

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 398

BY REPRESENTATIVE ZERINGUE

PUBLIC OFFLS/EMPS: Prohibits payment for lodging, meals, or incidental expenses for state public officials and employees from exceeding amounts for such expenses established by the U.S. General Services Administration

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 39:231(A) and to enact R.S. 13:6, R.S. 24:16, and R.S.
3 39:231(E), relative to travel by state government officers and employees; to provide
4 a maximum for payments by the state for certain types of travel expenses; to provide
5 exceptions; to provide for applicability; to provide for an effective date; and to
6 provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. R.S. 13:6 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

9 §6. Maximum payment for lodging, meals, or incidental expenses for certain
10 agencies and entities in the judicial branch

11 A. Except as otherwise provided in this Section, and notwithstanding any
12 other provision of law to the contrary, no court authorized by Article V of the
13 Constitution of Louisiana or any state entity in the judicial branch shall pay more for
14 lodging, meals, or incidental expenses for any officer or employee than the rates
15 established by the United States General Services Administration for such expenses.

16 B. For a conference or meeting that has lodging reserved or recommended
17 near the conference or meeting facility, if an officer or employee submits
18 documentation proving that it would cost less to stay at the reserved or recommended
19 lodging rather than elsewhere and commute, the officer or employee may be

1 reimbursed the full reserved or recommended lodging rate even if it exceeds the
2 United States General Services Administration lodging rate for that locale.

3 Section 2. R.S. 24:16 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

4 §16. Maximum payment for lodging, meals, or incidental expenses for the
5 legislative branch

6 A. Except as otherwise provided in this Section, and notwithstanding any
7 other provision of law to the contrary, no agency or entity in the legislative branch
8 shall pay more for lodging, meals, or incidental expenses for any officer or employee
9 than the rates established by the United States General Services Administration for
10 such expenses.

11 B. For a conference or meeting that has lodging reserved or recommended
12 near the conference or meeting facility, if an officer or employee submits
13 documentation proving that it would cost less to stay at the reserved or recommended
14 lodging rather than elsewhere and commute, the officer or employee may be
15 reimbursed the full reserved or recommended lodging rate even if it exceeds the
16 United States General Services Administration lodging rate for that locale.

17 Section 3. R.S. 39:231(A) is hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 39:231(E) is
18 hereby enacted to read as follows:

19 §231. Commissioner to prescribe rules governing travel and traveling expenses; use
20 of state aircraft and other vehicles by statewide elected officials; minimum
21 prices allowed for meals to state employees; maximum payment for certain
22 travel expenses for state officers and employees

23 A. Except as otherwise provided in ~~Subsection B, Subsection C, and~~
24 ~~Subsection D~~ this Section, the commissioner of administration, with the approval of
25 the governor, shall, by rule or regulation, prescribe the conditions under which each
26 of various forms of transportation may be used by state officers and employees in the
27 discharge of the duties of their respective offices and positions in the state service
28 and the conditions under which allowances will be granted for traveling expenses.

29 * * *

1 E.(1) Except as otherwise provided in this Subsection, and notwithstanding
2 any other provision of law to the contrary, no agency or entity in the executive
3 branch shall pay more for lodging, meals, or incidental expenses for any state officer
4 or employee than the rates established by the United States General Services
5 Administration for such expenses.

6 (2) For a conference or meeting that has lodging reserved or recommended
7 near the conference or meeting facility, if an officer or employee submits
8 documentation proving that it would cost less to stay at the reserved or recommended
9 lodging rather than elsewhere and commute, the officer or employee may be
10 reimbursed the full reserved or recommended lodging rate even if it exceeds the
11 United States General Services Administration lodging rate for that locale.

12 Section 4. This Act shall apply to expenses for lodging and meals and incidental
13 expenses incurred on and after July 1, 2026. Reimbursements for such expenses incurred
14 prior to July 1, 2026, but submitted after that date shall be at the rate in effect for the paying
15 organization at the time the expense was incurred.

16 Section 5. The provisions of this Act shall become effective July 1, 2026.

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 398 Original

2026 Regular Session

Zeringue

Abstract: Prohibits payment by any state agency or entity for lodging, meals, and incidental expenses for any officer or employee in excess of amounts established by the U.S. General Services Administration (USGA).

JUDICIAL BRANCH

Present law (R.S. 13:1 et seq.) establishes general provisions governing the judicial officers and employees of the state court system. Proposed law prohibits any court authorized by present constitution (Art. V) or any state entity in the judicial branch from paying more for lodging, meals, or incidental expenses for any officer or employee than the rate established by the USGA for such expenses. Further provides an exception for a conference or meeting that has lodging reserved or recommended near the conference or meeting facility. In such case, if the officer or employee submits documentation proving that it would cost less to stay at the reserved or recommended lodging rather than elsewhere and commute, proposed law authorizes the officer or employee to be reimbursed the full reserved or recommended lodging rate even if it exceeds the USGA lodging rate for that locale.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Present law (R.S. 24:1 et seq.) establishes general provisions governing the operations of the legislature. Proposed law prohibits any agency or entity in the legislative branch from paying more for lodging, meals, or incidental expenses for any officer or employee than the rate established by the USGA for such expenses. Further provides an exception for a conference or meeting that has lodging reserved or recommended near the conference or meeting facility. In such case, if the officer or employee submits documentation proving that it would cost less to stay at the reserved or recommended lodging rather than elsewhere and commute, proposed law authorizes the officer or employee to be reimbursed the full reserved or recommended lodging rate even if it exceeds the USGA lodging rate for that locale.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Present law (R.S. 39:231) authorizes the commissioner of administration, with the approval of the governor, to prescribe the conditions that state officers and employees may be granted travel expenses. Proposed law prohibits any agency or entity in the executive branch from paying more for lodging, meals, or incidental expenses for any officer or employee than the rate established by the USGA for such expenses. Further provides an exception for a conference or meeting that has lodging reserved or recommended near the conference or meeting facility. In such case, if the officer or employee submits documentation proving that it would cost less to stay at the reserved or recommended lodging rather than elsewhere and commute, proposed law authorizes the officer or employee to be reimbursed the full reserved or recommended lodging rate even if it exceeds the USGA lodging rate for that locale.

Proposed law applies to expenses for lodging and meals and incidental expenses incurred on and after July 1, 2026. Reimbursements for these expenses incurred prior to July 1, 2026, but submitted after that date are to be at the rate in effect for the paying organization at the time the expense was incurred.

Effective July 1, 2026.

(Amends R.S. 39:231(A); Adds R.S. 13:6, R.S. 24:16, and R.S. 39:231(E))