

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 538

BY REPRESENTATIVE FREIBERG

COURTS/JUVENILE: Provides relative to the judicial expense fund for the Juvenile Court for the parish of East Baton Rouge

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 13:1631, relative to the judicial expense fund for the Juvenile  
3 Court of East Baton Rouge Parish; to modify relative to the chief judge and all  
4 judges of the court; to establish functions of the collective judges; to authorize the  
5 clerk of court to collect certain additional costs in civil and criminal nonsupport  
6 proceedings; to provide for the control, expenditure, and audit of monies in the  
7 judicial expense fund; to increase the civil filing fee; to prohibit payment of salaries  
8 from the judicial expense fund; and to provide for related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 13:1631 is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

11 §1631. Judicial expense fund for the Juvenile Court for the parish of East Baton  
12 Rouge; established; disbursements

13 A. In addition to all other fees or costs ~~now or hereafter~~ provided by law, the  
14 clerk of court of the Nineteenth Judicial District shall collect from every person  
15 filing any action, suit, or motion and rule to show cause on the docket of the Juvenile  
16 Court of East Baton Rouge Parish and who is not otherwise ~~exempted~~ exempt by law  
17 from the payment of court costs, a sum to be determined by the ~~chief judge of the~~  
18 court, but judges of the court, sitting en banc, which sum shall not to exceed fifteen  
19 seventy-five dollars, subject, however, to the provisions of Code of Civil Procedure  
20 Article 5181 et seq.; and in all criminal nonsupport cases over which the court has

1 jurisdiction, including contempt proceedings provided for by Children's Code Article  
2 1353, there shall be taxed as costs against every defendant who is convicted after  
3 trial or after plea of guilty or who forfeits his bond, a sum ~~likewise determined, but~~  
4 not to exceed ten dollars, which shall be in addition to all other fines, costs, or  
5 forfeitures lawfully imposed, and which shall be transmitted to the clerk for further  
6 disposition in accordance ~~herewith~~ with this Section.

7 B. The clerk of court shall place all sums collected or received ~~under~~  
8 pursuant to this Section in a separate account to be designated as the judicial expense  
9 fund for the Juvenile Court for the parish of East Baton Rouge. ~~The chief judge of~~  
10 the court judges, en banc, of the Juvenile Court of East Baton Rouge Parish shall  
11 ~~have control over the fund and all disbursements made therefrom. The chief judge~~  
12 The judges shall cause to be conducted annually an audit of the fund, ~~and the books,~~  
13 and related accounts relating thereto and shall file ~~same~~ a copy of the audit with the  
14 office of the legislative auditor, where it shall be available for public inspection.

15 C. ~~The chief judge~~ judges, en banc of the court Juvenile Court of East Baton  
16 Rouge Parish, in lieu of all or any part of the fees for reporting and transcribing  
17 testimony authorized ~~under~~ pursuant to the provisions of R.S. 13:961(F) or other  
18 applicable laws, and in addition to salaries otherwise provided, authorized, or  
19 established by law, may fix and pay each court reporter a salary from the judicial  
20 expense fund. ~~The chief judge~~ judges, en banc, may further appoint ~~such~~ secretarial,  
21 clerical, research, administrative, or other personnel necessary to expedite the  
22 business and function of the court and fix and pay all or any part of the salaries of  
23 such personnel out of the monies in the judicial expense fund. In like manner, the  
24 ~~chief judge~~ judges, en banc, may utilize the monies in the judicial expense fund to  
25 pay all or any part of the cost of establishing or maintaining a law library for the  
26 court, or for buying or maintaining any type of equipment, supplies, or other items  
27 consistent with or germane to the efficient operation of the court. In general, the  
28 judicial expense fund is established and may be used for any purpose or purposes  
29 connected with, incidental to, or related to the proper administration or functions of

1 the court, or of the ~~office~~ offices of the individual ~~judge~~ judges, and is in addition to  
2 any and all other funds, salaries, expenses, or other monies authorized by law for any  
3 of these purposes.

4 D. No salary shall be paid from the judicial expense fund to a judge of the  
5 court.

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#### 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)]

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HB 538 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

Freiberg

**Abstract:** Increases the maximum additional civil filing fee in the Juvenile Court of East Baton Rouge Parish from \$15 to \$75 and replaces the chief judge with the judges of the court, sitting en banc, for purposes of administering the judicial expense fund.

Present law requires the clerk of court for the 19th Judicial District to collect certain additional court costs in civil matters filed in the Juvenile Court of East Baton Rouge Parish in an amount determined by the chief judge, not to exceed \$15, and to collect certain additional costs in criminal nonsupport cases, not to exceed \$10.

Present law provides for the deposit of such monies into a judicial expense fund for the Juvenile Court, subject to the control of the chief judge, and provides for the use and annual audit of the fund.

Proposed law retains present law but increases the maximum amount of the additional civil filing fee from \$15 to \$75 and replaces references to the chief judge with the judges of the court, sitting en banc, for purposes of determining the amount of fees, controlling and administering the judicial expense fund, and conducting the required annual audit.

Present law prohibits payment of judicial salaries from the fund.

Proposed law retains present law.

(Amends R.S. 13:1631)