



**OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
Fiscal Note**

Fiscal Note On: **SB 217** SLS 26RS 510
 Bill Text Version: **ENGROSSED**
 Opp. Chamb. Action:
 Proposed Amd.:
 Sub. Bill For.:

| | | |
|--|---------|-----------------------------|
| Date: April 3, 2026 | 1:47 PM | Author: MORRIS, JAY |
| Dept./Agy.: Orleans Parish Courts | | |
| Subject: Operations of the Courts | | Analyst: Barry Kelly |

COURTS EG SEE FISC NOTE GF EX Page 1 of 2
 Provides for the administration of courts in Orleans Parish and the number of court judges. (2/3 - CA 5s15(D)) (8/1/26)

Purpose of Bill: This bill reduces nine Orleans Parish judgeships by abolishing two Civil District Court judgeships, four Criminal District Court judgeships, two Municipal and Traffic Court judgeships; and one Orleans Parish Juvenile Court judgeship. It consolidates judicial funds into a single Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund managed by an executive committee and transfers crier compensation to the Orleans Parish Sheriff. Additionally, the bill increases City Court civil limits to \$50,000, and shifts appellate jurisdiction for the First and Second City Courts and Municipal and Traffic Court from the Civil and Criminal District Courts to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal.

| EXPENDITURES | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 | 2029-30 | 2030-31 | 5 -YEAR TOTAL |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------|
| State Gen. Fd. | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | |
| Agy. Self-Gen. | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | |
| Ded./Other | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | |
| Federal Funds | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Local Funds | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | |
| Annual Total | | | | | | |

| REVENUES | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 | 2029-30 | 2030-31 | 5 -YEAR TOTAL |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------|
| State Gen. Fd. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Agy. Self-Gen. | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | |
| Ded./Other | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Federal Funds | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Local Funds | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | SEE BELOW | |
| Annual Total | | | | | | |

EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION

This bill may reduce state and local costs by abolishing judgeships and staff of various Orleans Parish courts. In addition, the bill may impact agency self-generated and local expenditures due to the shifting of caseloads from the District Courts to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal and City Courts. The bill also shifts crier costs from the Civil District Court and City of New Orleans to the Orleans Parish Sheriff. The exact fiscal impact of this bill will be affected by the unknown timing of judicial attrition and volume of shifted cases. See below for more detail on potential expenditure impacts:

Judges and Support Staff: Abolishing nine judgeships and related staff may decrease annual state costs by \$2,608,575 (\$2,465,911 General Fund + \$142,664 Statutorily Dedicated) and local costs by \$3,232,618 (\$2,508,706 City of New Orleans + \$683,912 Civil Court + \$40,000 Municipal/Traffic Court), as detailed below:

| Category | Criminal | Civil | Muni/Traffic | Juvenile | Grand Total |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Judges Eliminated | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| State General Fund (Judges + Staff) | \$1,589,605 | \$475,312 | \$163,338 | \$237,656 | \$2,465,911 |
| Statutorily Dedicated (Judges) | \$74,752 | \$37,376 | \$11,848 | \$18,688 | \$142,664 |
| Total State Decrease | \$1,664,357 | \$512,688 | \$175,186 | \$256,344 | \$2,608,575 |
| Local Decrease (Judges + Staff) | \$1,315,421 | \$683,912 | \$947,000 | \$286,285 | \$3,232,618 |
| GRAND TOTAL ANNUAL DECREASE | \$2,979,778 | \$1,196,600 | \$1,122,186 | \$542,629 | \$5,841,193 |

Note: Current law redirects local Juvenile judgeship savings to juvenile services within the City. Criminal Court local savings assume the elimination of one local funded secretary per judge. However, if SGF-funded secretaries are eliminated instead, savings will shift from local funds to the SGF (average \$56,850 per year per position).

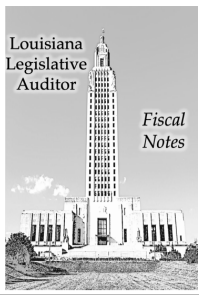
Expenditures Explanation Continued on Page 2

REVENUE EXPLANATION

This bill may increase agency self-generated and local fund revenues for the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal and First and Second City Courts while decreasing revenues for the Civil and Criminal District Courts as caseloads shift due to changes in jurisdiction related to appeals and civil limits. The exact fiscal impact is indeterminable as the volume, timing, and fees to be assessed on these transferred cases is currently unknown. Revenue Explanation Continued on Page 2

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| <p><u>Senate</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S & H}</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S & H}</p> | <p><u>House</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6.8(F)(1) >= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H & S}</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6.8(G) >= \$500,000 Tax or Fee Increase or a Net Fee Decrease {S}</p> |
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Michael G. Battle
 Manager, Advisory Services



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CONTINUED EXPLANATION from page one:

Expenditures Explanation Continued from Page 1

Caseload Shifts - The expansion of City Court civil limits and the rerouting of City Court and Municipal and Traffic Court appeals to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal may increase expenditures for the First and Second City Courts and the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal. Conversely, this may decrease expenditures for the Civil and Criminal District Courts. The exact impact on local and agency self-generated expenditures in total, and at the individual court levels, is currently indeterminable due to unknown future case volumes and transfer timelines.

Crier Expenditures - This bill shifts the responsibility for Civil District Court criers to the Orleans Parish Sheriff, resulting in a transfer of expenditures rather than an increase in expenditures. Excluding the two crier positions associated with the abolished judgeships, the Civil District Court currently funds 12 criers at an annual cost of \$79,040 each. Transferring these positions may decrease the Court's annual payroll expenditures by an estimated \$948,480. Furthermore, state law requires the City of New Orleans to also contribute to crier compensation. Because the City's current contribution levels are unknown, the exact decrease in City expenditures is indeterminable. However, these costs will now be borne by the Sheriff's Office.

Revenue Explanation Continued from Page 1

Accounting and Control - This bill creates the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund for the parish of Orleans to centralize the accounting and control of the judicial expense funds currently maintained separately by Criminal District Court and Civil District Court (including First and Second City Courts). Merging these funds into a single, consolidated fund governed by a committee may impact the amounts available for each court's operations.

Senate Dual Referral Rules
13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S & H}
13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S & H}

House
6.8(F)(1) >= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H & S}
6.8(G) >= \$500,000 Tax or Fee Increase or a Net Fee Decrease {S}

Signature of Michael G. Battle
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