Public Law 99-650
99th Congress

An Act

To establish an independent jury system for the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

Nov. 14, 1986
[H.R. 2946]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

District of Columbia Jury System Act.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "District of Columbia Jury System Act".

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA JURY SYSTEM.

Chapter 19 of title 11 of the District of Columbia Code is amended to read as follows:

"CHAPTER 19. JURIES AND JURORS

Sec.
"11-1901. Declaration of policy.
"11-1902. Definitions.
"11-1903. Prohibition of discrimination.
"11-1904. Jury system plan.
"11-1905. Master juror list.
"11-1906. Qualification of jurors.
"11-1907. Summoning of prospective jurors.
"11-1908. Exclusion from jury service.
"11-1909. Deferral from jury service.
"11-1910. Challenging compliance with selection procedures.
"11-1911. Length of service.
"11-1912. Juror fees.
"11-1913. Protection of employment of jurors.
"11-1914. Preservation of records.
"11-1915. Fraud in the selection process.
"11-1916. Grand jury; additional grand jury.
"11-1917. Coordination and cooperation of courts.
"11-1918. Effect of invalidity.

"CHAPTER 19. JURIES AND JURORS

"§ 11-1901. Declaration of policy.

"A jury selection system is hereby established for the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. All litigants entitled to trial by jury shall have the right to grand and petit juries selected at random from a fair cross section of the residents of the District of Columbia. In accordance with the provisions of this chapter, all qualified individuals shall have the opportunity to be considered for service on grand and petit juries in the District of Columbia and shall be obligated to serve as jurors when summoned for that purpose.

"§ 11-1902. Definitions.

"For purposes of this chapter, the following terms have the following meanings:

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"(1) The term 'Board of Judges' means the chief judge and the associate judges of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

"(2) The term 'chief judge' means the chief judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

"(3) The term 'clerk' means the clerk of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia or any deputy clerk.

"(4) The term 'Court' means the Superior Court of the District of Columbia and may include any judge of the Court acting in an official capacity.

"(5) The term 'juror' means (A) any individual summoned to Superior Court for the purpose of serving on a jury; (B) any individual who is on call and available to report to Court to serve on a jury upon request; and (C) any individual whose service on a jury is temporarily deferred.

"(6) The term 'jury' includes a grand or petit jury

"(7) The term 'jury system plan' means the plan adopted by the Board of Judges of the Court, consistent with the provisions of this chapter, to govern the administration of the jury system.

"(8) The term 'master juror list' means the consolidated list or lists compiled and maintained by the Board of Judges of the District of Columbia Courts which contains the names of prospective jurors for service in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

"(9) The term 'random selection' means the selection of names of prospective jurors in a manner immune from the purposeful or inadvertent introduction of subjective bias, so that no recognizable class of the individuals on the list or lists from which the names are being selected can be purposefully or inadvertently included or excluded.

"(10) The term 'resident of the District of Columbia' means an individual who has resided or has been domiciled in the District of Columbia for not less than six months.

"§ 11-1903. Prohibition of discrimination.

"A citizen of the District of Columbia may not be excluded or disqualified from jury service as a grand or petit juror in the District of Columbia on account of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, economic status, marital status, age, or (except as provided in this chapter) physical handicap.

"§ 11-1904. Jury system plan.

"(a) The Board of Judges shall adopt, implement, and as necessary modify, a written jury system plan for the random selection and service of grand and petit jurors in the Superior Court consistent with the provisions of this chapter. The adopted plan and any modifications shall be subject to a 30-day period of review by Congress in the manner provided for an act of the Council under section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act. The plan shall include—

87 Stat. 813.

"(1) detailed procedures to be followed by the clerk of the Court in the random selection of names from the master juror list;

"(2) provisions for a master jury wheel (or other device of like purpose and function) which shall be emptied and refilled at specified intervals, not to exceed 24 months;

"(3) provisions for the disclosure to the parties and the public of the names of individuals selected for jury service, except in cases in which the chief judge determines that confidentiality is required in the interest of justice; and

"(4) procedures to be followed by the clerk of the Court in assigning individuals to grand and petit juries.

"(b) The jury system plan shall be administered by the clerk of the Court under the supervision of the Board of Judges.

"§ 11-1905. Master juror list.

"(a) The jury system plan shall provide for the compilation and maintenance by the Board of Judges of a master juror list from which names of prospective jurors shall be drawn. Such master juror list shall consist of the list of District of Columbia voters, and names from such other appropriate sources and lists as may be provided in the jury system plan.

"(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, upon request of the Board of Judges any person having custody, possession, or control of any list required under subsection (a) shall provide such list to the Court, at cost, at all reasonable times. Each list shall contain the names and addresses of individuals on the list. Any list obtained by the Court under the provisions of this chapter may be used by the Court only for the selection of jurors pursuant to this chapter.

"§ 11-1906. Qualification of jurors.

"(a) The jury system plan shall provide for procedures for the random selection and qualification of grand and petit jurors from the master juror list. Such plan may provide for separate or joint qualification and summoning processes.

"(b)(1) An individual shall be qualified to serve as a juror if that individual—

"(A) is a resident of the District of Columbia;

"(B) is a citizen of the United States;

"(C) has attained the age of 18 years; and

"(D) is able to read, speak, and understand the English language.

"(2) An individual shall not be qualified to serve as a juror—

"(A) if determined to be incapable by reason of physical or mental infirmity of rendering satisfactory jury service; or

"(B) if that individual has been convicted of a felony or has a pending felony or misdemeanor charge, except that an individual disqualified for jury service by reason of a felony conviction may qualify for jury service not less than one year after the completion of the term of incarceration, probation, or parole following appropriate certification under procedures set out in the jury system plan.

"(3) Any determination regarding qualification for jury service shall be made on the basis of information provided in the juror qualification form and any other competent evidence.

"(c)(1) The jury system plan shall provide that a juror qualification form be mailed to each prospective juror. The form and content of such juror qualification form shall be determined under the plan. Notarization of the juror qualification form shall not be required.

"(2) An individual who fails to return a completed juror qualification form as instructed may be ordered by the Court to appear before the clerk to fill out such form, to appear before the Court and

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show cause why he or she should not be held in contempt for failure to submit the qualification form, or both. An individual who fails to show good cause for such failure, or who without good cause fails to appear pursuant to a Court order, may be punished by a fine of not more than $300, by imprisonment for not more than seven days, or both.

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"(d) An individual who intentionally misrepresents a material fact on a juror qualification form for the purpose of avoiding or securing service as a juror may be punished by a fine of not more than $300, by imprisonment for not more than 90 days, or both.

"§ 11-1907. Summoning of prospective jurors.

"(a) At such times as are determined under the jury system plan, the Court shall summon or cause to be summoned from among qualified individuals under section 11-1906 sufficient prospective jurors to fulfill requirements for petit and grand jurors for the Court. A summons shall require a prospective juror to report for possible jury service at a specified time and place unless advised otherwise by the Court. Service of prospective jurors may be made personally or by first-class, registered, or certified mail as determined under the plan.

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"(b) A prospective juror who fails to appear for jury duty may be ordered by the Court to appear and show cause why he or she should not be held in contempt for such failure to appear. A prospective juror who fails to show good cause for such failure, or who without good cause fails to appear pursuant to a Court order, may be punished by a fine of not more than $300, by imprisonment for not more than seven days, or both.

"§ 11-1908. Exclusion from jury service.

"(a) Subject to the provisions of this section and of sections 11-1903, 11-1906, and 11-1909, no indivdual or class of individuals may be disqualified, excluded, excused, or exempt from service as a juror.

"(b) An individual summoned for jury service may be: (1) excluded by the Court on the ground that that individual may be unable to render impartial jury service or that his or her service as a juror would be likely to disrupt the proceedings; (2) excluded upon peremptory challenge as provided by law; (3) excluded pursuant to the procedure specified by law upon a challenge by any party for good cause shown; or (4) excluded upon determination by the Court that his or her service as a juror would be likely to threaten the secrecy of the proceedings, or otherwise adversely affect the integrity of jury deliberations. No person shall be excluded under clause (4) of this subsection unless the judge, in open Court, determines that such exclusion is warranted and that exclusion of that individual will not be inconsistent with sections 11-1901 and 11-1903 of this chapter.

"(c) An individual excluded from a jury shall be eligible to sit on another jury if the basis for the initial exclusion would not be relevant to his or her ability to serve on such other jury. The procedures for challenges to and review of exclusions from jury service shall be set forth in the jury system plan.

"§ 11-1909. Deferral from jury service.

"A qualified prospective juror may be deferred from jury service only upon a showing of undue hardship, extreme inconvenience, public necessity, or temporary physical or mental disability which

would affect service as a juror. The procedure for requesting a deferral from jury service and the procedure and basis for granting a deferral shall be set forth in the master jury plan.

"§ 11-1910. Challenging compliance with selection procedures.

"(a) A party may challenge the composition of a jury by a motion for appropriate relief. A challenge shall be brought and decided before any individual juror is examined, unless the Court orders otherwise. The motion shall be in writing, supported by affidavit, and shall specify the facts constituting the grounds for the challenge. If the Court so determines, the motion may be decided on the basis of the affidavits filed with the challenge. If the Court orders trial of the challenge, witnesses may be examined on oath by the Court and may be so examined by either party.

"(b) If the Court determines that in selecting a grand or petit jury there has been a substantial failure to comply with this chapter, the Court shall stay the proceedings pending the selection of a jury in conformity with this chapter, quash the indictment, or grant other appropriate relief.

"(c) The procedures prescribed by this section are the exclusive means by which a person accused of a crime, the District of Columbia, the United States, or a party in a civil case may challenge a jury on the ground that the jury was not selected in conformity with this chapter. Nothing in this section shall preclude any person from pursuing any other remedy, civil or criminal, which may be available for the vindication or enforcement of any law prohibiting discrimination on account of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, economic status, marital status, age, or physical handicap in the selection of individuals for service on grand or petit juries.

Discrimination, prohibition.

"§ 11-1911. Length of service.

"The length of service for grand and petit jurors shall be determined by the master jury plan. In any twenty-four month period an individual shall not be required to serve more than once as a grand or petit juror except as may be necessary by reason of the insufficiency of the master juror list or as ordered by the Court.

"§ 11-1912. Juror fees.

"(a) Notwithstanding section 602(a) of the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act, grand and petit jurors serving in the Superior Court shall receive fees and expenses at rates established by the Council of the District of Columbia, except that such fees and expenses may not exceed the respective rates paid to such jurors in the federal system.

87 Stat. 813.

"(b) A petit or grand juror receiving benefits under the laws of employment security of the District of Columbia shall not lose such benefits on account of performance of juror service.

"(c) Employees of the United States or of any State or local government who serve as grand or petit jurors and who continue to receive regular compensation during the period of jury service shall not be compensated for jury service. Amounts representing reimbursement of expenses incurred in connection with jury service may be paid to such employees to the extent provided in the jury system plan.

State and local governments.

"§ 11-1913. Protection of employment of jurors.

"(a) An employer shall not deprive an employee of employment, threaten, or otherwise coerce an employee with respect to employment because the employee receives a summons, responds to a summons, serves as a juror, or attends Court for prospective jury service.

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"(b) An employer who violates subsection (a) is guilty of criminal contempt. Upon a finding of criminal contempt an employer may be fined not more than $300, imprisoned for not more than 30 days, or both, for a first offense, and may be fined not more than $5,000, imprisoned for not more than 180 days, or both, for any subsequent offense.

Claims. Wages.

"(c) If an employer discharges an employee in violation of subsection (a), the employee within 9 months of such discharge may bring a civil action for recovery of wages lost as a result of the violation, for an order of reinstatement of employment, and for damages. If an employee prevails in an action under this subsection, that employee shall be entitled to reasonable attorney fees fixed by the court.

"§ 11-1914. Preservation of records.

"(a) All records and lists compiled and maintained in connection with the selection and service of jurors shall be preserved for the length of time specified in the jury system plan.

"(b) The contents of any records or lists used in connection with the selection process shall not be disclosed, except in connection with the preparation or presentation of a motion under § 11-1910, or until all individuals selected to serve as grand or petit jurors from such lists have been discharged.

"§ 11-1915. Fraud in the selection process.

"An individual who commits fraud in the processing or selection of jurors or prospective jurors, either by causing any name to be inserted into any list maliciously or by causing any name to be deleted from any list maliciously (including malicious data entry or the altering of any data processing machine or any set of instructions or programs which control data processing equipment for such malicious purpose), is guilty of the crime of jury tampering, and, upon conviction, may be punished by a fine of not more than $10,000, imprisonment for not more than two years, or both. This section shall not limit any other provisions of law concerning the crime of jury tampering.

"§ 11-1916. Grand jury; additional grand jury.

"(a) A grand jury serving in the District of Columbia may take cognizance of all matters brought before it regardless of whether an indictment is returnable in the Federal or District of Columbia courts.

"(b) If the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia certifies in writing to the chief judge that an additional grand jury is required, the judge may in his or her discretion order an additional grand jury summoned which shall be drawn at such time as he or she designates. Unless discharged by order of the judge, the additional grand jury shall serve until the end of the term for which it is drawn.

"§ 11-1917. Coordination and cooperation of courts.

"To the extent feasible, the Superior Court and the United States District Court shall consider the respective needs of each court in the qualification, selection, and service of jurors. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prevent such courts from entering into any agreement for sharing resources and facilities (including automated data processing hardware and software, forms, postage, and other resources).

Contracts.

"§ 11-1918. Effect of invalidity.

"If any provision of this Act or the application of that provision is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any other provision or application of this Act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.".

SEC. 3. TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

28 USC 1869.

Section 1869(f) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking out "except that for purposes of sections 1861, 1862, 1866(c), 1866(d), and 1867 of this chapter such terms shall include the Superior Court of the District of Columbia".

SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.

28 USC 1869 note.

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b), the provisions of this Act shall take effect 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) Upon enactment of this Act, the Board of Judges shall have authority to promulgate and adopt a jury system plan in accordance with this Act and the Court and the clerk of the Court shall have authority to take all necessary actions preliminary to the assumption of the administration of an independent jury system under this Act.

Approved November 14, 1986.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 2946:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 99-324 (Comm. on the District of Columbia).
SENATE REPORTS: No. 99-473 (Comm. on Governmental Affairs).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:
Vol. 131 (1985): Oct. 28, considered and passed House.
Vol. 132 (1986): Oct. 18, considered and passed Senate, amended; House concurred in Senate amendments.