

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 398

BY REPRESENTATIVE ZERINGUE

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 39:231(A) and (C) and to enact R.S. 13:6, R.S. 24:16, and R.S.  
3 39:231(E), relative to travel by state government officers and employees; to provide  
4 a maximum for payments by the state for meals and incidental expenses; to provide  
5 for applicability; to provide for an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 13:6 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

8 §6. Maximum payment for meals or incidental expenses for certain agencies and  
9 entities in the judicial branch

10 Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, no court  
11 authorized by Article V of the Constitution of Louisiana or any state entity in the  
12 judicial branch shall reimburse more for meals or incidental expenses for any officer  
13 or employee than the maximum daily rates established by the United States General  
14 Services Administration for such expenses. Nothing in this Section shall prohibit  
15 reliance upon provisions for agency hosted conferences or meals during working  
16 meetings that are equivalent to those that apply to executive branch employees  
17 pursuant to R.S. 39:231.

1 Section 2. R.S. 24:16 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

2 §16. Maximum payment for meals or incidental expenses for the legislative branch

3 Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, no agency or  
4 entity in the legislative branch shall reimburse more for meals or incidental expenses  
5 for any officer or employee than the maximum daily rates established by the United  
6 States General Services Administration for such expenses. Nothing in this Section  
7 shall prohibit reliance upon provisions for agency hosted conferences or meals  
8 during working meetings that are equivalent to those that apply to executive branch  
9 employees pursuant to R.S. 39:231.

10 Section 3. R.S. 39:231(A) and (C) are hereby amended and reenacted and R.S.  
11 39:231(E) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

12 §231. Commissioner to prescribe rules governing travel and traveling expenses; use  
13 of state aircraft and other vehicles by statewide elected officials; minimum  
14 and maximum prices allowed for meals ~~to state employees~~

15 A. Except as otherwise provided in ~~Subsection B, Subsection C, and~~  
16 ~~Subsection D~~ this Section, the commissioner of administration, with the approval of  
17 the governor, shall, by rule or regulation, prescribe the conditions under which each  
18 of various forms of transportation may be used by state officers and employees in the  
19 discharge of the duties of their respective offices and positions in the state service  
20 and the conditions under which allowances will be granted for traveling expenses.

21 \* \* \*

22 C.(1) The commissioner of administration shall not establish meal  
23 allowances for state employees at a price below two dollars and seventy-five cents  
24 for breakfast, three dollars and twenty-five cents for lunch, and five dollars for  
25 dinner.

26 (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, no agency  
27 or entity in the executive branch shall reimburse more for meals or incidental  
28 expenses for any state officer or employee than the maximum daily rates established  
29 by the United States General Services Administration for such expenses, unless

1 authorized in writing by the commissioner of administration when acting in  
2 accordance with an issued policy and procedure memorandum.

3 \* \* \*

4 E.(1) Notwithstanding any provision of this Section to the contrary, during  
5 a state of disaster or emergency declared by the governor pursuant to R.S. 29:724,  
6 the maximum allowable reimbursement for meals and incidental expenses for state  
7 public officials and employees who are performing duties directly related to the  
8 declared emergency or disaster may exceed the amounts established by the United  
9 States General Services Administration by not more than seventy-five percent of the  
10 applicable rate established by the United States General Services Administration for  
11 the locality in which the expenses are incurred.

12 (2) The increased reimbursement rate authorized by Paragraph (1) of this  
13 Subsection shall apply only to expenses incurred:

14 (a) Within the designated emergency area as identified in the governor's  
15 executive order or proclamation, or in any area to which state personnel are deployed  
16 in direct response to the declared emergency or disaster.

17 (b) During the period beginning on the date of the governor's declaration of  
18 a state of disaster or emergency and ending on the date of the termination of the  
19 declared state of disaster or emergency, or thirty days after the date of the  
20 declaration, whichever occurs first. If the governor renews the declaration pursuant  
21 to R.S. 29:724(B)(1), the increased reimbursement rate shall continue for the  
22 duration of the renewed declaration.

23 (3) Each budget unit claiming reimbursement at the increased rate authorized  
24 by this Subsection shall maintain documentation sufficient to demonstrate that the  
25 expenses were incurred in direct connection with the declared emergency or disaster  
26 and shall submit such documentation to the commissioner of administration within  
27 sixty days after the termination of the declared state of disaster or emergency.

28 Section 4. This Act shall apply to expenses for meals and incidental expenses  
29 incurred on and after July 1, 2026. Reimbursements for such expenses incurred prior to July

1 1, 2026, but submitted after that date shall be at the rate in effect for the paying organization  
2 at the time the expense was incurred.

3 Section 5. The provisions of this Act shall become effective July 1, 2026.

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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: \_\_\_\_\_