

By: _____

____.B. No. _____

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the financial disclosure requirements for judges receiving contributions from parties involved in cases they preside over.

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

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the "Transparency and Reporting for Unbiased Standards in Trials" (TRUST Act).

SECTION 2. Title 5, Chapter 572, subchapter A, Government Code, is amended adding as follows to Section 572.002:

(13) "Judge" refers to any judicial officer presiding over cases in the state of Texas.

(14) "Contribution" refers to any monetary donation, gift, or in-kind contribution.

(15) "Party to a suit" includes any plaintiff, petitioner, defendant, prosecutor, or their legal representatives.

(16) "Texas Ethics Commission" refers to the commission established under Chapter 571, Government Code, responsible for enforcing this Act.

SECTION 3. Subchapter C, Chapter 572, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 572.062 to read as follows:

Sec. 572.062. ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURE OF CERTEN CONTRIBUTIONS TO JUDGES.

(a) A judge shall disclose any contribution received from a party to a suit they are presiding over within five (5) business

days of receipt.

(b) The disclosure must be submitted on a form accepted and maintained by the Texas Ethics Commission and must include:

(1) The judge's name and position.

(2) The jurisdiction or geographical territory of the judge.

The cause number of the case.

(3) The name of the contributor.

(4) The contributor's relation to the case.

(5) The amount of the contribution, including in-kind contributions.

(c) A copy of this disclosure shall be presented to all parties to a suit subject to this section

(1) within five (5) business days of receipt or;

(2) prior to final hearing of an applicable suit, whichever is sooner.

SECTION 4. Subchapter C, Chapter 572, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 572.0621 to read as follows:

Sec. 572.0621. POST-CASE DISCLOSURE PERIOD

Pursuant to Sec. 572.062, a judge must continue to disclose any contributions from parties involved in a case for a period of Sixty (60) days after the final order of the suit.

SECTION 5. Subchapter C, Chapter 572, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 572.0622 to read as follows:

Sec. 572.062. EXEMPTIONS

(a) Elected judges are exempt from the disclosure requirements under Sec. 572.062 (a) and (b) during the period

starting when the judge announces their candidacy for re-election or election to a higher office and ending after the election in which the judge becomes the 'elect' and is guaranteed the next term.

(b) Elected judges are not exempt from 572.062 (c) or Sec. 572.0621.

SECTION 6. If any provision of this Act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this Act that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end, the provisions of this Act are severable.

SECTION 7. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.