



**OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR  
Fiscal Note**

Fiscal Note On: **SB 217** SLS 26RS 510  
 Bill Text Version: **REENGROSSED**  
 Opp. Chamb. Action: **w/ HSE COMM AMD**  
 Proposed Amd.:  
 Sub. Bill For.:

<b>Date:</b> May 4, 2026	5:36 PM	<b>Author:</b> MORRIS, JAY
<b>Dept./Agy.:</b> Orleans Parish Courts		
<b>Subject:</b> Operations of the Courts		<b>Analyst:</b> Barry Kelly

COURTS RE1 SEE FISC NOTE GF EX See Note 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 eliminates eight Orleans Parish judgeships by abolishing three Criminal District Court judgeships, one Civil District Court judgeship, two Municipal and Traffic Court judgeships, and two Orleans Parish Juvenile Court judgeships. 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. It also allows for the optional salary supplementation of commissioners, authorizes the appointment of a Juvenile Court hearing officer/commissioner and civil court hearing officers, removes statutory minimums for the number of Criminal Court law clerks and secretaries, and repeals current law that requires the State General Fund to pay for minute clerks and court reporters serving the four Criminal District Court commissioners.

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	

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	

**EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION**

**This bill may annually decrease State General Fund Expenditures by approximately \$2.2 Million, Statutory Dedicated Expenditures by \$124,000, and Local Fund Expenditures by approximately \$2.8 Million. However, such reductions may be further affected by additional cost reductions and/or cost increases. The exact impacts are indeterminable as they depend on future management decisions and effects such as shifting of cases amongst courts. SEE BELOW FOR DETAILS:**

**Judges and Support Staff:** Abolishing eight judgeships and related staff may decrease annual state costs by \$2,192,486 (\$2,068,510 General Fund + \$123,976 Statutorily Dedicated) and local costs by \$2,848,092 (\$2,466,136 City of New Orleans + \$341,956 Civil Court + \$40,000 Municipal/Traffic Court), as detailed below:

Category	Criminal	Civil	Muni/Traffic	Juvenile	Grand Total
Judges Eliminated	3	1	2	2	8
State General Fund (Judges + Staff)	\$1,192,204	\$237,656	\$163,338	\$475,312	\$2,068,510
Statutorily Dedicated (Judges)	\$56,064	\$18,688	\$11,848	\$37,376	\$123,976
<b>Total State Decrease</b>	<b>\$1,248,268</b>	<b>\$256,344</b>	<b>\$175,186</b>	<b>\$512,688</b>	<b>\$2,192,486</b>
Local Decrease (Judges + Staff)	\$986,566	\$341,956	\$947,000	\$572,570	\$2,848,092
<b>GRAND TOTAL ANNUAL DECREASE</b>	<b>\$2,234,834</b>	<b>\$598,300</b>	<b>\$1,122,186</b>	<b>\$1,085,258</b>	<b>\$5,040,578</b>

**Note:** Current law redirects local Juvenile judgeship savings to juvenile services within the City.

**Expenditures Explanation Continued on Page 2**

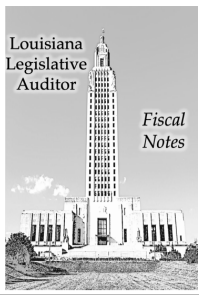
**REVENUE EXPLANATION**

**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 are currently unknown.**

**Revenue Explanation Continued on Page 2**

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| <p><u>Senate</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 13.5.1 &gt;= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S &amp; H}</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 13.5.2 &gt;= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S &amp; H}</p> | <p><u>House</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6.8(F)(1) &gt;= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H &amp; S}</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6.8(G) &gt;= \$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:

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Expenditures Explanation Continued from Page 1

Criminal Court Minute Clerks and Stenographers/Court Reporters - The bill repeals current law that requires the State General Fund to pay for minute clerks and court reporters serving the four Criminal District Court commissioners. According to the FY 2025 judicial appropriations bill, the State General Fund paid a total of \$137,786 for these employees (\$79,683 for the four minute clerks + \$58,103 for the four court reporters). Therefore, state general fund expenditures may decrease by \$137,786 annually for these positions.

Salary Supplement for Criminal Court Commissioners - The bill authorizes the payment of optional salary supplements for Criminal Court commissioners by the City of New Orleans or the Consolidated Judicial Expense Fund, as determined by the executive committee. The fiscal impact of this provision is currently indeterminable, as it depends on future decisions by the committee. According to City officials, they have no plans to supplement salaries.

Criminal Court Law Clerks and Secretaries - The bill removes the statutory minimum number of law clerks and secretaries to be employed by the Criminal Court and allows the executive committee to approve the number of these positions. The funding for these positions includes a mixture of local and State General Fund dollars. To the extent that the number of positions change, local and state expenditures may be impacted; however, the exact amount is currently indeterminable, as it depends on future decisions by the committee.

Juvenile Court Hearing Officer/Commissioner - The bill authorizes Juvenile Court judges to appoint a hearing officer/commissioner for the Juvenile Court, noting that the City of New Orleans is not required to provide additional appropriations to support this position. The exact impact of this provision is currently indeterminable, as it depends on future decisions by the Juvenile Court judges.

Civil Court Hearing Officer - The bill authorizes Civil Court judges to appoint hearing officers to hear paternity, support, and other domestic and family related matters. The exact impact of this provision is currently indeterminable, as it depends on future decisions by the Civil Court judges.

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 one crier position associated with the abolished judgeship, the Civil District Court would fund 13 criers at an annual cost of \$79,040 each. Transferring these positions may decrease the Court's annual payroll expenditures by an estimated \$1,027,520. 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
Michael G. Battle
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