

**21.580 Senior Status Program for Special Judges.** (Effective until July 1, 2007. See 5/23/2007 LRC note).

(1) As a pilot project to determine the effectiveness of using senior retired judges to combat backlog and delay in Kentucky courts, there is hereby created a "Senior Status Program for Special Judges." The program shall be implemented as follows:

(a) KRS 21.400(1) and any other provision in KRS Chapter 21 to the contrary notwithstanding, a member who retires at a time when combining his total years of judicial service credit and his age equals or exceeds the number seventy-five (75), may elect, within ninety (90) days following retirement, to participate in the "Senior Status Program for Special Judges," if he complies with the provisions of this subsection. In that event, the member shall be entitled to a service retirement allowance, commencing at the member's normal retirement age, payable monthly during his lifetime in an amount equal to five percent (5%) of his final compensation multiplied by the number of years of his judicial service, not to exceed twenty (20) years of judicial service at the five percent (5%) factor, not to exceed one hundred percent (100%) of final compensation. "Final compensation", notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, for all members retiring under any provision of KRS 21.345 to 21.570 or this section, or similar statutes governing the same positions, as defined in KRS 21.400 shall be based on a period of thirty-six (36) months. Any nonjudicial time shall be counted as is otherwise provided in KRS Chapter 21, but in no event shall service retirement allowance exceed one hundred percent (100%) of final compensation.

1. In the event the retiring judge elects to retire as a "Senior Status Special Judge" under this subsection, he shall commit to serve, upon appointment by the Chief Justice of the Commonwealth, as special judge for one hundred twenty (120) work days per year for a term of five (5) years without compensation other than the retirement benefits under this subsection. The Senior Status Special Judge may agree to work more than one hundred twenty (120) days in any year within the five (5) years of service; however, the Senior Status Special Judge shall be compensated as otherwise provided by law, in addition to his retirement benefits, for any days served in excess of one hundred twenty (120) in that year. If the Senior Status Special Judge has not served a total of six hundred (600) days within the five (5) year period outlined in this subsection, the Chief Justice shall require the Senior Status Special Judge to serve at no additional compensation to the Senior Status Special Judge, until the six hundred (600) day period is served by the Senior Status Special Judge. The Senior Status Special Judge and the Chief Justice may agree in writing to serve less than the one hundred twenty (120) days in any one (1) or more of the five (5) years; however, any of the days not served in a given year shall be served at the end of the five (5) year period set forth in this subsection.

2. Should any member electing to retire under the Senior Status Program

for Special Judges fail, when ordered by the Chief Justice to serve the requisite number of days not to exceed one hundred twenty (120) days a year for the five (5) year period outlined in this subsection, unless otherwise agreed in writing, he shall no longer be eligible for benefits computed under this subsection and shall return to the benefits otherwise provided under this chapter.

3. Subject to Section 110(5)(b) of the Kentucky Constitution, the Chief Justice shall give due regard, when practical, to the desirability of appointing Senior Status Special Judges to serve within their judicial region as defined by the regional administration charter.
  - (b) The inviolable contract provisions of Kentucky law, KRS 21.480, shall apply during the period of time that KRS 21.580 is effective; however, no other provisions of 2000 Ky. Acts ch. 305 shall be considered subject to an inviolable contract of the Commonwealth.
  - (c) Nothing contained in this section shall be construed to invalidate provisions in the current law which require a penalty for retiring before the normal retirement age.
- (2) The Senior Status Program for Special Judges created by this section shall be open to any member who is a judge in office on the June 24, 2003, and who subsequently retires as a Senior Status Special Judge on or before January 31, 2009.

**Effective:** June 24, 2003

**History:** Amended 2003 Ky. Acts ch. 128, sec. 6, effective June 24, 2003. -- Amended 2002 Ky. Acts ch. 258, sec. 1, effective July 15, 2002. -- Repealed 2000 Ky. Acts ch. 305, sec. 4, effective July 1, 2007 -- Created 2000 Ky. Acts ch. 305, sec. 1, effective July 14, 2000.

**Legislative Research Commission Note (5/23/2007).** On May 23, 2007, the Franklin Circuit Court held that the enrollment and expiration dates for the Senior Status Program for Special Judges established by this statute were extended to January 31, 2009. George v. Board of Trustees of Judicial Form Retirement System, 07-CI-00587.

**Legislative Research Commission Note (6/24/2003).** 2000 Ky. Acts ch. 305, sec. 1, created KRS 21.580, which established the Senior Status Program for Special Judges. Section 4 of the same Act repealed KRS 21.580 effective July 1, 2007. Thereafter, 2002 Ky. Acts ch. 258, sec. 1, amended KRS 21.580 to change the retirement date from June 30, 2007, to January 31, 2009, and 2003 Ky. Acts ch. 128, sec. 6, amended KRS 21.580 to extend eligibility for the program to judges in office on June 24, 2003. Neither of these Acts specifically addresses the repeal set out in the 2000 Act.