

By: VanDeaver

H.B. No. 2147

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to remotely conducting depositions, hearings, and other proceedings in juvenile cases.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 51, Family Code, is amended by adding Section 51.055 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.055. REMOTE CONDUCT OF PROCEEDINGS. (a) In this section, "remote proceeding" means a proceeding in which one or more of the participants, including a judge, party, attorney, witness, court reporter, or other individual, attends the proceeding remotely through the use of technology and the Internet, including through teleconferencing or videoconferencing.

(b) A juvenile court may:

(1) conduct a hearing or other proceeding under this title as a remote proceeding without the consent of the parties unless the United States or Texas Constitution requires consent; and

(2) allow or require a party, attorney, witness, court reporter, or any other individual to participate in a remote proceeding, including a deposition, hearing, or other proceeding under this title.

(c) The judge of a juvenile court shall submit to the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System a plan for conducting remote proceedings under this title. The plan must:

1           (1) include protocols for handling physical evidence;  
2 and  
3           (2) require an unobstructed view of any party or  
4 witness who provides testimony from a remote location.

5           SECTION 2. Section 54.012(e), Family Code, is amended to  
6 read as follows:

7           (e) In this section, "remote proceeding" has the meaning  
8 assigned by Section 51.055 ~~[means a proceeding in which one or more~~  
9 ~~of the participants, including a judge, party, attorney, witness,~~  
10 ~~court reporter, or other individual, attends the proceeding~~  
11 ~~remotely through the use of technology and the Internet, including~~  
12 ~~through teleconferencing or videoconferencing]~~.

13           SECTION 3. Sections 54.012(a-1) and (a-2), Family Code, are  
14 repealed.

15           SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.