
DIGEST

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HB 650 Reengrossed

2023 Regular Session

Edmonds

Abstract: Requires official journals of parishes, municipalities, and school boards to have websites and to place official proceedings and public notices on their websites and provides relative to costs and billing for publication.

Present law requires parishes, municipalities, and school boards to select a newspaper as their official journal and to publish their minutes, ordinances, resolutions, budgets and other official proceedings in their official journal.

Present law provides that such publication may be made under contract and sets maximum rates that the official journal may charge for publication. Provides that payment may be made monthly or quarterly. Proposed law retains present law.

Present law provides for maximum rates an official journal may charge generally as follows:

- (1) \$6 per square of 100 words in parishes that do not contain a city with a population of over 100,000.
- (2) \$.33 per agate line in parishes that contain a city with a population of more than 100,000, but not one with more than 300,000.
- (3) \$.37 per agate line in parishes that contain a city with a population of more than 300,000.

Proposed law provides for maximum rates based on price per character, unless the parties agree to a higher rate. Provides that "character" does not include spaces, letting, or kerning. Provides that the maximum rate is 2 cents per character if the parish has a municipality with a population of more than 100,000 and 1.5 cents if the parish does not have such a municipality. Provides for costs of specialized printing.

Proposed law provides for a transitional period between Jan. 1, 2024, and Dec. 31, 2026, during which parishes, municipalities, and school boards have the option of using either the present law or proposed law billing method (or both). Provides that as of Jan. 1, 2027, proposed law shall be the only billing method allowed.

Proposed law provides additionally relative to the publication of official proceedings and public notices by official journals as follows:

- (1) Requires official journals to have a website and post the local government's proceedings and notices on that website and on a collective website in which a majority of the state's official journals participate.
- (2) Requires an official journal to, within 30 days of publication, submit a bill for the publication with a copy of the published proceedings or notice and a verified statement that states the rate charged for the publication and certifies the number and dates of publication.
- (3) Requires that proceedings and notices be retained by the La. Public Notice program promulgated by the La. Press Assoc. for a minimum of three years.
- (4) Provides that a fault in publication that is not due to the negligence of the public body shall not affect the validity of the publication.

(Amends R.S. 43:140(3)(intro. para.) and 147(A) and (B); Adds R.S. 43:141.1, 143.1, 147.1, and 147.2; Repeals R.S. 43:147 and 147.2)