

Hearing Date: March 24, 2021 8:00 AM

Printed on: April 18, 2021 2:56 PM

COMMENTS FOR: HB 2579

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John Dixon, Lawyer

Self

Houston, TX

After reading the article "does electronic court reporting improve court performance by Georgia Hurley and Agnes Said I am in agreement with there conclusions which are as follows:

1. Automatic systems can be cumbersome, costly, and cause delays since they need to be maintained and the technology is not always open source.
  - 2.All technology is not equal. Video recordings cost more and require bigger e-file to store than audio recordings. Any courtroom technology also require skilled staff, able to administer it effectively, adding additional costs for training and support.
  - 3.The technology requires more time. Reviewing a 5 hour testimony requires watching a 5 hour video but only 30 minutes to read a transcript.
  4. Malfunctions can prove disastrous sometimes requiring retrials.
  5. Payment for these services remains an open question . Is transcription outsourced or done by court staff. Can parties transcribe.
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Gloria Carlin

self - freelance court reporter

Mansfield, TX

I fully support this bill. Attorneys have spoken up in favor of continuing Zoom depositions to avoid all the travel, and it has worked seamlessly in the past year with the reporter asking the witness to show photo ID in front of camera before we swear the witness. With the shortage of reporters, it allows a reporter to take a deposition in the morning and still be available for an afternoon deposition since they don't have to travel. I fully support all the other elements of the bill also.

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Kim Pence

self

Paige, TX

I am in support of this joint bill.

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Melanie Smith

self - court reporter

Longview, TX

I strongly ask you to support this bill. We court reporters have been given a new option to report proceedings/depositions by remote means (not being physically present with the witness) because of the pandemic. We all adjusted quickly to this new remote access to taking down a record, and not only has it allowed for the judicial process to continue to flow during this challenging time, but being able to take down depositions remotely drastically helps cut down on the court reporter shortage as we are able to cover assignments in areas where there are more depositions to cover than available court reporters some days. This ease of access to gather remotely provides more options for those who still do not and may never feel too comfortable being

in a crowded room with others. It cuts down on driving time for all involved in the proceeding which allows for a more efficient work day and more opportunities for witnesses to be available when they don't have to travel to attend. I do strongly hope this option of a remote method for taking down the record is allowed to stay. Thank you for your time.

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Jessica Escobar  
Coastal Bend Video & Recording  
Corpus Christi, TX

I am a Texas court reporter. I am in favor of this bill. This bill requires the court reporter to utilize the most current technology available to deliver a digitally secure transcript for the witness to review and is a major step in ensuring that the integrity of the deposition transcript is maintained throughout the process.

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Sarah Moreland, CSR  
260TH DISTRICT COURT  
ORANGE, TX

I SUPPORT HB 2579.

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Becky Partin  
Court reporters  
Fort worth, TX

I am a Texas certified shorthand reporter and I oppose this bill. The proposed bill allows commissioners' courts to overstep a judge's authority to manage their court consistent with the administration of justice. This legislation has the potential to bring up constitutional questions such as the separation of powers between our branches of government. Commissioners' courts primarily consist of business leaders with no legal background or knowledge in judicial matters. Certified court reporters are required by law to make a verbatim record of each proceeding to ensure the accuracy of the words said, which an ER device cannot do. Court Reporters are also ethically bound to maintain these records and protect their authenticity. Many states that previously implemented ER in courts returned to court reporters after a long list of problems including complaints of quality of transcripts generated by electronic recording; backlog of cases at the appellate level; time and equipment involved in reviewing video testimony, i.e., five hours to review video compared to 30 minutes to review reporters' transcripts; lack of realtime transcription during proceedings; missing or inaudible recordings; retrials of cases because of lost digital recordings; lack of confidence in the system by attorneys who hired their own court reporters for fear of an inaccurate record; violation of clients' rights in criminal matters due to inaudible portions of recordings; and unexpected costs and additional personnel required to perform all the functions that a certified court reporter provides.

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Kelly Rivera  
Self - Freelance Court Reporter  
Houston, TX

I am a Texas court reporter. I am in favor of this bill.

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Viviana Figueroa  
self- court reporter

Grand Prairie, TX

H.B. 2579 - Please Support This Bill.

Please direct your attention to supporting this bill so that Court Reporters, who are guardians of the record, may continue to create and protect the record as a non-biased party. It has been ever more crucial in this new virtual setting to continue to do our best to preserve the record.

This will also address the issue of shortage due to allowing every report to offer more coverage via remotely. This will tremendously improve the shortage!

Thank you for your time.

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Charletta Breed

Self - Court Reporter

ARLINGTON, TX

Dear House of Representatives:

I am in favor of HB 2579, and I feel that HB 2579 will greatly assist in the judicial process as it relates to court reporting and court reporting processes.

Thank you for your time and careful attention to this matter.

Respectfully,  
Charletta Breed

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Terrilyn Crowley

Self, Texas certified court reporter

Houston, TX

Please support this bill.

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Lorrie Schnoor

Self-Texas Certified Shorthand Reporter

Round Rock, TX

Dear Members, I am writing to ask for your support of HB2579. This bill relates to remote court reporting in Texas. Since the pandemic, court proceedings and depositions have utilized remote technology, which has kept the wheels of justice moving for litigants. With the passage of this bill, it will continue to allow for the ability to use remote technology in the future. Thank you for your support. Sincerely, Lorrie Schnoor

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Rebecca Velasquez Rendon

Self - Certified Shorthand Reporter

Corpus Christi, TX

I am a Texas certified court reporter working as an official reporter in Nueces County. I am in support of HB 2579. It is imperative that I, as a certified court reporter, continue to be responsible for and certify to proceedings that were held in my presence. Also, the importance of a clean record is financially feasible to ALL parties. The quality of a record I provide is undeniable.

It is for this reason I oppose HB 228/1685, which allows a method of recording court procedures by an uncertified, untrained individual. I have the ability to ask for a comment or statement to be repeated when it was not heard. I have the ability to know when equipment, unfortunately, is not working properly and can stop proceedings to remedy the situation immediately. When you compare that to an uncertified, untrained person to simply press a button to record proceedings, the expense can be staggering when it is determined a day later or a week later that the equipment was not working properly. Or when someone sneezes or coughs at the exact moment the response to a very important question is answered. The quality of the record by an untrained, uncertified person is undeniable.

Please vote FOR HB 2579. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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Kathy Bounds

self - court reporter

Murphy, TX

My name is Kathy Bounds and I am a Certified Shorthand Reporter in the State of Texas. I am in support of H.B. 2759 and am asking for your vote in favor of this bill. Court reporters are required to be certified by the Supreme Court of Texas and are held to high standards and rules governing our conduct and responsibilities as professionals. Because of the current shortage of court reporters, I believe it is imperative that the Government Code be updated regarding the definition of "shorthand reporter" and "court reporter" to also include a certified provisional court reporter or apprentice court reporter, who in turn will also be held to those same high standards and rules governing our conduct and responsibilities as professionals, so that the jobs in our courthouses across the state which have become vacate largely due to growing counties where new courts are being created, as well as current court reporters reaching retirement age and thereby retiring and creating vacancies, can be filled to preserve and protect the integrity of the record for the litigants of Texas. Thank you in advance for supporting H.B. 2759.

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