updated Judicial Weighted Caseload Study

The Tennessee Comptroller's Office of Research and Education Accountability (OREA) has released an updated Judicial Weighted Caseload Study, providing lawmakers and the public with a data-driven look at whether judicial resources across the state align with current workload demands.

State law requires the Comptroller's Office to publish a weighted caseload study comparing the number of judges available in each judicial district with the number needed to handle the volume and complexity of cases. This is the first judicial weighted caseload study published since 2020 and reflects updated case weights developed by the National Center for State Courts after court operations returned to more typical levels following the COVID-19 pandemic.



Unlike a simple count of cases, a weighted caseload study accounts for the fact that different types of cases require different amounts of time. More complex cases, such as first-degree murder trials, are weighted more heavily than cases that typically require less judicial time. These weights are applied to actual case filings to estimate how many judges are needed in each judicial district.

Using a three-year average of case filings from fiscal years 2023 through 2025, OREA found that 25 of Tennessee's 32 judicial districts have a deficit of judicial resources, meaning they have fewer judges than estimated to be needed based on workload. Statewide, the study found a deficit of 22.29 full-time equivalent judges when accounting for trial judges and state-funded child support magistrates.

The study provides context for the work of the Judicial Redistricting Task Force, which is charged with developing a statewide judicial redistricting plan by January 2027.

In a related update, OREA reported that it will not publish weighted caseload studies for Tennessee district attorneys general and district public defenders in 2026. Incomplete case data from General Sessions courts in several counties and outdated case weights, which were last updated more than 20 years ago, currently prevent the production of reliable studies.

The full Judicial Weighted Caseload Study, along with supporting materials, is available on the Comptroller's website at tncot.cc/orea

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