
The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Senate Legislative Services. The keyword, summary, 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)]

DIGEST

SB 217 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

Morris

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.

Proposed law reduces the number of judges for the civil district court in Orleans Parish from fourteen to twelve judges.

Present law provides for twelve judges for the criminal district court in Orleans Parish.

Proposed law provides that effective January 1, 2027, there shall be nine divisions of the Criminal District Court. The divisions of the first four judges, if any, serving on the effective date of proposed law that provide written notice to the supreme court and secretary of state by July 1, 2026, that they will not qualify to seek re-election shall be abolished.

Proposed law provides that if a sufficient number of judges do not provide notice pursuant to proposed law, then the requisite Divisions comprising the judges who have served on the court the least amount of time shall be designated to be abolished at the end of their current term of office. If there is any dispute concerning this calculation the supreme court shall issue an order to the secretary of state designating what divisions shall be abolished pursuant to 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 on or before March 1, 2028, and every two years thereafter, the judicial council is to study the need for the number of judges on the criminal district court.

Proposed law provides that if the supreme court certifies a recommendation to the legislature to abolish a judgeship based on the judicial council report, then provisions concerning calling of a special election to fill a vacancy for that judgeship are to be temporarily suspended for a vacancy arising thereafter by resignation, retirement, or removal to allow the legislature to consider the recommendation. Provides that for purposes of filling the particular judgeship is to be treated in the same manner as if it had been abolished prior to the deadline for calling the special election to fill its vacancy.

Proposed law provides that if the legislature fails to act on the particular recommendation at the next regular session it can repeal or reallocate the particular judgeship on the thirtieth day following

session adjournment and the judgeship shall no longer be considered abolished.

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.

Effective August 1, 2026.

(Amends R.S. 13:1136, 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, 1595.1, 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) and 2492(A)(7)(b))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Judiciary A to the original bill

1. Makes technical changes.
2. Reduces the number of divisions of criminal district court from 12 to 9 judges, effective January 1, 2027.
3. Provides procedure for determining what divisions shall be abolished.
4. Prohibits qualification and election for any successor judgeship to the abolished division.
5. Clarifies the divisions being abolished.
6. Changes the date that the first judgeship vacancy is abolished by death, resignation, retirement, or removal of any division from after January 1, 2027 to December 31, 2026.
7. Repeals provision providing additional judges for the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.