

HOUSE REPUBLICAN STAFF ANALYSIS

Bill:	House File 956 (Formerly HSB 259)	House Committee:	PASSED on March 6 (21-0)
Committee:	Judiciary	House Floor:	PASSED on March 27 (87-6)
Floor Manager:	Rep. Lohse	Senate Floor:	PASSED on April 23 (48-0)
Date:	May 22, 2025	Governor:	
Staff:	Amanda Wille (1-5230)		

Judicial Branch Omnibus

- Makes changes to judicial residency, retirement age for judges, appointment of court reporters, and access to civil pleadings.

Section by Section Analysis

Division I- Judicial Officer Residency

This division expands where district judges, district associate judges, magistrates, full time juvenile judges and full-time associate probate judges can live while serving.

District Judge- can be a resident of the judicial election district or a county contiguous with the district.

District associate judges- resident of the judicial election district or a county continuous with the judicial election district.

Magistrate- resident of the judicial election district, or a contiguous county of the judicial election district they are appointed to. Clarifies a Chief judge can assign a magistrate to hold court outside the county or counties of appointment.

Full time associate juvenile judges- can reside in their judicial election district or a county contiguous to the district.

Full time associate probate judge- can reside in their judicial election district or a county contiguous to the district.

Division II- Judicial Officer Retirement Age

Current law requires Judges retire at 72. This division raises the mandatory retirement age to 78.

Senior Judges retirement will be 84, this can be extended one year at a time by the Supreme Court.

Applies to judicial officers retiring on or after July 1, 2025

Division III- Miscellaneous Judicial Administration

Remote Proceedings: The bill authorizes court proceedings to be conducted by remote means of communication.

Court Reporter Management: The management and appointment of court reporters are restructured:

- The chief judge of a judicial district, will have the authority to supervise, schedule, and assign duties to all court reporters within the district.
- Judges presiding over reported proceedings will have the authority to supervise the work of court reporters during those proceedings.
- The chief judge may delegate the authority to appoint and manage court reporters to the district court administrator or their designee.

Appointment of Court Reporters: Judicial officers are required to appoint court reporters, subject to the approval of the chief judge or their designee.

Temporary Appointments: If a regularly appointed court reporter is disabled or if there is a vacancy, the chief judge may appoint a competent, uncertified shorthand reporter for up to one year, provided that a diligent search for a certified reporter has been conducted.

Civil Pleadings Access: The bill allows the clerk of court to provide access to civil pleadings before the memorandum of the filing date is made in the appearance docket, improving transparency and access to court documents.

Amendment Analysis