
DIGEST

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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))