

By: Bucy

H.B. No. 1604

Substitute the following for H.B. No. 1604:

By: Jones of Harris

C.S.H.B. No. 1604

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

2 relating to public access to criminal proceedings.

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

4 SECTION 1. Article 1.24, Code of Criminal Procedure, is  
5 amended to read as follows:

6 Art. 1.24. PUBLIC TRIAL. The proceedings, including a  
7 proceeding under Article 15.17, and trials in all courts shall be  
8 public.

9 SECTION 2. Chapter 15, Code of Criminal Procedure, is  
10 amended by adding Article 15.1705 to read as follows:

11 Art. 15.1705. PROCEEDINGS CONDUCTED BEFORE MAGISTRATE BY  
12 LIVESTREAM OR VIDEOCONFERENCE. (a) A court that as of January 1,  
13 2026, does not have the physical capability, or is located in a  
14 secured facility without the physical capability, to provide  
15 in-person public access to a proceeding under Article 15.17 may  
16 provide public access by livestream or videoconference. The  
17 livestream or videoconference must allow members of the public to  
18 clearly see and hear the proceeding.

19 (b) This article may not be construed as prohibiting a judge  
20 from placing reasonable limits on in-person access to the court for  
21 safety or to prevent overcrowding.

22 SECTION 3. The change in law made by this Act applies only  
23 to a criminal proceeding that commences on or after January 1, 2026.  
24 A criminal proceeding that commenced before January 1, 2026, is

1 governed by the law in effect immediately before the effective date  
2 of this Act, and the former law is continued in effect for that  
3 purpose.

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