

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3946
By: Gámez
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Current statute requires state and federal judges who choose to use restricted distribution license plates to have the designation "State Judge" or "U.S. Judge" displayed on their plates. The bill author has informed the committee that while this serves to identify judicial officials, it also creates a security risk. The bill author has also informed the committee that deputies from the U.S. Marshals Service have raised concerns that visibly marking a vehicle with a judge's status could make them more vulnerable to threats or harassment, and in identifying the risk, the Department of Public Safety has requested legislation to give judges the option to obtain restricted plates without a judicial designation. H.B. 3946 seeks to fulfill this request in order to provide judges with greater discretion over their public identification and address security concerns while preserving the benefits these restricted plates provide.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 3946 amends the Transportation Code to authorize rather than require that the specialty license plates issued by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles for current or visiting state or federal judges include the words "State Judge" or "U.S. Judge," as appropriate.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.