

Judicial Structure Task Force
(HR 30 2022 R.S.)
Minutes of Meeting
April 21, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Jerome Zeringue, chairman of the Judicial Structure Task Force, called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. in Room 1, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue
Representative Nicholas Muscarello, Jr.
Representative Thomas A. Pressly, IV
Representative Debbie Villio

LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator James "Jimmy" Harris
Representative Jason M. Hughes
Representative Mandie Landry
Representative Tanner Magee

NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Judge Marilyn Castle
Judge Lee Faulkner
Judge Douglas J. Saloom
Judge Mitchell R. Theriot
Chief Justice John Weimer

INVITED STAKEHOLDERS ABSENT:

Judge Tiffany Chase
Judge Guy Holdridge

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Amanda Trapp, legislative analyst
Diane Merritt, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Michael McCain, clerk
Myrtis Jarrell, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION

Amanda Trapp, legislative analyst, provided an update on the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) workload assessments for appellate and district court judges and support staff.

Kerry Lentini, Louisiana Supreme Court, 300 Southern Rd., River Ridge, LA 70123, (504) 400-4499, testified for information only and addressed questions from the task force members.

Judge Patricia Koch, president, Louisiana District Judges Association, 701 Murray St., Suite 501, Alexandria, LA 71301, (318) 443-6893, testified for information only and addressed questions from the task force members. Judge Koch stated that the concerns of the district court judges have been eased because data entry would only add twenty to thirty minutes more to their day.

Representative Zeringue explained that House Resolution No. 30 from the 2022 Regular Session requires the task force to submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the House Appropriations and Judiciary committees. The Judicial Structure Task Force Progress Report dated April 21, 2023, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records, included the following recommendations: establish a uniform data-collection, promote minimum uniform technology standards, establish a comprehensive review of judgeships statewide, and provide for a statewide e-filing at all court levels.

The task force discussed proposed legislation for the 2023 Regular Session. Amanda Trapp, legislative analyst, discussed House Bill No. 300 of the 2023 Regular Session.

Julia C. Spear, Louisiana Supreme Court, 500 Royal St., New Orleans, LA 70130, (504) 310-2629, discussed a comparison of House Bill No. 300 with current law and addressed questions from Judge Theriot and other task force members, stating that the judicial council data collection is constrained to follow certain statutes. She said that House Bill No. 300 would give the judicial council the authority to expand or amend the practices that are currently in place. She said that the judicial council does not always get the most accurate updated data and that this bill would set a uniform standard of the way the council collects data.

Chief Justice Weimer addressed a question by Representative Villio, stating that the Judicial Supplemental Compensation Fund Board is made up of five judges, who evaluate the amounts of court costs and determine how much supplement is available to pay judges on a monthly basis. He stated that the Budgetary Control Board evaluates the financial needs of the judiciary and makes recommendations to the Louisiana Supreme Court, which approves the final budget.

Julia Spear addressed questions from Representative Villio, stating that the operational plan will become a part of the evaluation report as set up in R.S. 13:61.1. She stated that in R.S. 13:84, there is a judicial performance report which would also be incorporated into House Bill No. 300.

Judge Faulkner suggested to change R.S. 13:82(A) to add back that the Judicial Budgetary Control Board and/or the Council shall develop on behalf of each level of court a strategic plan to be used as a guide to the ongoing and proposed activities of the judiciary for the next five years and as a basic

framework for the annual judicial appropriation bill. Representative Muscarello stated that he would amend House Bill No. 300 to reflect the suggested changes.

Kerry Lentini addressed a question from Judge Theriot, stating that the data is much more robust at the appellate level than district court data. She stated that the proposed bill would get uniform reports in district, city, and parish courts.

Chief Justice Weimer stated that the Louisiana Supreme Court does not have the authority to issue mandates to the clerks, but that is in the hands of the legislature.

The task force discussed the Court Modernization and Technology Program. Amanda Trapp, legislative analyst, stated the change was made to the title of the program "Court Modernization and Technology Program", that was adopted at the last task force meeting. The task force discussed House Bill No. 229, to provide for statewide integrated e-filing.

Annette Fontana, Clerks of Court Association, 10202 Jefferson Hwy., Bldg. A., Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 293-1162, testified for information only. Annette Fontana discussed her position serving as the vice chairman of the Task Force on Statewide Standards for Clerks of Court Electronic Filing and Record Retention and her experience as the clerk of court of Lafouche Parish.

Annette Fontana answered questions from several members regarding the Louisiana Clerks' Remote Access Authority and statewide e-filing proposals.

Judge Faulkner stated that the task force was going to work with Representative Magee on changes to House Bill No. 229, which provides relative to electronic filings.

Judge Saloom stated that city court judges have concerns with House Bill No. 229, because city courts do not participate in Louisiana Clerks' Remote Access Authority (LCRAA). Judge Saloom said that there would be a fiscal impact for local municipalities to begin e-filing.

Amanda Trapp, legislative analyst, discussed the changes from the task force on the Judicial Structure Task Force Progress Report.

Representative Villio offered a motion to adopt the Judicial Structure Task Force Report as amended. Without objection, the Judicial Structure Task Force Report was adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representative Zeringue, Judge Castle, Judge Faulkner, Representative Hughes, Representative Landry, Representative Muscarello, Representative Pressly, Judge Saloom, Judge Theriot, Representative Villio, and Chief Justice Weimer voted yea.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

The minutes from the Judicial Structure Task Force dated March 16, 2023, were presented to the committee for approval. Representative Pressly offered a motion to approve the minutes. Without objection, the minutes were approved by a vote of 7 yeas and 0 nays. Representative Zeringue, Judge Castle, Representative Muscarello, Representative Pressly, Judge Theriot, Representative Villio, and Chief Justice Weimer voted yea.

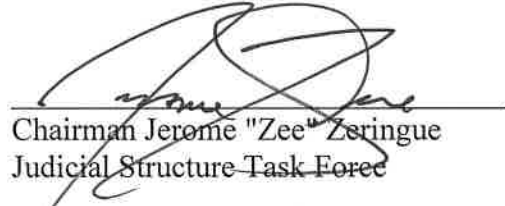
V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Chairman Jerome "Zee" Zeringue
Judicial Structure Task Force

Date adopted: 6/22/23