

HCS SS SB 218 -- COURT OPERATIONS

SPONSOR: Black

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 13 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 5 to 3.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for SB 218.

The bill amends the definitions of "adult" and "child" in Chapter 455, RSMo, related to protective orders resulting from adult abuse. Currently, "adult" is defined as any person 17 years of age or older, and "child" is defined as any person under 17 years of age. This bill increases the age references from 17 to 18.

This provision is the same as HB 736 (2025).

Currently, an interpreter's or translator's fees and expenses in a criminal proceeding are payable by the State from funds appropriated for that purpose. This bill allows such fees and expenses in any civil, juvenile, or criminal proceeding to be paid by the State from the appropriated funds.

This provision is the same as HB 182 (2025).

This bill specifies that a parent, spouse, child, or personal representative of a person who was convicted of a misdemeanor offense can petition the court to have the record of the offense made confidential in any automated case management system if the person has been deceased for six months or more. The petition must be accompanied by a copy of a death certificate and the court must make the case confidential. Before making the record confidential in the system, the court must determine whether any person would be unfairly prejudiced by having the record made confidential in the system.

This provision is the same as HB 143 (2025).

This bill amends the Judicial Privacy Act to replace the definition for "judicial officer" with a definition for "court-related officer", which includes various judges, prosecuting and circuit attorneys, circuit clerks, court administrators, deputy circuit clerks, division clerks, municipal clerks, and juvenile officers and chief deputy juvenile officers.

The definition of "written request" is amended to exclude a court-related officer's personal information. The bill specifies that

the prohibition on a government agency publicly posting or displaying publicly available content of a court-related officer does not apply to a court-related officer's personal information that is included in any records of court proceedings of this State contained in any statewide court automation system.

This bill amends the offense of tampering with a judicial officer and the offense of tampering with a judicial proceeding to prohibit a person convicted of the offense or offenses from being eligible for parole, probation, or conditional release.

These provisions are the same as HCS HB 1457 (2025).

Currently, the "Basic Civil Legal Services Fund" is set to expire on December 31, 2025. The money in the Fund is used to provide legal representation to eligible low-income persons in civil matters. This bill repeals that expiration date. The bill also corrects an incorrect reference to a provision in the Missouri Constitution.

This provision is the same as HB 124 (2025).

The bill adds mental health treatment court to the list of treatment court divisions, defined as a court focused on addressing the mental health disorder or co-occurring disorder of defendants charged with a criminal offense. This bill specifies that a mental health treatment court can be established by any circuit court to provide an alternative for the judicial system to dispose of cases that stem from a mental health disorder or co-occurring disorder.

This provision is the same as HB 83 (2025).

This bill requires the clerk of the Missouri Supreme Court to notify the Revisor of Statutes of any authorized new circuit judgeships, and the Revisor must publish a footnote listing the authorized judgeships and the corresponding judicial circuits. Any new judgeship authorized under the provisions of this bill will be elected at the next general election and every six years thereafter, unless the judgeship is in a circuit where the circuit judges are selected under the Missouri Nonpartisan Court Plan.

The bill authorizes one additional circuit judge in the 24th judicial circuit. The Governor will appoint the judge, who will serve until January 1, 2027, and a judge will be elected in 2026 and every six years thereafter. It also authorizes one additional circuit judge in the 32nd judicial circuit. The additional judge will be appointed initially by the Governor, and then elected in 2028.

These provisions are the same as HCS HBs 93 & 1139 (2025).

This bill specifies that each grand and petit juror will receive at least \$6 per day for every day the juror actually serves and a mileage reimbursement rate as provided by law for state employees. Each county and the City of St. Louis can authorize additional compensation for its jurors. Alternatively, a governing body, as specified in the bill, may, by a majority vote, vote to restructure juror compensation so that grand and petit jurors do not get paid for the first two days of service but thereafter will receive \$50 per day, as well as mileage reimbursement at the rate provided by law for state employees for necessary travel from the juror's residence to the courthouse and back, to be paid by the county.

This provision is the same as HB 131 (2025).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the Senate Perfected version of the bill.

**PROPONENTS:** Supporters say that this authorizes mental health courts to be included in treatment courts. Treatment courts are specialized non-adversarial court divisions and they are a cost effective way to avoid incarceration, reduce recidivism, and offer offenders a way to stay connected to the community. There are already mental health courts in various circuits, but this authorization allows these mental health courts to apply to the treatment court coordinating commission and receive funds from the treatment court resource fund and be subject to the same standards as other treatment courts.

Testifying in person for the bill were Senator Black; REACH Healthcare Foundation; Eric D. Jennings, Judicial Conference of Missouri; Arnie Dienhoff.

**OPPONENTS:** There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.