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## DIGEST

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HB 977 Engrossed

2024 Regular Session

Carlson

**Abstract:** Provides relative to official journals for the state and local governments.

Present law requires the state to select a newspaper as its official journal and to print advertisements, public notices, and proclamations of the legislature or the executive branch in the official journal. Requires that all laws and joint resolutions be accessible through the official journal.

Proposed law authorizes the commissioner of education to select the state register's website or a website designated by the state register as the official journal of the state. Requires the state register to provide a unique location on a publicly available website for publishing materials pursuant to present law.

Present law requires parishes, municipalities, school boards, and other political subdivisions to select a newspaper as an official journal and to publish various official proceedings and financial information in the official journal.

Present law provides that a newspaper shall meet specified criteria to qualify for selection as an official journal of a political subdivision.

Proposed law modifies such criteria as follows:

- (1) Present law provides that the newspaper shall have been published in an office physically located in the parish for five years prior to selection. Proposed law shortens this period to two years.
- (2) Present law provides that the newspaper shall have been entered in a U.S. post office in that parish under a periodical permit in that parish for five consecutive years prior to selection. Proposed law shortens this period to two years and provides that such entry may be pursuant to a permit from anywhere in the state.
- (3) Present law, applicable to parishes, municipalities, and school boards, requires that the newspaper: has been published at regular intervals of not less than weekly, has been published for the dissemination of current news and intelligence of varied, broad, and general public interest, has not been published primarily for advertising purposes, has maintained a general paid circulation to bona fide paying subscribers within the area the publication is required.

Present law further requires that the newspaper has met these publishing requirements during each year of the five-year period prior to its first publication of a legal or official notice. Proposed law shortens this period to two years.

- (4) Proposed law authorizes selection of a newspaper that would be precluded from selection as an official journal solely because specific notice publication requirements require a more frequent publishing schedule than the newspaper's actual schedule *if* the newspaper can publish the notice in a time period that is not more than five days longer than the period otherwise required by law. Provides that if such a newspaper is selected, any publication that is completed within the five additional days is deemed to be in compliance with the applicable publishing requirements.
- (5) Proposed law provides that in certain parishes the period during which a newspaper shall have met the applicable publishing requirements to qualify as an official journal is one year.

(Amends R.S. 43:81(A)(intro. para.), 140(3), 142, and 171(A)(2) and (3); Adds R.S. 43:82.1, 140.1, 140.2, 171.1, and 171.2; Repeals R.S. 43:171(B))