

By: _____

____.B. No. _____

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the requirement of a court reporter being present and on the record during any private meetings between a presiding judge and the attorneys representing the parties in a suit when the parties themselves are not present.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. [Title 2, Chapter 21, Subchapter A, Government Code](#), is amended by adding Section 21.014 to read as follows:

Sec. 21.014. RECORDING OF PRIVATE MEETINGS BETWEEN JUDGE AND ATTORNEYS.

(a) In any civil or criminal case, if a presiding judge meets privately with the attorneys representing the parties of a suit without the presence of the parties themselves, a court reporter must be present to record the entirety of the meeting.

(b) The court reporter shall ensure that all proceedings during such meetings are recorded verbatim, including but not limited to discussions, agreements, and any decisions made.

(c) The record created by the court reporter shall be treated as part of the official court record and shall be made available to the parties involved in the suit upon request.

(d) Failure to comply with this section by any judge or attorney may result in sanctions imposed by the administrative court or the State Commission on Judicial Conduct. The administrative court shall have the authority to apply

appropriate sanctions, and the State Commission on Judicial Conduct shall have the authority to investigate and discipline judges in accordance with its established procedures.

(e) This section does not apply to settlement conferences or mediations conducted pursuant to a court order or agreement of the parties where the presence of a court reporter is waived by both parties in writing.

SECTION 2. Section 21.002, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(h) A person who violates Section 21.014, Government Code, by meeting privately with a judge without the presence of a court reporter as required, may be punished for contempt of court as provided by this section.

SECTION 3. Section 33.022, Government Code, is amended by adding Subsection (j) to read as follows:

(j) The commission shall investigate allegations of judicial misconduct, including violations of Section 21.014, Government Code, and may impose appropriate sanctions.

SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2026.