

2020 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 122

BY REPRESENTATIVE GREGORY MILLER

1 AN ACT

2 To enact Chapter 11 of Title 35 of the Louisiana Statutes of 1950, to be comprised of R.S.  
3 35:701 and 702, relative to the effect of remote notarization during certain  
4 emergencies and disasters; to provide for notary services during the COVID-19  
5 public health emergency; to provide relative to the ratification of Section 6 of  
6 Proclamation Number 37 JBE 2020 and Part C of Section 5 of Proclamation Number  
7 41 JBE 2020; to provide for retroactive and prospective application; to provide for  
8 effectiveness, and to provide for related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. Chapter 11 of Title 35 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950,  
11 comprised of R.S. 35:701 and 702, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

12 CHAPTER 11. MODIFICATION OF PRESENCE REQUIREMENT FOR NOTARY

13 FUNCTIONS PERFORMED DURING 2020 COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH

14 EMERGENCY

15 §701. Purpose; ratification

16 A. The legislature finds that the COVID-19 public health emergency created  
17 a statewide emergency disrupting the ability of notaries public to be in the physical  
18 presence of persons whose signatures the notary public was authenticating. This  
19 Chapter is enacted for the benefit and protection of the state as a whole and its  
20 citizens, to prevent injustice, inequity, undue hardship, and disruption of transactions  
21 to persons relying on the authentication of signatures of persons not in the physical  
22 presence of a notary public by a notary public who authenticated the signature

1 through electronic means using audio-video communication. Therefore, this Chapter  
2 shall be liberally construed to effect its purposes.

3 B. The action of the governor of this state in issuing Section 6 of  
4 Proclamation Number 37 JBE 2020 and Part C of Section 5 of Proclamation Number  
5 41 JBE 2020 is hereby approved, ratified, and confirmed subject to the provisions  
6 of this Part.

7 §702. Remote notarization authorized

8 A. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, any act in which any person or  
9 witness appeared before a notary public using an electronic device or process which  
10 allowed all such persons and the notary public to communicate simultaneously by  
11 sight and sound and to which the electronic signatures of such persons, witnesses,  
12 and the notary public were affixed on or after March 11, 2020, and before May 1,  
13 2020, shall have the same force and effect as if all persons, witnesses, and the notary  
14 public had been in the physical presence of each other.

15 B. The provisions of Subsection A of this Section shall not apply to any  
16 testament, trust instrument, donation inter vivos, matrimonial agreement, act  
17 modifying, waiving, or extinguishing an obligation of final spousal support, or any  
18 amendments to such acts, or authentic acts.

19 C. Any act which would constitute an authentic act but for the appearance  
20 of one or more necessary persons via electronic means, may still be valid as an act  
21 under private signature or an acknowledged act.

22 Section 2. The provisions of this Act shall preempt and supersede but not repeal any  
23 conflicting provision of the Civil Code or any other provision of law to the extent that such  
24 provision conflicts with the provisions of this Act.

25 Section 3. This Act is declared to be interpretative, curative, and procedural, and  
26 therefore is to be applied retroactively as well as prospectively.

27 Section 4. The Louisiana State Law Institute is hereby directed to include as notes  
28 to this Act Proclamation Number 37 JBE 2020 and Proclamation Number 41 JBE 2020.

29 Section 5. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not  
30 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature

1 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If  
2 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become  
3 effective on the day following such approval.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_