



accused.

Proposed law also provides that the scope of the preliminary hearing will be limited to:

- (1) Determining whether there is probable cause to believe an offense has been committed and the accused committed the offense;
- (2) Determining whether the convening authority has court-martial jurisdiction over the offense and the accused;
- (3) Considering the form of the charges; and
- (4) Recommending the disposition that should be made of the case.

Proposed law further provides a preliminary hearing will be conducted by an impartial judge advocate certified under present law whenever practicable or, in exceptional circumstances by an impartial hearing officer who is not a judge advocate. If the hearing officer is not a judge advocate, a judge advocate certified under present law will be available to provide legal advice to the hearing officer.

Proposed law provides that when the judge advocate or other hearing officer is detailed to conduct the preliminary hearing, the officer will be equal to or senior in grade to military counsel. After a hearing has been conducted, a report addressing the matters will be prepared. The accused will be advised of the charges against them and of their rights and can cross-examine witnesses who testify at the preliminary hearing and present evidence relevant to the limited scope of the hearing.

Proposed law also adds that a victim may not be required to testify at the preliminary hearing and when a victim declines to testify, they shall be deemed unavailable for purposes of the preliminary hearing. The presentation of evidence and examination, will be limited to the matters relevant to the scope of the hearing and the hearing will be recorded and the victim may request the recording and shall have access to the recording as prescribed by the Manual for Courts-Martial.

Proposed law adds that if evidence adduced in a preliminary hearing indicates that the accused committed an uncharged offense, the hearing officer may consider the subject matter of that offense without the accused having first been charged with the offense if the accused:

- (1) Is present at the preliminary hearing;
- (2) Is informed of the nature of each uncharged offense considered; and
- (3) Is afforded the opportunities for representation, cross-examination, and presentation.

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

(Amends R.S. 29:40, 102, 116, 120, 132, 136)