

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 705

BY REPRESENTATIVE NEWELL

LEGISLATIVE POWERS: Provides relative to contempt of the legislature

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 24:4 (A) and (B) and 5, relative to contempt of the legislature;
3 to provide for the maximum penalty for contempt of the legislature; to provide for
4 duties of the presiding officers; to provide for the immediate arrest of the accused;
5 and to provide for related matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 24:4 (A) and (B) and 5 are hereby amended and reenacted to read as
8 follows:

9 §4. Contempt of the legislature; penalties

10 A. Whenever the legislature or either house of the legislature, or whenever
11 any committee of either house or any joint committee of both houses or any ~~sub-~~
12 ~~committee~~ subcommittee of any such committee, which committee, joint committee
13 or ~~sub-committee~~ subcommittee has been specifically and expressly granted the
14 subpoena power, has summoned any person as a witness to give testimony or to
15 produce papers or other evidence upon any matter under inquiry before such house,
16 committee, joint committee or ~~sub-committee~~ subcommittee, such person shall be
17 guilty of contempt of the legislature if he or she does any of the following:

18 (1) ~~willfully~~ Willfully defaults by failing to appear or to produce papers or
19 other evidence, as ordered, ~~or,~~

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 705 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

Newell

Abstract: Provides for criminal penalties for contempt of the legislature and provides for the arrest of a person found to be in contempt of the legislature.

Present law provides that whenever the legislature or either house of the legislature, or whenever any committee of either house or any joint committee of both houses or any subcommittee of any such committee, which committee, joint committee or subcommittee has been specifically and expressly granted the subpoena power, has summoned any person as a witness to give testimony or to produce papers or other evidence upon any matter under inquiry before such house, committee, joint committee or subcommittee, such person shall be guilty of contempt of the legislature if he or she willfully defaults by failing to appear or to produce papers or other evidence, refuses to take the oath or affirmation of a witness, or refuses to answer any question pertinent to the question under inquiry.

Proposed law retains present law.

Present law provides that whoever is found guilty of contempt of the legislature shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$1,000 or by imprisonment for not more than six months, or both.

Proposed law instead provides that whoever is found guilty of contempt of the legislature shall be punished as follows:

- (1) For a first offense, by a fine of not more than \$1,500.
- (2) For a second offense, by a fine of not more than \$2,500.
- (3) For a third and subsequent offenses, by a fine of not more than \$5,000 or by imprisonment for not more than six months, or both

Present law provides that whenever a statement of facts alleged to constitute contempt under present law is reported to either house of the legislature while the legislature is in session, or whenever, while the legislature is not in session, such statement is reported to and filed with the president of the senate or the speaker of the house of representatives, the president or speaker, as the case may be, shall certify the statement to the district attorney of a district where venue lies, and the district attorney shall institute and prosecute a criminal proceeding against the accused for contempt of the legislature.

Proposed law additionally requires the president or speaker to certify the statement to the appropriate law enforcement officer, who shall immediately arrest the accused for contempt of the legislature.

(Amends R.S. 24:4(A) and (B) and 5)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs to the original bill:

1. Remove proposed law additional grounds for a person to be held in contempt of the legislature.
2. Provide for increasing criminal fines for multiple offenses, rather than a proposed law increase from \$1,000 to \$50,000.