



HOUSE REPUBLICAN STAFF ANALYSIS

Bill:	House File 2719 (Formerly HSB 631)	House Committee:	PASSED on February 19 (14-6)
Committee:	Judiciary	House Floor:	
Floor Manager:	Rep. C. Thomson	Senate Floor:	
Date:	March 4, 2026	Governor:	
Staff:	Amanda Wille (1-5230)		

Judicial Performance Information

- HF 2719, as amended, will require data be published about District Court Judges, District Associate Judges, Juvenile Judges, and Probate Judges.
- The information will show how the judge sets bond, how often sentences are below statutory or prosecutor recommendations, how often deferred sentences are granted, and other metrics to help Iowans understand what decisions Judges are making.
- The database will be searchable for the public.

Section by Section Analysis

Section 1: - Judicial Officer Performance Information (New Section 46.26)

1: Data Collection & Publication

- The State Commissioner of Elections must collect and publish objective, data-driven information about each district court judge, including district associate, juvenile, and probate judges.
- The required data includes, by offense class:
 1. Percentage of cases where a judge sets a bond below the bond schedule.
 2. How often a judge releases persons on their own recognizance for violent vs. nonviolent offenses.
 3. How often a judge issues sentences below statutory or prosecutorial recommendations.
 4. Frequency of deferred judgments, deferred sentences, or suspended sentences.
 5. Number and percentage of times a judge's rulings are reversed on appeal
 6. Average time from motion/case filing to ruling.
 7. Number of disposed vs. outstanding cases on a judge's docket per year.
- Five-Year Trends: After five years, each metric must show a five-year rolling trend.

2: Access to Court Data

- Judicial branch must give the Commissioner read-only access to publicly available Iowa court information within a year.
- State court administrator must annually certify the accuracy and completeness of this data and report discrepancies to the Legislature.

3: Methodology Report

State Commissioner of Elections must create a report within 18 months and explain and document how they'll collect and compare judges' performance data, and how they'll ensure the statistics are meaningful and fair.

4: Statistical Confidence

- Metrics based on insufficient case numbers must display a bold "RELIABILITY WARNING" stating that the metric may not accurately reflect the judge's typical performance.

5: Public Repository of Judicial Opinions/Orders

- Commissioner must maintain an online, searchable system of all written judicial opinions and orders from the current term and the previous six years.
- Court administrator will transmit required documents monthly.
- Repository supports keyword, date, type, and party-type searches.
- Redactions must follow court rules

6: Judicial Performance Website

- Commissioner to maintain a website:
 - Searchable by district, county, and judge name.
 - Each judge's profile displays the required metrics, trend lines, comparisons, and links to the public repository.
 - No editorial commentary beyond what's specified in the law.
 - Judges may add personal statements (max 2,000 words) on their profile about their philosophy or the data
 - Includes methodology and annual data reports.

7: Notice & Acknowledgment Requirement

- Before viewing a judge's profile, users must acknowledge reading a detailed notice explaining limitations and context for the statistics.

8: Noninterference Clause

- This section does not give the Commissioner power to supervise, direct, or regulate judges.

9: Rulemaking

- The Commissioner may adopt rules to implement this section:
 - Any such rules must be ratified by the Legislature and approved by the Governor.
 - Temporary approval by the legislative council is possible when the Legislature is out of session, but rules expire if not ratified by the next session.
 - The administrative code editor must publish notices regarding rule status and remove unratified rules.

Amendment Analysis

H-8115 by C. Thomson – See above