

Committee on Judiciary

CS/CS/SB 1392 — Courts

by Appropriations Committee; Judiciary Committee; and Senator Simmons

The bill provides that a District Court of Appeal (DCA) judge who lives more than 50 miles from his or her DCA's courthouse or other headquarters is eligible to have an alternative official headquarters and to be reimbursed for trips between these locations. Additionally, the bill expands the list of work-travel expenses for which a Supreme Court justice may be reimbursed. Finally, the bill transfers much of the appellate jurisdiction of the circuit courts to the DCAs.

A DCA judge who is approved for an alternative headquarters is eligible for reimbursement of the cost of the travel, lodging, and meals necessitated by travel to the DCA courthouse. However, the bill prohibits the payment of state funds for use of the space.

As to Supreme Court justices, the bill provides for reimbursement of additional expenses incurred on work-related trips compared to current law and allows a justice, with approval of the Chief Justice, a choice in how his or her reimbursement amount is determined.

Finally, the bill changes the appellate jurisdiction of the circuit courts and DCAs by:

- Eliminating the authority of the circuit courts to hear appeals from county courts in civil and criminal cases; and
- Specifying that a county court's final judgment must be appealable to the circuit court for the county court to have the option to certify a question involved in the judgment to the DCA.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2020, except where otherwise provided.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 118-0