

2025 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 644

BY REPRESENTATIVE BROWN

COURTS/COURT COSTS: Provides for the assessment of a fee for filing civil and criminal matters

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 13:86, relative to court costs; to provide relative to court costs
3 collected for civil filings and criminal convictions; to provide for the allocation of
4 such costs; to provide for the use of proceeds of such costs; and to provide for related
5 matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 13:86 is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

8 §86. Judicial College; education account; sources of funds

9 A. In addition to any other filing fee or cost imposed or authorized by law,
10 the clerk of the supreme court and each city, parish, juvenile, family, district, and
11 appellate court shall impose and collect from each party liable for court costs the
12 additional sum of one dollar and fifty cents for the initial filing in all civil matters.

13 B. In addition to the costs provided for in Subsection A of this Section, a
14 person convicted of a felony, a misdemeanor, or violating an ordinance of any local
15 government, including a traffic felony, traffic misdemeanor, or a local traffic
16 violation, shall be assessed an additional one dollar and fifty cents as a special court
17 cost. These costs shall be imposed by all courts, including mayor's courts and
18 magistrate courts.

19 C. All funds collected pursuant to this Section shall be deposited into a
20 special account and transmitted monthly to the Louisiana Supreme Court in the

1 manner and form specified by the supreme court ~~and~~ provided that one-third of the
2 total collected shall be used solely to defray the costs associated with the general
3 growth and program improvement strategies of the Judicial College, and the
4 remainder shall be used pursuant to the court's direction to defray the costs
5 associated with coordinated efforts between the Judicial College and the Judiciary
6 Commission for improved education concerning judicial ethics and best practices of
7 the court or for other expenses of the Judiciary Commission related to the education,
8 investigation, or enforcement of judicial ethics. The supreme court shall conduct an
9 annual audit of the books and accounts relating to the funds collected pursuant to this
10 Section, and shall file the audit with the legislative auditor where it shall be available
11 for public inspection.

12 Section 2. In accordance with the provisions of R.S. 13:62, the change in court costs
13 or fees as provided by this Act shall become effective on January 1, 2026, if the Judicial
14 Council provides a recommendation that such court costs and fees meet the applicable
15 guidelines in its report to the Louisiana Legislature. No fee shall be imposed or collected
16 without Judicial Council approval.

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 644 Engrossed

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Abstract: Provides for the assessment of a \$1.50 court cost for civil and criminal matters with the proceeds funding the Judicial College and education efforts of the supreme court.

Present law requires the collection of an additional court cost in the amount of 50¢ to be collected by the supreme court, appellate courts, district courts, parish courts, and city courts, upon civil filings and traffic matters, with exceptions for some juvenile and family matters. Requires the costs collected to be used to defray the costs associated with the growth and program improvement of the Judicial College.

Present law provides that the 50¢ cost shall be collected for the initial filing in all civil matters, with no exceptions, and provides that the 50¢ cost shall be assessed as court costs for criminal convictions, including traffic offenses. Requires an annual audit of the funds.

Proposed law retains present law but increases the amount to \$1.50. Further requires that one-third of the funds collected be used solely for the defrayment of the costs of the Judicial College.

Proposed law requires that the remainder of funds be used to coordinate efforts between the Judicial College and the supreme court on education regarding judicial ethics and best practices of the court or enforcement of judicial ethics.

Proposed law provides for an effective date of Jan. 1, 2026, if the Judicial Council provides a recommendation that such court costs and fees meet applicable guidelines.

(Amends R.S. 13:86)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Judiciary to the original bill:

1. Provide an effective date of Jan. 1, 2026, if approved by the Judicial Council.