

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1107

BY REPRESENTATIVE MELERINE

CRIMINAL/PROCEDURE: Provides relative to determination of intellectual disability in capital cases

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact Code of Criminal Procedure Article 905.5.1(C) and 924(introductory
3 paragraph) and to enact Code of Criminal Procedure Articles 905.5.1(I), 924(7)
4 through (9), and 926.5, relative to intellectual disabilities in capital cases; to provide
5 for definitions; to provide for a prohibition; to provide relative to the effectiveness
6 of certain provisions of law; to provide for legislative overrule of certain
7 jurisprudence; to provide for a burden of proof; to provide for criteria; to provide for
8 duties of the court; to provide for duties of the defendant or petitioner; to provide
9 relative to evidentiary hearings; to provide for retroactivity; and to provide for
10 related matters.

11 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

12 Section 1. Code of Criminal Procedure Article 905.5.1(C) and 924(introductory
13 paragraph) are hereby amended and reenacted and Code of Criminal Procedure Articles
14 905.5.1(I), 924(7) through (9), and 926.5 are hereby enacted to read as follows:

15 Art. 905.5.1. Intellectual disability

16 * * *

17 C.(1)(a) Any defendant in a capital case ~~making a claim of~~ who claims the
18 existence of an intellectual disability shall prove ~~the allegation~~ all of the following
19 by a preponderance of the evidence.;

1 Art. 924. Definitions

2 As used in this Title, the following terms have the following meanings:

3 * * *

4 (7) "Adaptive behavior" means the effectiveness or degree to which the
5 petitioner meets developmental and sociocultural standards for personal
6 independence and social responsibility that, without ongoing support, limit the
7 functioning of the petitioner in one or more activities of daily living that include but
8 are not limited to communication, social participation, and independent living across
9 multiple environments such as home, school, work, and the community.

10 (8) "Intellectually disabled" means a condition that occurred before the
11 petitioner reached eighteen years of age, is based on a mental deficit that involves
12 significantly subaverage intellectual functioning, and exists concurrently with
13 significant impairment in adaptive behavior.

14 (9) "Significantly subaverage intellectual functioning" means an intelligence
15 quotient of seventy or below.

16 * * *

17 Art. 926.5. Determination of intellectual disability in capital cases; post-conviction
18 relief

19 A. In *State v. Williams*, 2001-1650 (La. 11/1/02), 831 So. 2d 835, the
20 Louisiana Supreme Court created a test for applying a determination of intellectual
21 disability in *Atkins v. Virginia*, 536 U.S. 304 (2002) absent legislative guidance. In
22 *State v. Dunn*, 2007-0878 (La. 1/25/08), 974 So. 2d 658, the Louisiana Supreme
23 Court held that, notwithstanding Article 905.5.1, *Williams* still applied to all claims
24 of intellectual disability raised post-trial pursuant to *Atkins*. As provided in this
25 Article, the legislature unambiguously overrules both *Dunn* and *Williams* to the
26 extent these cases conflict with this Article.

27 B. No person found to be intellectually disabled pursuant to this Article shall
28 be subjected to a sentence of death.

1 C.(1) To obtain relief pursuant to this Article, a petitioner shall prove all of
2 the following by clear and convincing evidence:

3 (a) The petitioner has significantly subaverage intellectual functioning.

4 (b) The petitioner has significant and substantial deficits in adaptive
5 behavior.

6 (c) Both the significantly subaverage intellectual functioning and the
7 substantial deficits in adaptive behavior manifested before the petitioner reached
8 eighteen years of age.

9 (d) Both the significantly subaverage intellectual functioning and substantial
10 deficits in adaptive behavior exist concurrently.

11 (2) A petitioner shall prove all of the criteria provided in Subparagraph (1)
12 of this Paragraph to be considered intellectually disabled.

13 D.(1) To prove significantly subaverage intellectual functioning for post-
14 conviction relief, the petitioner shall submit a written expert report of a
15 determination of the petitioner's intelligence quotient using current community,
16 nationally, and culturally accepted intelligence testing procedures within ten days of
17 the testing of the petitioner.

18 (2) The court shall consider the margin of error when evaluating a
19 petitioner's intelligence quotient test score; however, the court shall not presume that
20 an intelligence quotient score falls in the bottom of the error range.

21 (3) The court shall consider the cumulative effects of multiple scores and
22 shall presume that higher intelligence quotient scores more accurately reflect a
23 person's capacity. A score above seventy-five on any scientifically recognized,
24 standardized intelligence quotient test that is individually administered by a licensed
25 psychiatrist or psychologist creates an irrebuttable presumption that the petitioner
26 does not have significantly subaverage intellectual functioning.

27 E. Any evidentiary hearing, if applicable, shall be conducted in accordance
28 with Article 930.

1 F. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, Article
 2 905.5.1 shall become inoperative immediately upon, and to the extent permitted by,
 3 a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States overruling *Atkins v. Virginia*,
 4 536 U.S. 304 (2002), thereby restoring this state with the authority to impose or carry
 5 out a sentence of death notwithstanding a claim of intellectual disability.

6 G. Any civil action seeking declaratory, injunctive, or other relief
 7 challenging the constitutionality of this Article, in whole or in part, shall be brought
 8 exclusively by ordinary proceeding in the Twenty-First Judicial District Court.

9 H. This Article applies both retroactively and prospectively to all post-
 10 conviction relief that is sought on the basis of the petitioner's intellectual disability.

11 Section 2. The Louisiana State Law Institute is hereby authorized and directed to
 12 renumber the Subparagraphs of Code of Criminal Procedure Article 926 so as to properly
 13 place Code of Criminal Procedure Article 926(7) through (9) as enacted by this Act.

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 1107 Original

2026 Regular Session

Melerine

Abstract: Provides relative to the legislative overruling of certain jurisprudence with respect to the determination of intellectual disability in capital cases.

Present law (C.Cr.P. Art. 905.5.1) provides relative to capital defendants who have intellectual disabilities.

Proposed law generally retains present law.

Present law requires any defendant in a capital case who makes a claim of intellectual disability to prove the allegation by a preponderance of the evidence.

Proposed law amends present law to require the defendant to prove all of the following:

- (1) The defendant has significantly subaverage intellectual functioning with consideration of the margin of error when evaluating a defendant's intelligence quotient test score.
- (2) The defendant has significant and substantial deficits in adaptive behavior.
- (3) Both the significantly subaverage intellectual functioning and the substantial deficits in adaptive behavior manifested before the defendant reached the age of 18 years.

- (4) Both the significantly subaverage intellectual functioning and substantial deficits in adaptive behavior exist concurrently.

Proposed law requires a defendant to prove all of the criteria provided in proposed law to be considered intellectually disabled.

Proposed law provides that present law becomes inoperative immediately upon, and to the extent permitted by, a decision of the U.S. Supreme Court overruling *Atkins v. Virginia*, relative to the imposition of a sentence of death notwithstanding a claim of intellectual disability.

Present law (C.Cr.P. Art. 924) provides for definitions relative to post-conviction relief.

Proposed law retains present law and defines the terms "adaptive behavior", "intellectually disabled", and "significantly subaverage intellectual functioning".

Proposed law provides for the legislative overruling of *State v. Williams* and *State v. Dunn*, relative to capital defendants who allege a claim of intellectual disability.

Proposed law provides that no person found to be intellectually disabled pursuant to proposed law shall be subjected to a sentence of death.

Proposed law provides for criteria that a petitioner is required to prove by clear and convincing evidence in order to obtain post-conviction relief under proposed law.

Proposed law requires a petitioner to prove all of the criteria provided in proposed law to be considered intellectually disabled.

Proposed law provides for certain submissions from the petitioner to prove significantly subaverage intellectual functioning for post-conviction relief. Further provides for duties of the court relative to consideration of the margin of error when evaluating a petitioner's intelligence quotient test score and the cumulative effects of multiple scores.

Proposed law provides a rebuttable presumption that the petitioner does not have significantly subaverage intellectual functioning if he has obtained a score above 75 on any scientifically recognized, standardized intelligence quotient test that is individually administered by a licensed psychiatrist or psychologist.

Proposed law requires any evidentiary hearing, if applicable, to be conducted in accordance with present law (C.Cr.P. Art. 930).

Proposed law provides that present law (C.Cr.P. Art. 905.5.1) becomes inoperative immediately upon, and to the extent permitted by, a decision of the U.S. Supreme Court overruling *Atkins v. Virginia*, relative to the imposition of a sentence of death notwithstanding a claim of intellectual disability.

Proposed law provides for venue in the 21st JDC for any civil action seeking declaratory, injunctive, or other relief challenging the constitutionality of proposed law, in whole or in part.

Proposed law applies both retroactively and prospectively to all post-conviction relief that is sought on the basis of the petitioner's intellectual disability.

Proposed law provides for duties of the La. State Law Institute relative to placement of proposed law.

(Amends C.Cr.P. Art. 905.5.1(C) and 924(intro. para.); Adds C.Cr.P. Arts. 905.5.1(I), 924(7)-(9), and 926.5)