

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3

102ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE RIGGS.

1753H.011

DANA RADEMAN MILLER, Chief Clerk

1 **WHEREAS**, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri is a
2 trial level federal district court with jurisdiction over fifty counties in the eastern half of
3 Missouri and is organized into three divisions, with courts located in Cape Girardeau,
4 Hannibal, and St. Louis; and

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6 **WHEREAS**, the court was formed in 1857 when the District of Missouri was divided
7 into East and West; and

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9 **WHEREAS**, there are currently eight active judges, four senior status judges, and
10 eight magistrate judges attached to the Eastern District; and

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12 **WHEREAS**, of the twenty judges and magistrates in the Eastern District of Missouri
13 eligible to hear cases, seventeen are housed in St. Louis, three are housed in Cape Girardeau,
14 and none are housed in Hannibal; and

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16 **WHEREAS**, the last part-time federal magistrate judge who routinely heard cases in
17 the Hannibal Federal Building retired in 1982, leaving the Northern Division of Eastern
18 District Counties (Adair, Audrain, Chariton, Clark, Knox, Lewis, Linn, Macon, Marion,
19 Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, Ralls, Randolph, Schuyler, Scotland, and Shelby) unrepresented;
20 and

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22 **WHEREAS**, during the period of time from 1982 to present, the Eastern and
23 Southeastern Divisions of the Eastern District saw the addition of judges, magistrates, and
24 new federal courthouses, with no new judges, no new magistrates, and no new courthouse
25 funds expended in the Northern Division; and

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27 **WHEREAS**, the Eastern District of Missouri routinely pays counties within the
28 Northern Division in excess of \$700,000 per year to house and transport federal offenders
29 from its jails in the Northern Division to the federal courthouse in St. Louis rather than
30 allowing defendants access to justice in a more economical and local fashion; and

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32 **WHEREAS**, litigants within the federal court system from the Northern Division are
33 denied access to justice by being compelled to travel three to four hours one-way to the
34 federal courthouse in St. Louis for matters that could easily be heard and disposed of at the
35 Hannibal Federal Building, with the proper and consistent allocation of resources and
36 assignment of staff; and

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38 **WHEREAS**, of the twenty judges and magistrates in the Eastern District eligible to
39 hear cases, only one actually lives in the Northern Division; and

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41 **WHEREAS**, when courthouses are properly staffed, the courthouses are able to hear
42 and dispose of matters in a timely fashion and provide Missourians with faith in the
43 impartiality and availability of their court system:

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45 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the members of the House of
46 Representatives of the One Hundred Second General Assembly, First Regular Session, the
47 Senate concurring therein, hereby call on the Missouri members of the Missouri
48 Congressional delegation to support the creation of a federal district judge position based
49 in the Hannibal Federal Building, urge the creation of a new magistrate position to be based in
50 the Hannibal Federal Building, or urge the swift confirmation of a judicial nominee from the
51 Northern Division; and

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53 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the members of the Missouri General Assembly
54 hereby call on all members of the Missouri Congressional delegation to lend their influence to
55 the cause of access to justice for all Missourians within the federal court system by renewing
56 their commitment to keeping the Hannibal Federal Building operational with the proper and
57 consistent allocation of resources and assignment of staff; and

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59 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Chief Clerk of the Missouri House of
60 Representatives be instructed to prepare a properly inscribed copy of this resolution for each
61 member of the Missouri Congressional delegation.

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