

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 911

BY REPRESENTATIVE MCMAKIN

PARISH/ORLEANS: Provides for the complete reform and modernization of the judicial components of Orleans Parish

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 13:1, 842(A), and 1381(introductory paragraph) and to enact

3 R.S. 13:474.1, 477(41), 621.41 through 621.45, 714.1, 714.2, 751.1 through 751.5,

4 841.3, 983, 996.62, and to repeal R.S. 9:2745, R.S. 13:1031 through 1147, 1211

5 through 1212.1, 1271 through 1312, 1335 through 1347, 1371, 1372, 1377, 1381.1

6 through 1400, 1566 through 1568.3, 1587.1, 1587.2, and 1593 through 1595.3,

7 relative to the reorganization and consolidation of the civil and criminal district

8 courts and juvenile court, clerk of the civil and criminal district courts; to provide,

9 delineate, and otherwise designate the powers, authority, duties, functions,

10 compensation, fees, and related matters concerning the civil and criminal district

11 courts, clerks of the civil and criminal courts, and other judicial officers and officials

12 for the parish of Orleans; to create the Forty-First Judicial District, its subsequent

13 divisions, sections, magistrate, and commissioners; to abolish the Orleans Parish

14 Juvenile Court and transfer its jurisdiction; to extend the terms of office of the judges

15 of the juvenile court now in office; to transfer the jurisdiction of the juvenile court

16 to the Forty-First Judicial District Court; to provide for the juvenile section of the

17 Forty-First Judicial District Court; to create the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund

18 for certain courts; to provide for the consolidation of certain offices and judicial

19 expense funds; to provide for the election of a single clerk of court for the parish of

20 Orleans commencing with the next election for parochial and municipal officers in

1 Orleans Parish; to provide for continuation of retirement system coverage; to provide
2 for the reduction by attrition of judges upon retirement; to direct the Louisiana State
3 Law Institute to change statutory references necessitated by this Act and to make
4 recommendations it deems necessary to clarify or modify its provisions, including
5 the elimination of antiquated provisions; to provide for effective dates; and to
6 provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. Legislative intent and history. In the 2006 Regular Session of the
9 Legislature, the legislature overwhelmingly adopted Act 621 to merge the courts and clerks
10 of court of Orleans Parish into a single reformed structure. That Act was supported by
11 twenty-nine Senators and ninety-six members of the House of Representatives and signed
12 into law by Governor Blanco. In 2012 via Act 474 the legislature repealed those provisions
13 before they were allowed to go into effect. The legislature recognized in Act 621, and
14 affirms today that:

15 There should be effective, efficient, and economic administration of governmental
16 services at all levels. It is the intent of the legislature that the public interest is best served
17 by the elimination, to the fullest extent practicable, of the duplication of effort within local
18 government in order to expend public funds more efficiently and wisely and to meet more
19 effectively and conveniently the needs of the people who provide the revenues for its
20 operations, particularly in the wake of devastation wrought by hurricanes Katrina and Rita
21 and in the wake of the large deficits and unprecedented financial crisis the City of New
22 Orleans currently faces.

23 It is the public policy of this state to ensure that all courts, officials, and offices
24 enumerated in Article V of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 are structured in a manner
25 which is responsive to the needs of the people, operated efficiently, and consistent with the
26 funds available. The state, as well as the city of New Orleans and its citizens, now have
27 limited resources with which to support the number of judges and judicial offices it did
28 previously. The legislature finds that the structure of the judiciary in Orleans Parish is
29 fragmented and inefficient and must be fundamentally changed if the city/ Orleans Parish

1 is to flourish. The costs of operating one district court and one clerk of the district court will
2 inherently be less due to economies of scale. The legislature recognizes that the city of New
3 Orleans is of economic, historical, and cultural significance to this state and to this nation
4 and that efficiency of its judiciary and offices comprising the judiciary is fundamental and
5 that the legislature should provide the best framework for its future. The consolidation of
6 the courts and officers covered by this Act is critical to the future financial stability of the
7 city and will ultimately lessen the financial burden to the citizens of the city of New Orleans
8 and this state. The legislature recognizes that a judicial system founded 200 years ago is
9 unrealistic and not viable in the 21st century. The legislature does hereby enact these
10 provisions in accordance with the authority granted in Section 32 of Article V of the
11 Louisiana Constitution of 1974.

12 Section 2. There are three judicial districts larger than the Parish of Orleans. The
13 states most populated parish and judicial district is East Baton Rouge Parish. It also has a
14 noticeably higher caseload than the Orleans Parish courts. The 19th Judicial District has
15 fifteen judges, the East Baton Rouge Family Court has four, and the East Baton Rouge
16 Juvenile Court has two. The state's largest parish elects the equivalent of twenty-one district
17 judges. It also elects four appellate court judges. The Parish of Orleans elects ten appellate
18 court judges and thirty-one trial court judges (Civil, Criminal, and Juvenile).

19 The legislature finds that there is no reason that Orleans should have more judges
20 than larger parishes with a higher caseload, but to facilitate transition to a proper number has
21 decided to make this reduction that still leaves Orleans with twenty-two judgeships which
22 is still the most district judgeships in the State of Louisiana. Therefore, the following
23 judgeships are abolished effective January 1, 2027: Divisions E and F of the Orleans
24 Juvenile Court, Divisions A, I, and J of the Orleans Criminal District Court, and Divisions
25 C, L, M, and N of the Orleans Civil District Court are abolished effective December 31,
26 2026. The Secretary of State shall not include those offices in the 2026 fall elections nor
27 authorize qualifying for those judgeships.

28 Section 3. The clerk of the civil district court shall become the clerk of court of
29 Orleans Parish. The property, employees, and duties of the clerk of the criminal district

1 court and of the clerk of the Orleans Parish juvenile court shall be under the control of the
2 clerk of court of Orleans Parish effective December 31, 2026. The clerk of the criminal
3 district court shall be authorized to finish their current term at the same salary and maintain
4 responsibility for elections until the end of their term and may utilize employees of the clerk
5 of court for that purpose.

6 Section 4. R.S. 13:1, 842(A), and 1381(introductory paragraph) are hereby amended
7 and reenacted and R.S. 13:474.1, 477(41), 621.41 through 621.45, 714.1, 714.2, 751.1
8 through 751.5, 841.3, 983, and 996.62 through 996.64 are hereby enacted to read as follows:

9 TITLE 13. COURTS AND JUDICIAL PROCEDURE

10 CHAPTER 1. JUDICIAL OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES, IN GENERAL

11 PART I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

12 §1. Duties of the minute clerks of courts of Orleans Parish

13 The minute clerks of the court of appeals and of the civil and criminal district
14 courts of the parish of Orleans Forty-First Judicial District Court shall attend the
15 sessions of the court for which they are appointed, and shall, under the supervision
16 of the judge or judges of the courts, keep the minutes of the court, issue all notices,
17 copies of rules and orders entered on the minutes, which are required to be issued,
18 and make due entries on the dockets of the causes and of the proceedings therein, and
19 shall perform such other duties as the judges may direct.

20 * * *

21 §474.1. Judicial depository

22 A. The bank or banks so designated as fiscal agent for such funds shall
23 furnish adequate security, satisfactory to the judges, to secure the return and payment
24 of any such deposited funds.

25 B. It shall be the duty of the judges to endeavor to receive interest on all
26 monies so deposited, and if, for any reason, the fiscal agent, or agents, so designated
27 are unable or unwilling to pay interest on such deposit, the judges of the district court
28 are hereby authorized to purchase certificates of deposit, and other forms of

1 certificates of indebtedness bearing interest, or they may purchase short-term United
2 States bonds, treasury notes, or certificates.

3 C. Any and all interest received on all such monies so deposited, or from any
4 certificates of deposit, certificates of indebtedness, or United States bonds, treasury
5 notes, or certificates, shall be distributed in the following manner:

6 (1) One-half of all interest so received, as received, shall be transferred to
7 and shall form part of the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund for the Forty-First
8 Judicial District Court, in reimbursement and payment for the services rendered in
9 administering said "registry of the court" fund by the judges, clerk, and other
10 employees whose salaries are paid out of the fund.

11 (2) The ultimate recipient of any of said funds so deposited in the registry
12 of the court shall receive interest on such sum received by him, to be calculated on
13 the following basis, to wit:

14 (a) The rate of interest per annum to be paid such recipient shall be one-half
15 of the average interest rate received from the fiscal agent and/or from certificates of
16 deposit, certificates of indebtedness, United States government bonds, treasury notes,
17 or certificates, during the period that the funds being disbursed were on deposit in
18 the registry of the court.

19 (b) Interest shall be paid such recipient on the same percentage of such sum
20 he receives as the total amount of such registry funds invested with interest bears to
21 the total of such funds held in the registry of the court during the preceding year.

22 (c) In determining the amount of such registry funds invested with interest,
23 and the total of such funds held in the registry of the court, as provided in
24 Subparagraph (b) of this Paragraph, the basis for such determination shall be the
25 average daily balance of the total funds invested and the average daily balances of
26 the total funds held in the registry of the court fund during the period that the funds
27 being disbursed were on deposit in the registry of the court fund.

28 D. In the event it becomes necessary to disburse funds which have been
29 deposited in the registry of the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund, in accordance

1 Juvenile Court of the parish of Orleans is abolished and jurisdiction of that court is
2 transferred to the Forty-First Judicial District Court.

3 (2) Notwithstanding any principal assignments to divisions, all divisions of
4 the court shall retain general jurisdiction to hear all matters.

5 C. The Forty-First Judicial District Court shall be composed of divisions A
6 through U and the magistrate judge over the magistrate section.

7 D. The judges presently presiding over Divisions A, B, and D through K of
8 the Civil District Court for the parish of Orleans shall preside over Divisions A
9 through J of the Forty-First Judicial District Court. The judges shall continue to
10 serve until the thirty-first day of December of the year in which their terms expire.

11 E. The judges presently presiding over Divisions B through H and K and L
12 of the Criminal District Court for the parish of Orleans shall preside over Divisions
13 K through Q of the Forty-First Judicial District Court. The judges shall continue to
14 serve until the thirty-first day of December of the year in which their terms expire.

15 F. The judges assigned to the juvenile section shall preside over Divisions
16 T and U of the Forty-First Judicial District Court.

17 G. The court of appeal with jurisdiction over the parish of Orleans shall have
18 appellate jurisdiction over all cases tried in the city courts of New Orleans and all
19 cases tried before the Municipal and Traffic Court of New Orleans.

20 H. All judges of the Forty-First Judicial District shall be elected by the
21 qualified electors of the parish for terms of six years at the congressional election to
22 be held in 2026 and every six years thereafter. Each judge shall take office on the
23 first day of January of the year following election and shall serve through December
24 thirty-first of the last year of his term. Any candidate for election to the office of
25 judge of this court must designate the division for which he is a candidate, and, if
26 elected, shall succeed to the office of judge of the division for which he was a
27 candidate. The judge oldest in continuous service in each division of the district
28 court shall preside, and in the event two or more judges shall have served the same
29 length of time, the judge oldest in years shall preside.

1 I.(1) Subject to the recommendations of the committee provided for in R.S.
2 13:996.62, on the date that the Forty-First Judicial District Court becomes effective,
3 all of the books, papers, records, monies, actions, and other property of every kind
4 and description, movable and immovable, real and personal, possessed, controlled,
5 or used by the Civil District Court for the parish and Criminal District Court for the
6 parish shall be transferred and be owned, possessed, controlled, and used by the
7 Forty-First Judicial District Court.

8 (2) The judges of the Forty-First Judicial District, including the magistrate
9 judge, shall retain all accrued benefits and contributions to which they were entitled
10 and shall continue to contribute, if applicable, to the retirement system or pension
11 fund to which they were contributing on December 31, 2026. The salaries of the
12 judges and group health and life insurance premiums shall continue to be paid from
13 the same sources and in the same manner in which they were paid on December 31,
14 2026; however, the payment of health and life insurance premiums shall be in
15 accordance with the unified group health and life insurance program adopted by the
16 committee provided for in R.S. 13:996.62.

17 (3) The employees of the Civil District Court for the parish, the Criminal
18 District Court for the parish, and the Juvenile Court for the parish shall be transferred
19 in accordance with this Section, to the extent required and in accordance with
20 applicable civil service laws, and shall be subject to the supervision and control of
21 the Forty-First Judicial District Court. The employees transferred in accordance with
22 this Section shall continue to contribute to the retirement system or pension fund to
23 which they were contributing on the effective date of this Section, including the
24 retention of all accrued benefits and contributions to which they were entitled on the
25 effective date of this Section. The salaries of the employees shall continue to be paid
26 from the same sources and in the manner in which they are paid on December 31,
27 2026. The employees shall continue to be entitled to participate in the same health
28 and life insurance plans they are participating in on December 31, 2026.

1 §621.42. Forty-First Judicial District; office or positions and functions

2 The Forty-First Judicial District Court shall have a position or office of
3 judicial administrator, deputy judicial administrator, and assistants as needed and
4 shall provide for the conduct of the jury commission and sanity hearings, the cost of
5 all of which shall be allocated by the Judicial Budgetary Control Council to such
6 court; however, the positions provided for in R.S. 13:1384 shall be paid as required
7 by the provisions of that Section.

8 §621.43. Abolition of Orleans Parish Juvenile Court; extension of terms of office;
9 jurisdiction; conferred on Forty-First Judicial District Court; transfer of cases

10 A. The Orleans Parish Juvenile Court is abolished effective December 31,
11 2026. The terms of office of the judges of the juvenile court now in office shall be
12 extended until December 31, 2026. After the effective date of this Section, no judge
13 shall be elected to the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court except to fill a vacancy and in
14 such case the term of office shall expire on December 31, 2026.

15 B. It is the express intent of this Section that the jurisdiction conferred by
16 law, particularly the Louisiana Children's Code, upon the Orleans Parish Juvenile
17 Court, shall be vested in the Forty-First Judicial District Court and shall be the same
18 as it exists on the effective date of this Section. All of its powers, its duties, and its
19 various departments or its personnel, except as provided in this Section, shall be
20 vested in the Forty-First Judicial District Court as provided in this Section and R.S.
21 13:621.45 and 621.46.

22 C. Effective January 1, 2027, all pending cases filed in the Orleans Parish
23 Juvenile Court are hereby transferred to the Forty-First Judicial District Court for the
24 parish of Orleans. All records and files of the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court shall be
25 transferred to the Forty-First Judicial District Court, which shall hear and dispose of
26 each such case with the same legal effect as if it had been instituted in that court in
27 the first instance.

1 C. The magistrate shall have jurisdiction to act as committing magistrate in
2 felony and misdemeanor charges and to hold preliminary examinations, with the
3 authority to bail or discharge, or to hold for trial, in all cases before the Forty-First
4 Judicial District Court, and shall have the power to adopt all necessary rules with
5 respect thereto.

6 D. The magistrate shall hear preliminary motions, conduct extradition
7 hearings, accept pleas in misdemeanor cases, hear and render judgments in other
8 matters, including misdemeanor cases, preliminary to the trial on the merits, conduct
9 trials of misdemeanor cases, preside over jury trials of misdemeanor cases, and sign
10 and issue search and arrest warrants upon probable cause being shown in accordance
11 with law. The magistrate shall have the right to appoint a court reporter, deputy
12 court reporter, and minute clerk as provided by law, and the sheriff for the parish
13 shall appoint a crier and deputy sheriff for the section of the court created herein as
14 provided by law.

15 E. The Forty-First Judicial District Court, including the magistrate of the
16 Magistrate Section of said court, acting en banc, shall prescribe rules and procedures
17 not inconsistent with the constitution and laws of this state to be followed in all
18 matters to be presented before the Magistrate Section.

19 §714.2. Commissioners; Magistrate Section; Forty-First Judicial District Court

20 A.(1) There shall be up to two commissioners appointed to the Magistrate
21 Section of the Forty-First Judicial District Court. The persons appointed to the
22 offices of commissioner created by this Section shall be known as commissioners
23 and shall not be judges, but shall have the same qualifications, powers, duties,
24 jurisdiction, and functions, all as is now or hereafter provided for the judge in the
25 Magistrate Section of the Forty-First Judicial District Court. The commissioners
26 shall serve a term of six years.

27 (2) The salary of the commissioners of the Forty-First Judicial District Court
28 for the parish shall be fifty-five percent of the salary paid to a judge of the
29 Forty-First Judicial District Court, said salary and related benefits as provided for by

1 law, to be payable in the same manner and from the same sources as the salary and
2 benefits of a judge of the Forty-First Judicial District Court. The support services
3 and personnel including minute clerks and stenographers, as shall be necessary for
4 the offices of commissioner, and such supporting services and personnel shall be
5 paid in the same amount and from the same source as they are paid on December 31,
6 2026.

7 (3) The judges of the Forty-First Judicial District Court, sitting en banc, shall
8 determine the further powers, duties, functions, and policy affecting the offices of
9 commissioner, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Section.

10 B. Should there be a vacancy created by the removal, resignation, or death
11 of any commissioner, the judges of the district court, sitting en banc, shall fill the
12 vacancy by appointment for the unexpired term. At the termination of the initial
13 term and any subsequent terms of a commissioner, said judges, sitting en banc, shall
14 appoint successors to the office for like terms. All commissioners are subject to
15 removal for any reason for which a judge of the Forty-First Judicial District Court
16 may be removed from office. Such removal shall be by order of the judges sitting
17 en banc, after notice and hearing. No person shall serve as commissioner unless he
18 has practiced law in the state of Louisiana for a period of not less than five years.

19 C. No commissioner of the magistrate office shall practice law before the
20 Forty-First Judicial District Court.

21 * * *

22 SUBPART B. CLERKS

23 * * *

24 §751.1. Clerk of the Forty-First Judicial District Court

25 A. There shall be one clerk of the Forty-First Judicial District Court who
26 shall be elected by the qualified electors of Orleans Parish. He shall be elected at the
27 election for parochial and municipal officers in Orleans Parish, shall serve for a term
28 of four years, and shall take office and begin his term on the first Monday in May
29 following election. The clerk shall be called the clerk of court of the Forty-First

1 Judicial District Court. No separate clerk of the Civil District Court for the parish
2 of Orleans and no separate clerk of the Criminal District Court for the parish of
3 Orleans shall be elected after their current term of office expires. At the expiration
4 of the current term of the Clerk of the Criminal District Court, the separate offices
5 of the clerk of the Civil District Court for the parish of Orleans, the clerk of court of
6 the Criminal District Court for the parish of Orleans, and the clerk of court of the
7 Juvenile Court for the parish of Orleans shall be abolished and the functions, duties,
8 and responsibilities of their respective offices shall be merged and consolidated
9 within the office of the clerk of court of the Forty-First Judicial District Court.

10 C. All of the books, papers, records, monies, actions, and other property of
11 every kind and description, movable and immovable, real and personal, possessed,
12 controlled, or used by the clerk of the Civil District Court for the parish of Orleans
13 and the clerk of the Criminal District Court for the parish of Orleans shall be
14 transferred and be owned, possessed, controlled, and used by the clerk of the
15 Forty-First Judicial District Court.

16 D. The employees of the clerk of the Civil District Court for the parish of
17 Orleans, the clerk of the Criminal District Court for the parish of Orleans, and the
18 Juvenile Court of the parish of Orleans shall be transferred in accordance with this
19 Section, to the extent required and in accordance with applicable civil service laws
20 and rules, and shall be subject to the supervision and control of the clerk of the
21 Forty-First Judicial District Court. The employees transferred in accordance with this
22 Section shall continue to contribute to the retirement system or pension fund to
23 which they were contributing on the effective date of this Section, including the
24 retention of all accrued benefits and contributions to which they were entitled on the
25 effective date of this Section. The salaries of the employees of the clerk of Civil
26 District Court and the clerk of Criminal District Court shall continue to be paid from
27 the same sources and in the manner in which they were paid on the effective date of
28 this Section.

29 §751.2. Salary

1 The provisions of R.S. 13:782 shall apply to the clerk of the Forty-First
2 Judicial District Court except as otherwise provided therein and he shall receive a
3 salary as established in R.S. 13:782(A) based on the applicable population of the
4 parish according to the latest United States census which shall be payable out of the
5 Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund.

6 §751.3. Expenses

7 In addition to his salary, the clerk of the Forty-First Judicial District Court
8 shall receive a sum not to exceed ten percent of his annual salary as an expense
9 allowance. This allowance shall be payable out of the expense fund or its successor
10 upon the warrant of the clerk.

11 §751.4. Clerk’s salary fund

12 Except as provided in R.S. 13:783(C), the clerk of the Forty-First Judicial
13 District Court shall collect all fees and charges due his office and deposit them in a
14 fund known as the Clerk’s Salary Fund. The clerk shall keep an accurate set of
15 books in connection with this fund showing all receipts of his office, including
16 notarial fees, and all expenditures. On or before the tenth of October each year, he
17 shall render a statement from the books for the fiscal year beginning July first and
18 ending June thirtieth to the governing body of the parish. A clerk who fails to
19 comply with this Section shall forfeit to the parish fifty percent of the compensation
20 received by him under R.S. 13:782.

21 §751.5. Cross-references

22 The provisions of R.S. 13:750 and 750.1 shall apply in Orleans Parish.

23 * * *

24 SUBPART C. FEES

25 * * *

26 §841.3. Fees; clerk for the Forty-First Judicial District; collection

27 The clerk of the Forty-First Judicial District Court shall collect the fees set
28 forth in R.S. 13:1213, 1213.1, 1381, 1595.3, 2157, and any other fees required by
29 statute to be paid to or collected by the clerks of the Civil District Court for the

1 Judicial District Court for the purpose of protecting litigants against any acts of
2 incompetence or neglect of duty by the court reporter. The bond shall be recorded
3 and filed in the office of the clerk of court. Any party litigant shall have the right to
4 sue on said bond for any damages sustained through any wrongful act or neglect of
5 duty by the court reporter in the performance of his duties as official court reporter.

6 C. The court reporters shall report in shorthand, stenotype, by recording
7 machine, or in any recognized manner, and transcribe into longhand by typing or
8 printing all the testimony taken in all civil appealable cases and shall furnish for the
9 purposes of appeal the necessary copies of the testimony required by law.

10 D. The court reporters shall work concurrently under the direction and
11 supervision of the judges appointing them, according to the needs of the judicial
12 district, in the interest of expediting the business before the court.

13 E. Each court reporter shall perform secretarial duties for the district judge
14 appointing the reporter, particularly in the absence of the judge's regular secretary.

15 F. The court reporters shall receive a monthly salary to be fixed and
16 determined by the judges of the Forty-First Judicial District sitting en banc, upon
17 approval of the governing authority of the parish. The salaries shall be paid out of
18 the general fund of the parish. The governing authority for the parish shall budget
19 the salaries in its budget of annual expenses. Upon approval by the court, a portion
20 thereof may be paid out of the Consolidated Expense Fund for the Forty-First
21 Judicial District.

22 G.(1)(a) In all civil cases, a fee of one dollar and fifty cents per original page
23 of transcript, fifty cents per page for additional pages of original transcript for the
24 first copy, and thirty-five cents per page for additional copies reported and
25 transcribed beyond the first copy shall be charged by and paid to the court reporter
26 for reports and for transcribing the testimony which shall be retained by him as
27 compensation in addition to the salary as provided herein, and shall be taxed as costs
28 of the suit in which the testimony is taken to be collected by the clerk of court,
29 except in pauper cases.

1 (b) Payment of the fees shall be made primarily by the appellant immediately
2 upon the transcription of the evidence, and the court reporter shall not be required
3 to file the transcript with the clerk of court before payment.

4 (2) Should the appellant fail or refuse to make such payment, the appellee
5 or any other party to the suit may make the same and have it assessed as costs.

6 (3) Even though counsel may attempt to procure a transcript of the entire
7 record by alleging that the entire record is necessary to support a motion for a new
8 trial, the trial judge shall not order the entire transcript to be typed unless he deems
9 it indispensable to the record of the motion or proceedings.

10 H.(1)(a) In all pauper cases under Code of Civil Procedure Article 5181 et
11 seq., the governing authority for the parish shall pay to the court reporter for the
12 transcribing of testimony, when an appeal is taken or upon order of the judge,
13 one-half of the amount as would otherwise be required to be paid by the party who
14 is proceeding in forma pauperis.

15 (b) Such amount shall be paid at the time the transcription is filed, but only
16 upon the written approval and order of the judge.

17 (c) Such payments by the parish shall not exceed the sum of twenty-five
18 hundred dollars for any one year.

19 (2) The governing authority of the parish, upon making payment to any court
20 reporter pursuant to this Section shall be legally subrogated to the rights of the court
21 reporter as to all sums so paid for the transcription of testimony in pauper cases.

22 (3) All judgments in cases in which the pauper shall be cast for costs,
23 together with the statement of such costs, shall be recorded by the clerk of court in
24 the mortgage records of the parish and such judgments when so recorded shall
25 operate as judicial mortgages in favor of the parish governing authority.

26 I.(1) The court reporters shall record such criminal proceedings as may be
27 required by law or as ordered by the court.

28 (2)(a) No fee shall be charged for taking evidence on assignments of error,
29 motions, or other pleadings in criminal cases, unless approved by the presiding
30 judge.

1 §996.62. Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund for the Forty-First Judicial District

2 A.(1) Effective January 1, 2027, there is hereby created a fund for the Forty-
3 First Judicial District Court, the juvenile court for the parish of Orleans, and the First
4 and Second City Courts of the city of New Orleans which shall be known as the
5 “Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund.” As used in this Section, “judges” means the
6 judges of the courts enumerated in this Subsection.

7 (2) There is hereby created a committee of the following judges: three judges
8 from the civil district court who shall be the chief judge and two of his designees,
9 three judges from the criminal district court, including the magistrate judge, who
10 shall be the chief judge and two of his designees, one judge from the juvenile court
11 for the parish of Orleans with the most seniority, and one judge from the first or
12 second city court with the most seniority. The chairman of the committee shall be
13 elected by majority vote and serve for one year on a rotating basis among each court.

14 (3) Beginning on January 1, 2027, the committee designated in Paragraph (2)
15 of this Subsection shall:

16 (a) Review all funds and funding sources for the courts enumerated in this
17 Subsection.

18 (b) Have an audit conducted by an independent certified public account of all
19 monies, deposits and accounts possessed, controlled, exercised, or used by a court
20 or judge.

21 (c) Identify all obligations and debts of the courts enumerated in this
22 Subsection.

23 (d) Recommend appropriate funding levels and the sources for such funding
24 for the courts.

25 (e) Recommend the appropriate method for consolidating all funds, monies,
26 deposits, accounts, obligations and debts of the enumerated courts into the
27 Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund.

28 (4) The committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the
29 Senate Committee on Judiciary A and the House Committee on Judiciary not later
30 than January 1, 2028.

1 B.(1) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, effective January 1,
2 2029, all monies, deposits, accounts heretofore possessed, controlled, exercised, or
3 used by a court or judge separately or collectively, enumerated in Subsection A of
4 this Section shall be transferred to the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund, in
5 accordance with the recommendations of the Consolidation Review Committee, and
6 monies so allocated to the fund shall be continued to be paid from the same sources
7 as provided therein into a special account designated as the Consolidated Judicial
8 Expense Fund.

9 (2) This Section shall not apply to those funds collected pursuant to R.S.
10 13:1141(A) and R.S. 13:1381.1.

11 (3) The judges shall cause to be conducted annually an audit of the fund and
12 the books and accounts relating thereto, and shall file the same with the office of the
13 legislative auditor where it shall be available for public inspection.

14 (4) The monies in the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund may be used for
15 any purpose connected with, incidental to, or related to the proper administration or
16 function of the courts and judges designated in Subsection A of this Section or the
17 offices of the judges thereof and is in addition to any and all other funds, salaries,
18 expenses, or other monies that are provided, authorized, or established by law. The
19 establishment of the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund in no way relieves or
20 extinguishes any obligation of the city of New Orleans to fund the court system.

21 (5) The judges, en banc, may further appoint such secretarial, clerical,
22 research, administrative, or other personnel as they deem necessary to expedite the
23 business and function of the court and fix and pay all or any part of the salaries of
24 such personnel out of the monies in the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund. In like
25 manner, the judges, en banc, may utilize the monies in the Consolidated Judicial
26 Expense Fund to pay all or any part of the cost of establishing or maintaining, or
27 both, a law library for the court, or for buying or maintaining, or both, any type of
28 equipment, supplies, or other items consistent with or germane to the efficient
29 operation of the court. In general, the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund is
30 established and may be used for any purpose or purposes connected with, incidental

1 to, or related to the proper administration or function of the said court or the offices
2 of the individual judges and is in addition to any and all other funds, salaries,
3 expenses, or other monies that are now or hereafter provided, authorized, or
4 established by law for any of the aforesaid purposes.

5 C.(1) The judges, en banc, may utilize the monies in the Judicial Expense
6 Fund to pay all or any part of the cost of planning, designing, and constructing a new
7 courthouse for the parish, which may house the following courts and all related
8 support offices:

9 (a) District court for the parish.

10 (b) City courts.

11 (c) Juvenile courts.

12 (2) Any contract for the planning, designing, or construction of a new
13 courthouse shall be subject to the public bid laws. The provisions of this Subsection
14 shall not affect the obligation of the city of New Orleans to provide buildings to
15 house the Civil District Court and the other courts housed therein and the Criminal
16 District Court.

17 D. The legislature hereby specifically states that this Section is in no way
18 and to no extent intended to nor shall it be construed in any manner which will
19 impair the contractual or other obligations of any fund transferred by this Subpart or
20 of the state of Louisiana. It is hereby specifically provided that all obligations of any
21 fund transferred in accordance with this Subpart hereafter shall be deemed to be the
22 obligations of the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund for the Forty-First Judicial
23 District to which the fund is transferred to the same extent as if originally made by
24 said fund. This transfer of obligations shall in no way create a personal obligation
25 for any judge of the Forty-First Judicial District Court, if no such obligation existed
26 prior to the transfer. In like manner, and in order to prevent any violation of the
27 provisions, terms, or conditions of any gift, donation, deed, will, trust, or other
28 instrument or disposition by which property of any kind has been vested in a fund
29 transferred by this Section, or diversion from the purposes for which such property
30 was thus vested in any fund, it is hereby specifically provided that each such

1 instrument or disposition hereafter shall be deemed to have been vested in the
2 Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund for the Forty-First Judicial District to which the
3 fund is transferred in the same manner and to the same extent as if originally so
4 done.

5 E. The Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund for the Forty-First Judicial
6 District to which each fund is transferred shall be the successor in every way to each
7 fund transferred and from which functions are or may be merged and consolidated,
8 including all of the obligations and debts of each fund. In like manner, all other
9 dedications and allocations of revenues and sources of revenues heretofore made,
10 which are constitutional under the Constitution of Louisiana of 1974, shall continue,
11 until otherwise hereafter provided by the constitution, in the same manner, to the
12 same extent, and for the same purposes as were provided prior to the enactment of
13 this Section.

14 F. The provisions of this Section shall not be construed or applied in any way
15 which will prevent full compliance by the state, or any department, office, or agency
16 thereof, with the requirements of any Act of the Congress of the United States or any
17 regulation made thereunder by which federal aid or other federal assistance has been
18 or hereafter is made available to this state, or any department, office, agency, or
19 subdivision thereof, anything contained in this Subpart to the contrary
20 notwithstanding, and such compliance hereafter shall be insofar as such compliance
21 affects any fund transferred in accordance with the provisions of this Section.

22 G. Upon the transfer of each fund in accordance with this Section, any
23 pending or unfinished business of each such fund shall be taken over and be
24 completed by the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund for the Forty-First Judicial
25 District with the same power and authority as that of the fund transferred. The
26 Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund shall be the successor in every way to each
27 fund, and every act done by the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund in the exercise
28 of the functions of each shall be deemed to have the same force and effect under any

1 regulation made thereunder by which federal aid or other federal assistance has been or
2 hereafter is made available.

3 Section 10. Any legal proceeding to which any office transferred to the clerk of court
4 in accordance with the provisions of this Act is a party and which is filed, initiated, or
5 otherwise pending before any court on the effective date of such transfer, and all documents
6 involved in or affected by any such legal proceeding, shall retain their effectiveness and shall
7 be continued in the name of the office so transferred. All further legal proceedings and
8 documents in the continuation, disposition, and enforcement of said legal proceeding shall
9 be applicable to the office of clerk of court as the parish recorder without the necessity for
10 amendment of any document.

11 Section 11.(A) R.S. 13:1031 through 1147, 1271 through 1312, 1335 through 1347,
12 1381.1 through 1400, 1566 through 1568.3, 1587.1 through 1587.2, and 1593 through 1595.3
13 are hereby repealed in their entirety effective on January 1, 2027.

14 (B) R.S. 13:1211 through 1212.1, 1371, and 1372 are hereby repealed in their
15 entirety on the date that the clerk of the Forty-First Judicial District Court takes office.

16 Section 12. This Section and Sections 4 through 18 of this Act shall become
17 effective upon signature by the governor or, if not signed by the governor, upon expiration
18 of the time for bills to become law without signature by the governor, as provided by Article
19 III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If this Act is vetoed by the governor and
20 subsequently approved by the legislature, the provisions of this Section, Sections 4 through
21 18, of this Act shall become effective on the day following such approval.

22 Section 13. The provisions of Section 2 of this Act shall become effective on
23 January 1, 2027, except that the provisions of R.S. 13:621.41 and 714.1 shall be effective
24 for purposes of qualifying and election of judges and magistrate of the Forty-First Judicial
25 District Court to be held at the congressional election to be held in 2026.

26 Section 14. All fees and costs assessed or collected by the clerk of the Civil District
27 Court or the clerk of the Criminal District Court, for the parish of Orleans in effect on the
28 effective date of this Section are continued and shall be assessed and collected in accordance
29 with the provisions of law then in effect.

1 Section 15. The Louisiana State Law Institute is hereby directed to renumber and
 2 rearrange any sections or parts of Sections of this Act and make any such changes to
 3 references to other provisions of law consistent with the provisions of this Act. The
 4 Louisiana State Law Institute is also directed to submit such recommendations on or before
 5 March 1, 2027, as it deems necessary to clarify, modify, or repeal any of the provisions of
 6 this Act or any other provision of law, including the elimination of antiquated provisions
 7 consistent with the provisions of the Act.

8 Section 16. If a vacancy occurs before December 31, 2026, in a division of civil or
 9 criminal court as specified in Section 2 of this Act to be abolished or in the office of the
 10 clerk of the criminal district court, no special election shall be held to fill the vacancy. In
 11 the case of the clerks of the civil and criminal district courts, the chief deputy of either office
 12 shall fill the unexpired term.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 911 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

McMakin

Abstract: Provides for the complete reform and modernization of the judicial components of Orleans Parish.

Present law provides for the Civil and Criminal District Courts for Orleans Parish, and the jurisdiction, compensation, authority, rule making ability, assignment, and designation of divisions, cases, expenses, costs, fees, and personnel, number of judges, commissioners, and magistrates allocated to divisions or sections, clerks of civil and criminal courts, compensation, fees, resultant judicial expenses, funds, deposits, bonds, retirement, and related duties and privileges, court reporters' selection, salary, and fees, magistrates and commissioners, their respective duties, jurisdiction, compensation, authority, and designations of the Civil and Criminal District Courts for Orleans Parish.

Proposed law consolidates the civil and criminal courts, and the clerks of the respective courts into the 41st Judicial District Court, establishes one clerk of court for Orleans Parish, and otherwise would establish the salaries, composition, jurisdiction of such judicial officials, including magistrates and commissioners, and transfer all the duties, powers, and functions of the former offices to the consolidated office, would create the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund for the 41st Judicial District Court, its authority, practices, duties, and privileges, and otherwise operate under a board, composed of certain judicial officials, and to otherwise establish consolidated public offices similar to the other 40 existing judicial districts in the state.

Proposed law consolidates the clerks of the Civil and Criminal District Courts in Orleans Parish and provides for a single clerk for both courts. Provides that one clerk shall be elected at the municipal and parochial election in certain parishes in 2032. Transfers the

duties, powers, and functions of the former offices to the consolidated office. Provides that the salaries of employees of the clerk of the civil district court and the criminal district court shall continue to be paid from the same sources and in the manner in which they were paid on the effective date of proposed law. Requires the clerk of the 41st Judicial District Court to collect all fees and charges due to his office and deposit them in a fund known as the Clerk's Salary Fund. Requires the clerk to collect the fees set forth in R.S. 13:1213.1 and deposit no less than 60% of the amounts collected in the fund, and the remaining shall be deposited in the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund.

Proposed law provides that any employees who are transferred through the consolidation of the civil and criminal courts or the consolidation of the clerks of such courts shall continue to contribute to the retirement system or pension fund to which they were contributing on the effective date of the consolidation provisions, including the retention of all accrued benefits and contributions to which they were entitled at such time.

Proposed law creates the "Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund" for the civil and criminal district courts, the juvenile court for the parish of Orleans, and the First and Second City Court of the city of New Orleans. Further provides that such fund and all disbursements shall be administered and controlled by a committee composed of 4 judges from the civil district court, 4 judges from the criminal district court including the magistrate, 2 judges from the juvenile court for the parish of Orleans, and 1 judge from the first or second city court selected by a majority of the judges of the courts sitting en banc. At least one member from the criminal district court, the civil district court, and the juvenile court serving shall be the most senior judge at his respective court.

Proposed law requires that, effective Jan. 1, 2027, all funds of a court or judge of the city or parish courts of Orleans Parish, separately or collectively, shall be transferred to the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund in accordance with the recommendations of the Consolidation Review Committee and monies allocated shall continued to be paid from the same sources into the consolidated fund. Exempts funds deposited in the Clerk's Salary Fund from such proposed requirement. Further provides that the funds in the consolidated fund may be used for any purpose related to the administration or function of the courts and judges or the offices of the judges and is in addition to any other funds, salaries, expenses, or other monies which are authorized by law.

Proposed law provides for an annual audit of the consolidated fund by the judges which shall be filed with the legislative auditor and shall be available for public inspection.

Proposed law authorizes the use of the monies in the Judicial Expense Fund to pay all or part of expenses related to the construction of a new parish courthouse; however, further provides that such authorization does not affect the obligation of New Orleans to provide buildings to house the civil district court and the other related courts and the criminal district court.

(Amends R.S. 13:1, 842(A), and 1381(introductory paragraph); Adds R.S. 13:474.1, 477(41), 621.41-621.45, 714.1, 714.2, 751.1-751.5, 841.3, 983, 996.62-996.64; Repeals R.S. 9:2745, R.S. 13:1031-1147, 1211-1212.1, 1271-1312, 1335-1347, 1371, 1372, 1377, 1381.1-1400, 1566-1568.3, 1587.1, 1587.2 and 1593-1595.3)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Judiciary to the original bill:

1. Make technical corrections.