

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 263

BY REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM

COURTS: Provides with respect to the magistrate judge of the Fourteenth Judicial District Court and authority relative to specialty court programs

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 13:589(E), relative to the magistrate judge of the Fourteenth Judicial District
3 Court; to authorize the magistrate judge to preside over specialty court programs; to
4 define relative to specialty court; and to provide for related matters.

5 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

6 Section 1. R.S. 13:589(E) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

7 §589. Fourteenth Judicial District Court; magistrate judge

8 * * *

9 E.(1) Notwithstanding this Section or any other provision of law to the
10 contrary, subject to the approval of the en banc judges of the Fourteenth Judicial
11 District Court, the magistrate judge may preside over a specialty court program and
12 fully adjudicate the related felony charges for those who have pled into or otherwise
13 agreed to participate in a specialty court program.

14 (2) For purposes of this Subsection, "specialty court" means any program
15 designated as a specialty court by the Louisiana Supreme Court including drug court
16 programs, Veterans Court programs, driving while intoxicated court, mental health
17 court, reentry court, domestic abuse court, behavioral health court, or any juvenile
18 specialty court handling matters related to allegations of domestic abuse.

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)]

HB 263 Reengrossed

2026 Regular Session

Farnum

Abstract: Authorizes the magistrate judge of the 14th Judicial District Court (JDC) to preside over specialty court programs.

Present law provides relative to the elected magistrate judge of the 14th JDC. Further provides for term limits, qualifications, salary requirements, and related matters.

Proposed law retains present law.

Proposed law defines "specialty court" and further provides that subject to the approval of the en banc judges of the 14th JDC, the magistrate judge may preside over specialty court programs to fully adjudicate related felony charges for those who have pled into or otherwise agreed to participate in a specialty court program.

(Adds R.S. 13:589(E))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill:

1. Modify the definition of "specialty court" to include a drug, domestic abuse, behavioral health, or juvenile specialty court handling matters related to allegations of domestic abuse.