

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to courts; amending s. 26.20, F.S.;
 3 requiring each judicial circuit to have a circuit
 4 judge available at all times to hold and conduct
 5 hearings with limited notice; amending s. 28.35, F.S.;
 6 requiring certain reimbursement requests be submitted
 7 to the Justice Administrative Commission; directing
 8 the Division of Law Revision to make conforming
 9 changes; amending s. 44.103, F.S.; removing a
 10 limitation on arbitrator compensation in court-
 11 ordered, nonbinding arbitration; amending s. 92.50,
 12 F.S.; providing an alternate method for authentication
 13 of oaths, affidavits, or acknowledgments taken or
 14 administered by or before any judge; providing an
 15 effective date.

16
 17 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
 18

19 **Section 1. Section 26.20, Florida Statutes, is amended to**
 20 **read:**

21 26.20 Availability of judge for hearings ~~in chambers.~~ ~~In~~
 22 ~~circuits having more than one circuit judge,~~ At least one
 23 circuit judge in each circuit ~~of said judges~~ shall be available
 24 ~~as nearly as possible~~ at all times to hold and conduct hearings
 25 with limited notice ~~in chambers.~~ In each circuit, there must be

26 | at least one judge available on Saturdays, Sundays, holidays,
 27 | and after hours on weekdays to hear motions for a temporary
 28 | injunction ex parte in domestic violence cases. The chief judge
 29 | may assign a judge for this purpose.

30 | **Section 2. Paragraph (i) of subsection (2) of section**
 31 | **28.35, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

32 | 28.35 Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation.—

33 | (2) The duties of the corporation shall include the
 34 | following:

35 | (i) Annually preparing a budget request which,
 36 | notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 216 and in accordance
 37 | with s. 216.351, provides the anticipated amount necessary for
 38 | reimbursement pursuant to ss. 40.29(6), 741.30(2)(a),
 39 | 784.046(3)(b), 784.0485(2)(a), and 825.1035(4)(i) ~~s. 40.29(6)~~.
 40 | The request for the anticipated reimbursement amount shall be
 41 | submitted in the form and manner prescribed by the Justice
 42 | Administrative Commission. Such request is not subject to change
 43 | by the Justice Administrative Commission, except for technical
 44 | changes necessary to conform to the legislative budget
 45 | instructions, and shall be submitted to the Governor for
 46 | transmittal to the Legislature.

47 | **Section 3. The Division of Law Revision is directed to**
 48 | **replace the phrase "Office of the State Courts Administrator"**
 49 | **with "Justice Administrative Commission" wherever it occurs in**
 50 | **ss. 741.30(2)(a), 784.046(3)(b), 784.0485(2)(a), and**

51 825.1035(4)(i), Florida Statutes.

52 **Section 4. Subsection (3) of section 44.103, Florida**
53 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

54 44.103 Court-ordered, nonbinding arbitration.—

55 (3) Arbitrators shall be selected and compensated in
56 accordance with rules adopted by the Supreme Court. Arbitrators
57 shall be compensated by the parties, or, upon a finding by the
58 court that a party is indigent, an arbitrator may be partially
59 or fully compensated from state funds according to the party's
60 present ability to pay. ~~At no time may an arbitrator charge more~~
61 ~~than \$1,500 per diem, unless the parties agree otherwise.~~ Prior
62 to approving the use of state funds to reimburse an arbitrator,
63 the court must ensure that the party reimburses the portion of
64 the total cost that the party is immediately able to pay and
65 that the party has agreed to a payment plan established by the
66 clerk of the court that will fully reimburse the state for the
67 balance of all state costs for both the arbitrator and any costs
68 of administering the payment plan and any collection efforts
69 that may be necessary in the future. Whenever possible,
70 qualified individuals who have volunteered their time to serve
71 as arbitrators shall be appointed. If an arbitration program is
72 funded pursuant to s. 44.108, volunteer arbitrators shall be
73 entitled to be reimbursed pursuant to s. 112.061 for all actual
74 expenses necessitated by service as an arbitrator.

75 **Section 5. Subsection (1) of section 92.50, Florida**

76 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

77 92.50 Oaths, affidavits, and acknowledgments; who may take
78 or administer; requirements.—

79 (1) IN THIS STATE.—Oaths, affidavits, and acknowledgments
80 required or authorized under the laws of this state, except ~~except~~
81 oaths to jurors and witnesses in court and such other oaths,
82 affidavits and acknowledgments as are required by law to be
83 taken or administered by or before particular officers, may be ~~may be~~
84 taken or administered by or before any judge, clerk, or deputy
85 clerk of any court of record within this state, including
86 federal courts, or by or before any United States commissioner
87 or any notary public within this state. The jurat, or
88 certificate of proof or acknowledgment, shall be authenticated
89 by the signature and official seal of such officer or person
90 taking or administering the same; however, when taken or
91 administered by or before any judge, clerk, or deputy clerk of a
92 court of record, the seal of such court may be affixed as the
93 seal of such officer or person. The jurat, or certificate of
94 proof or acknowledgment, may also be authenticated by a judge by
95 affixing his or her signature and printing his or her name,
96 title, and court.

97 **Section 6.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.