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CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT DIGEST

SB 217

2026 Regular Session

Morris

Keyword and summary of the bill as proposed by the Conference Committee

COURTS. Provides for the administration of courts in Orleans Parish and the number of court judges. (gov sig)

Report adopts House amendments to:

1. Allow any judges and related divisions being abolished under proposed law to remain in effect only to the end of their current terms of office.
2. Specify that no provision of proposed law shall deprive any judge in office of the ability to serve the entire remainder of his or her current unexpired term of office.
3. Prohibit any further elections to be held for any judgeship abolished pursuant to the provisions of proposed law, including any division either abolished or repealed under proposed law.
4. Clarify the equal allotment of cases pending in the criminal district court among the divisions of the court.
5. Require the reimbursement for the compensation of criers to be subject to an agreement between the executive committee of the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund and the sheriff after Fiscal Year 2026-27.
6. Clarify that nothing in proposed law relieves a sheriff of any obligation under applicable law, including present law (R.S. 13:5539(B)).

Report rejects House amendments which would have:

1. Reduced the number of judges for the Civil District Court for the parish of Orleans.

Report amends the bill to:

1. Adds two sitting judges appointed by the supreme court to the executive committee

of the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund for Orleans Parish.

2. Abolish Divisions A, E, and J of the Criminal District Court for the parish of Orleans in accordance with proposed law, reducing the number of divisions from 12 to nine.
3. Abolish Divisions B and F of the Municipal and Traffic Court of New Orleans in accordance with proposed law, reducing the number of divisions from seven to five.
4. Provide that any judge and the related division otherwise abolished pursuant to this Act shall remain in effect only to the end of the current term of office.
5. Provide that no provision of this Act shall deprive any judge in office of the ability to serve the entire remainder of his current unexpired term of office.
6. Provide that to effectuate the provisions of this Act, no further elections shall be held for any judgeship abolished pursuant to the provisions of this Act, including for any division repealed under either Section 1 or 2 of this Act.

Digest of the bill as proposed by the Conference Committee

Present law provides that judges of each division of the civil district court shall appoint a crier for his division and provides for the duties and responsibilities of the crier and the procedures for compensation of each crier.

Proposed law retains present law and provides that for Fiscal Year 2026-27, the judicial expense fund shall reimburse the sheriff for the full amount of compensation of criers. Further requires the reimbursement for the compensation of criers to be subject to an agreement between the executive committee of the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund and the sheriff after Fiscal Year 2026-27.

Present law provides for the number of judges in Orleans Parish and for the administration of the courts. Provides for the funds and payment from the judicial expense fund.

Present law provides for 12 judges for the Criminal District Court for the parish of Orleans.

Proposed law reduces the judges from 12 to nine.

Proposed law abolishes Divisions A, E, and J for the Criminal District Court for the parish of Orleans in accordance with proposed law.

Proposed law provides that no qualifying shall be opened for any successor to a judgeship that is abolished pursuant to proposed law, and no election shall be held for any judgeship abolished pursuant to proposed law.

Proposed law provides that the judges, en banc, may appoint a hearing officer in the same manner as any district court or may appoint a commissioner to perform duties in accordance with the rules of the court as prescribed by the elected judges that are in accordance with the Louisiana Constitution and do not exceed authority otherwise provided for in the law for a hearing officer or commissioner in a district court in the state.

Present law provides that each division in the Criminal District Court in the parish of Orleans shall have a position or office of judicial administrator, deputy judicial administrator, and assistants, at least thirteen law clerks, and at least four secretaries.

Proposed law repeals the fixed number of law clerks and secretaries and provides for law clerks and secretaries for each section at amounts approved by the executive committee of the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund for the parish of Orleans.

Proposed law provides that the commissioners shall have the same authority for cases in present law, within the jurisdiction of the Orleans Criminal Court as a commissioner pursuant to present law (R.S. 13:713), including the authority to make a report and recommendation to the judges concerning claims for post-conviction relief by the incarcerated.

Proposed law provides that the salaries of commissioners may be optionally supplemented by the city of New Orleans or the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund for the parish of Orleans, as determined by its executive committee.

Proposed law repeals provisions dividing the civil district court into seven divisions and provisions regarding an additional commissioner in the criminal district court of Orleans Parish.

Proposed law abolishes Divisions B and F of the Municipal and Traffic Court of New Orleans in accordance with proposed law, reducing the number of divisions from seven to five.

Proposed law provides that any judgeship that voluntarily becomes vacant by retirement or resignation, within the Municipal and Traffic Court of New Orleans, before December 31, 2026, is abolished.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 13:1137(B), 1302, 1312(A), (B), (C), (D)(1), 1335, 1337(A) and (B), 1343(A), 1344(A) and (D), 1347(A)(3), (B), and (C), 1383, 1384, 1595, 2151(D), 2151.4(D), 2492(A)(1), (5), and (6); adds R.S. 13:1312(E) and (F), and 2492(A)(8); repeals R.S. 13:1304, and 1347(D), (F), and (G), 1595.1, and 2492(A)(7)(b))