ACT 631 (HB 600)   **2016 Regular Session**   **Leger**

Existing law provides for the Municipal and Traffic Court of New Orleans. (Act No. 845 of 2014 R.S. merged the two separate municipal and traffic courts into the one consolidated court, to become effective Jan. 1, 2017.) Prior law provided for eight judgeships, and required each judge candidate to have a minimum of five years experience as an attorney prior to his election and to be an elector of the parish of Orleans.

New law provides for the following changes:

(1)   Amends the qualifications for judgeships from having five years of experience as an attorney to having eight years of experience. Also provides that judicial candidates must be domiciled in the parish of Orleans for at least two years prior to election.

(2)   Reduces the number of judgeships from eight to seven by abolishing either the judgeship in Division H, effective Dec. 31, 2020, or the judgeship in any other division left vacant by death, resignation, retirement, or removal. Prohibits the judges in Divisions A through D from engaging in the practice of law, and provides that the judges in Divisions E-G shall have that same prohibition, on a staggered basis.

(3)   Provides that the salary of the judges shall be equal to that of the district court judges but not more salary paid to the district court judges in Orleans Parish, payable in part by the state and the remainder to be paid by the city of New Orleans.

(4)   Provides for the appointment of ad hoc judges selected pursuant to rules of the La. Supreme Court when a judge is temporarily absent.

(5)   Provides for the clerk of court's salary to be set by the judges en banc.

(6)   Removes the automatic requirement in prior law that all testimony be taken verbatim, and provides that it be done upon request of any party.

(7)   Provides that the sheriff of Orleans, New Orleans Police Dept., and city constable provide one P.O.S.T. certified officer for each division of the court.

(8)   Provides that each judge shall appoint four employees in addition to any employee otherwise provided by law, and removes prior law provisions requiring the judge to appoint a crier, minute clerk, court reporter, secretarial, clerical, research, administrative, or other court personnel.

(9)   Removes prior law specifying the prosecuting authority for the court.

(10)   Provides that all prosecutions other than parking violations may be assessed an additional cost per offense against every defendant convicted.

(11)   Removes prior law sanctions for failure to pay court costs.

(12)   Adds a provision requiring each judge to remit all fines collected monthly to the city treasurer of New Orleans.

(13)   Repeals prior law (R.S. 13:2493(G)) regarding the jurisdiction of the court, and repeals prior law (R.S. 13:2496.1) regarding court crier appointments and salary.

Effective January 1, 2017.

(Amends R.S. 13:2492(A), (B), (D), (E), and (F), 2493(A), (B), and (C), 2495(B), 2495.1(A), 2496(A), 2496.2(A), 2496.3(F) and (G)(3), 2497(A), 2498, 2499, 2500.1(A), 2500.2, and 2501; Repeals R.S. 13:2493(G) and 2496.1)