

Committee on Judiciary

CS/HB 1197 — Courts

by Civil Justice and Property Rights Subcommittee and Rep. Aloupis and others (CS/CS/SB 748
by Appropriations Committee; Judiciary Committee; and Senator Brandes)

The bill revises a broad range of statutes that govern the operation of the court system. Some of the diverse changes are made to accommodate developments in technology, some reflect the impact that COVID-19 has had on the court system, and one change recognizes the effect of inflation on the monetary jurisdictional limit of the county courts.

- The bill updates provisions controlling the maintenance of appellate court records to allow the electronic storage of court records at a remote location. These provisions are updated to keep pace with electronic technology rather than require the court clerk to keep manual control of the records.
- The clerks of court, working with the Florida Courts Technology Commission, must prepare a plan to procure or develop a statewide electronic solution that identifies all civil and criminal mandatory financial assessments required by statute.
- The jurisdictional limit for county courts will be adjusted beginning in 2030, and every 10 years afterwards, to account for inflation based on changes in the Consumer Price Index. The jurisdictional limit must be rounded to the nearest \$5,000, but no lower than \$50,000. The Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR) must calculate the adjusted jurisdictional limit and certify it to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court beginning January 31, 2030 and every 10 years thereafter. The EDR and the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) must publish the adjusted jurisdictional limit on their websites.
- The bill authorizes a person to postpone jury service for up to 1 year when a public health emergency or a state of emergency is declared.
- Finally, the bill revises three criminal statutes to authorize the taking and certification of fingerprints when a guilty judgment is entered in a proceeding that is conducted remotely. The fingerprints no longer must be taken in open court and in the judge's presence.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2021.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 114-0