

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 2141
By: Zaffirini
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 sponsor has informed the committee that while this serves to identify judicial officials, it also creates a security risk. The bill sponsor 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. S.B. 2141 seeks to fulfil 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

S.B. 2141 amends the Transportation Code to reenact provisions that do the following:

- require the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles to issue specialty license plates for a current or visiting state or federal judge;
- define the term "state judge"; and
- require an applicable license plate to include the words "State Judge" or "U.S. Judge," as appropriate.

The bill authorizes a person entitled to such a license plate to elect to receive plates that do not include the words "State Judge" or "U.S. Judge."

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.