

**SUBJECT:** Redacting information regarding judges and spouses, requiring a report

**COMMITTEE:** Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 9 ayes — Leach, Farrar, Y. Davis, Julie Johnson, Krause, Meyer, Neave, Smith, White

0 nays

**SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, March 18 — 30-0

**WITNESSES:** *On House companion bill, HB 3305:*  
For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Nicholas Chu, Justices of the Peace and Constables Association; Lee Parsley, Texans for Lawsuit Reform; George Christian, Texas Civil Justice League; Alexis Tatum, Travis County Commissioners Court; Paul Raleeh; Chuck Ruckel)

Against — None

On — David Slayton, Office of Court Administration, Texas Judicial Council

**BACKGROUND:** Property Code sec. 11.008 requires a county clerk to omit or redact from an instrument, defined as a deed or deed of trust, available in an online database made public by the county clerk the Social Security number, driver's license number, and residence address of a federal or state judge or such a judge's spouse upon receipt of a written request by the judge or spouse.

Some have suggested there are certain gaps in the state's court security laws, including with regard to information contained in publicly available campaign records.

**DIGEST:** SB 489 would require the Texas Ethics Commission to remove or redact the residence address of a federal or state judge or such a judge's spouse from any campaign report upon receiving notice from the Office of Court

Administration (OCA) of the judge's qualification for office or upon receipt of a written request from the judge or spouse.

The bill would expand the definition of an instrument to include any record recorded by a county clerk related to real property, including a mineral lease, mechanic's lien, or release of a mechanic's lien.

SB 489 also would require the director of security and emergency preparedness appointed by OCA to submit to the Legislature an annual report on court security activities supported by OCA's judicial security division. The report must contain recommendations for monitoring the use of state resources in providing court security and for improving court security as well as recommendations for increasing state funds and other resources available for that purpose.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.