ACT No. 424

HOUSE BILL NO. 728

BY REPRESENTATIVE GAROFALO

1	AN ACT
2	To amend and reenact Code of Civil Procedure Articles 4919(A)(introductory paragraph)
3	and (5), 4922, and 4925(A) and to enact Code of Civil Procedure Articles 4921.1(C)
4	and 4921.2, relative to justice of the peace courts; to provide relative to the service
5	of citations; to provide relative to trial procedures; to provide relative to notice of
6	judgment; and to provide for related matters.
7	Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:
8	Section 1. Code of Civil Procedure Articles 4919(A)(introductory paragraph) and
9	(5), 4922, and 4925(A) are hereby amended and reenacted and Code of Civil Procedure
10	Articles 4921.1(C) and 4921.2 are hereby enacted to read as follows:
11	Art. 4919. Citation; service of citation; justice of the peace courts; district courts
12	with concurrent jurisdiction
13	A. The citation must be signed by the justice of the peace or the clerk of
14	court issuing it, with an expression of his official capacity and under the seal of his
15	office, must be accompanied by a certified copy of any petition, which has been
16	filed, exclusive of exhibits, even if made a part thereof, and must contain the
17	following:
18	* * *
19	(5)(a) A statement that the person cited must either comply with the demand
20	contained of in the pleading filed by the plaintiff against him or make an appearance,
21	either by filing a pleading or otherwise, in the court issuing the citation within the
22	delay provided under Article 4920 under penalty of default.
23	(b) If the matter is set for hearing pursuant to Article 4921.1(C), the citation
24	must contain a statement that the person cited must either comply with the demand

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of the plaintiff against him or appear in the court iss	suing the citation at the time and
date provided and that if he fails to appear, judgme	ent may be entered against him.

3 * * *

Art. 4921.1. Demand for trial; abandonment; applicability

5 * * *

C.(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of Paragraph A of this Article, the justice of the peace or clerk may set the matter for trial upon filing of a petition. The date, time, and location of the trial shall be contained in the citation. The first scheduled trial date shall be not more than forty-five days, nor less than ten days, from the service of the citation. If the defendant appears, he need not file an answer unless ordered to do so by the court. If a defendant who has been served with citation fails to appear at the time and place specified in the citation, the judge may enter a default judgment for the plaintiff in the amount proved to be due. If the plaintiff does not appear, the judge may enter an order dismissing the action without prejudice.

(2) If a matter has been set for trial pursuant to Paragraph (1) of this Article, no default judgement shall be rendered prior to the trial date.

Art. 4921.2. Duties of the justice of the peace; trial procedure; rules of evidence; depositions

A. At trial, it is the duty of the justice of the peace to conduct an informal hearing and to develop all of the facts necessary and relevant to an impartial determination of the case. The judge may take testimony, summon any party to appear as a witness in the suit upon his own motion, and do other acts which in his discretion appear necessary to effect a correct judgment and speedy disposition of the case. He may attempt to mediate disputes and encourage fair settlements among the parties.

B. The technical rules of evidence are relaxed, and all relevant evidence is admissible, including hearsay, provided the justice of the peace satisfies himself of its general reliability, and further provided that the judgment is founded upon competent evidence.

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1	C. No depositions shall be taken and no interrogatories of other discovery
2	proceedings shall be used except upon approval of the court. The court shall grant
3	discovery only upon notice and good cause shown, and limited to the necessities of
4	the case.
5	Art. 4922. Notice of judgment; justice of the peace courts; district courts with
6	concurrent jurisdiction
7	Notice of the signing of any final judgment shall be given as required by
8	Article 1913, except that if the party is personally served with the judgment in open
9	court, no further notice shall be required.
10	* * *
11	Art. 4925. Delay for appeal; justice of the peace courts; district courts with
12	concurrent jurisdiction
13	A. The appellant from a judgment rendered by a justice of the peace court
14	or the clerk of court shall file suit for a trial de novo in the district court or the parish
15	court within fifteen days from the date of the judgment or from the service of notice
16	of judgment, when such notice is necessary. A copy of the suit for trial de novo shall
17	be provided to all parties or their attorney of record. A copy of either the notice of
18	suit for trial de novo or the suit pleadings shall also be provided to the justice of the
19	peace court whose judgment is being appealed. The rules of the district court or
20	parish court shall thereafter apply.
21	* * *
	SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
	STEPHREN OF THE HOUSE OF REFIRESENTITIVES
	PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
	GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA
	APPROVED:

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