

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 127

BY REPRESENTATIVE STUART BISHOP

JUDGES: Requests the Louisiana Supreme Court to make financial disclosure reports available for viewing on the internet

1   A RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the Louisiana Supreme Court to allow the public to review personal  
3 financial disclosure reports of judges filed with the office of the judicial  
4 administrator by making the reports available for viewing on the internet.

5       WHEREAS, in 2008, the Louisiana Legislature enacted personal financial disclosure  
6 requirements for each person holding statewide elected office, the secretary of each state  
7 agency, the Public Service Commission Executive Secretary, the State Civil Service  
8 Director, the Superintendent of Education, the Commissioner of Higher Education, president  
9 of each public postsecondary education system, the Commissioner of Administration, senior  
10 staff of the Office of the Governor, members of the Louisiana Legislature, members of the  
11 Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Superintendent of the Recovery School  
12 District, members of the Ethics Adjudicatory Board, members of the Board of Ethics, the  
13 administrator of the Ethics Administration, the executive director of the Louisiana Housing  
14 Corporation, members of the Board of Pardons, local elected officials representing a voting  
15 district with a population above or below 5,000, members of the State Civil Service  
16 Commission, members of the Board of Commissioners of the Louisiana Stadium and  
17 Exposition District, each member of the governing authority or management board of a  
18 charter school, and each member or designees of members of a board or commission that has  
19 the authority to expend, disburse, or invest ten thousand dollars or more of funds in a fiscal  
20 year; and

1           WHEREAS, the Louisiana Legislature has statutorily mandated that personal  
2 financial disclosure reports filed by these officials be made available on a website by the  
3 Board of Ethics "to enhance the public's ability to gather information easily regarding the  
4 conduct of elected officials, public employees, and other persons regulated by the board";  
5 and

6           WHEREAS, the Louisiana Ethics Administration complies with state law and  
7 maintains a website with thousands of personal financial disclosure statements available for  
8 public viewing, including a searchable database; and

9           WHEREAS, Louisiana has been nationally recognized for the adoption of personal  
10 financial disclosure laws for legislators, receiving the number one ranking in the country  
11 with an "A" grade by the Center for Public Integrity for legislative financial disclosure  
12 requirements; and

13           WHEREAS, the Louisiana State Senate passed Senate Resolution No. 6 in the First  
14 Extraordinary Session in 2008, urging and requesting the Louisiana Supreme Court to adopt  
15 the same financial disclosure standards for judges that are applicable to other elected  
16 officials in the Code of Governmental Ethics; and

17           WHEREAS, the Louisiana Supreme Court subsequently adopted Rule XXXIX to  
18 require all elected judges, except justices of the peace, to annually file a financial statement  
19 with the office of the judicial administrator of the Louisiana Supreme Court that is  
20 substantially similar to the requirements in statute for legislative personal financial  
21 disclosure statements; and

22           WHEREAS, the Louisiana Supreme Court maintains a website that includes Rule  
23 XXXIX, the blank financial statement form required by Rule XXXIX, and a list of persons  
24 who have failed to file, failed to timely file, failed to provide omitted information, or failed  
25 to provide accurate information as required by Rule XXXIX; and

26           WHEREAS, Rule XXXIX specifies that the financial statements required by the  
27 Louisiana Supreme Court are a matter of public record and are subject to public inspection  
28 and copying; and

1           WHEREAS, members of the public are unable to view the financial statements of  
2 elected judges across Louisiana, without making a formal records request to the Louisiana  
3 Supreme Court in New Orleans; and

4           WHEREAS, the purpose of financial disclosure of elected officials is to promote  
5 public access and oversight, discourage potential conflicts of interest, and enhance public  
6 confidence in the integrity of state government, including the judiciary; and

7           WHEREAS, the Louisiana Supreme Court maintains the authority to redact any  
8 sensitive information necessary for the safety of judges prior to publication; and

9           WHEREAS, it would greatly benefit the public interest and the integrity of the  
10 judiciary for the Louisiana Supreme Court to enhance the public's ability to gather  
11 information easily regarding the conduct of the judiciary.

12           THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby  
13 urge and request the Louisiana Supreme Court to allow the public to review disclosure  
14 reports filed with the office of the judicial administrator by making the reports available for  
15 viewing on the internet.

16           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the  
17 chief justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

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#### 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)]

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HR 127 Original

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Stuart Bishop

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