

By: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_B. No. \_\_\_\_\_

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the mandatory video and audio recording of court proceedings.

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

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the "Courtroom Recording Act."

SECTION 2. The purpose of this Act is to ensure transparency and accessibility in the Texas judicial system by mandating the video and audio recording of all court proceedings in all respective courtrooms. These recordings shall be treated similarly to court records in terms of access, though they shall not replace the official court record as transcribed by court reporters.

SECTION 3. Chapter 21, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 21.014 to read as follows:

Sec. 21.014. MANDATORY RECORDING OF COURT PROCEEDINGS.

(a) All court proceedings in all Texas courtroom shall be recorded.

(b) The recordings shall include:

(1) Video footage capturing courtroom proceedings, including proceedings while off-the-record; and

(2) Audio recordings of all spoken words during the proceedings, including proceedings while off-the-record.

SECTION 4. Section 21.015 is added to Chapter 21,

Government Code, to read as follows:

Sec. 21.015. ACCESS TO RECORDINGS.

(a) Recordings shall be made available to parties involved in the proceedings under the same conditions as access to court records under Chapter 552, Government Code.

(b) In cases involving private matters, recordings shall be accessible only to the parties involved in the suit.

(c) Recordings are not to be considered the official court record. The transcript created by the court reporter pursuant to Section 52.046, Government Code, shall remain the official court record.

(d) Upon request, recordings shall be provided to the State Commission on Judicial Conduct free of charge.

SECTION 5. Section 21.016 is added to Chapter 21, Government Code, to read as follows:

Sec. 21.016. JUDICIAL DISCRETION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING.

(a) Judges shall have the discretion to allow the live broadcasting of court proceedings via video and audio upon request by either party involved in the suit.

(b) The decision to broadcast proceedings shall consider the nature of the case, privacy concerns, and the potential impact on the fairness and integrity of the trial.

SECTION 6. IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE.

(a) The Office of Court Administration shall oversee

the implementation of the Courtroom Recording Act, ensuring that courtrooms are equipped with the necessary recording technology and that recordings are properly stored and accessible as outlined in Section 77.031, Government Code.

(b) Courts must comply with this mandate immediately upon confirmation that the requisite technology is in place.

SECTION 7. 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.