

**House File 2719 - Reprinted**

HOUSE FILE 2719  
BY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

(SUCCESSOR TO HSB 631)

(As Amended and Passed by the House March 4, 2026)

**A BILL FOR**

- 1 An Act relating to the collection and publication of judicial
- 2 officer performance information.
- 3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. 46.26 Judicial officer performance  
2 information.

3 1. The state commissioner of elections shall collect  
4 and publish objective, data-driven information, expressed as  
5 unadjusted numbers and adjusted percentile ranks, related to  
6 each district court judge including district associate judges,  
7 full-time associate juvenile judges, and full-time associate  
8 probate judges.

9 a. The information must include all of the following:

10 (1) The percentage of cases in which the judge set a bond  
11 amount lower than the bond schedule promulgated pursuant to  
12 section 804.21, subsection 5, categorized by offense class.

13 (2) The frequency with which a person is released on  
14 the person's own recognizance by the judge when the person  
15 is arrested for a violent offense compared to a nonviolent  
16 offense, categorized by offense class.

17 (3) The frequency with which the judge's final sentence is  
18 lower than the statutory recommendation or the prosecutor's  
19 recommendation, categorized by offense class.

20 (4) The number of times the judge grants a deferred  
21 judgment, deferred sentence, or suspended sentence.

22 (5) The number of times the judge's rulings are reversed  
23 by the court of appeals or the supreme court due to abuse of  
24 discretion or error of law, including the percentage of the  
25 total number of the judge's opinions or orders appealed in the  
26 same time period, with the total number of appeals displayed as  
27 the denominator, categorized by issue type.

28 (6) The average time from the filing of a motion or  
29 submission of a case for ruling to the judge's final ruling on  
30 the motion or case.

31 (7) The number of cases the judge has disposed of compared  
32 to the number of outstanding cases remain on the judge's docket  
33 each year.

34 b. Beginning five years after the effective date of this  
35 Act, each metric must include a five-year rolling trend line.

1     *c.* The information collected under this subsection  
2 must be available for public download in an electronic,  
3 machine-readable open format. All data and adjusted metrics  
4 must be equally prominent and equally accessible.

5     2. *a.* The judicial branch shall provide the state  
6 commissioner of elections with read-only access to all publicly  
7 available information on the Iowa court information system  
8 within one year of the effective date of this Act.

9     *b.* The state court administrator shall annually certify the  
10 accuracy and completeness of the information made available  
11 under paragraph "*a*" during the period beginning November 1 and  
12 ending December 31.

13     *c.* The state court administrator shall report any material  
14 discrepancies in the information to the general assembly.

15     3. Within eighteen months of the effective date of this Act,  
16 the state commissioner of elections shall submit a methodology  
17 report to the general assembly that contains all of the  
18 following:

19     *a.* A case complexity index assigning weighted scores to  
20 each case type based on objective criteria including statutory  
21 penalty range, number of parties, number of hearings, length of  
22 the trial or contested hearing, and whether the case involved a  
23 constitutional challenge or question of first impression.

24     *b.* The method for assigning judges to peer groups of  
25 comparable docket composition.

26     *c.* The mathematical formula for each adjusted metric  
27 including expression of the adjusted metric as a percentile  
28 rank within the judge's peer group and judicial district.

29     *d.* The minimum case volume threshold for statistical  
30 confidence under subsection 4.

31     *e.* The criteria for distinguishing required opinions and  
32 orders under subsection 5, paragraph "*a*".

33     4. Any metric based on fewer cases than the ninety percent  
34 statistical confidence at one standard deviation must display,  
35 in boldface type, the following phrase immediately adjacent to

1 the metric:

2 RELIABILITY WARNING: This figure is based on a small number  
3 of cases and may not accurately reflect this judge's typical  
4 performance.

5 5. *a.* The state commissioner of elections shall maintain  
6 an online searchable public repository of all written opinions  
7 and orders that disclose a judge's reasoning, legal analysis,  
8 factual findings, or conclusions of law for each judge's  
9 current term and the six preceding years to the extent  
10 available. In cases of ambiguity, the state commissioner of  
11 elections shall err on the side of inclusion.

12 *b.* Beginning one year after the effective date of this Act,  
13 the state court administrator shall provide the opinions and  
14 orders required under paragraph "a" electronically each month  
15 to the state commissioner of elections.

16 *c.* The state commissioner of elections shall publish the  
17 opinions and orders as searchable documents with redactions  
18 consistent with Iowa court rules. The redacted documents  
19 must note the category of information redacted. Documents  
20 subject to a protective order, that are sealed, or that are  
21 otherwise confidential under law shall not be posted. The  
22 state commissioner of elections shall provide a notice in place  
23 of the document identifying the date the document was issued,  
24 the general subject matter to the extent disclosable, and the  
25 reason for nonproduction.

26 *d.* The online searchable public repository shall support  
27 full-text search by keyword, date range, case type, and party  
28 type.

29 6. The state commissioner of elections shall maintain an  
30 internet site that includes all of the following:

31 *a.* A search by judicial district, county, and judge name.

32 *b.* (1) A profile page for each judge displaying the  
33 unadjusted numbers and adjusted metrics required under  
34 subsection 1, with peer group and judicial district  
35 comparisons, and trend lines where applicable, and a link to

1 the online searchable public repository under subsection 5.

2 (2) The state commissioner of elections shall not add  
3 narrative interpretation or editorial commentary to any judge's  
4 profile page beyond what this section expressly authorizes and  
5 shall not filter or selectively present information in the  
6 online searchable public repository.

7 c. (1) A space for each judge's personal statement on  
8 judicial philosophy or data trends, not to exceed two thousand  
9 words.

10 (2) The state commissioner of elections shall not edit the  
11 judge's personal statement except to enforce the word limit or  
12 remove verifiably false content after providing notice and an  
13 opportunity to revise the personal statement to the judge.

14 d. The methodology report under subsection 3.

15 e. An annual report, to also be submitted to the general  
16 assembly, on data collected, documents posted, anomalies,  
17 deviations from methodology, and disclaimer acknowledgment  
18 statistics.

19 7. a. The state commissioner of elections shall create a  
20 standalone internet page for a person to acknowledge the notice  
21 under paragraph "b" prior to accessing a judge's profile page.

22 b. The standalone internet page shall require a person to  
23 check a box to acknowledge the following statement:

24 IMPORTANT NOTICE — PLEASE READ BEFORE PROCEEDING

25 This information is published by the Iowa secretary of state  
26 to assist voters in judicial retention elections. Statistics  
27 reflect caseload composition as much as judicial performance  
28 and do not measure whether a judge reached the correct result.  
29 Reversal rates cover only appealed cases. Sentencing and bond  
30 departures may be legally appropriate exercises of judicial  
31 discretion. Written opinions reflect judicial reasoning  
32 but not the full underlying record. Metrics flagged with a  
33 reliability warning should be given little or no weight. In  
34 reviewing this information, the reader will please remember  
35 that every lawsuit is different, with different parties,

1 different facts, and different applicable legal principles.  
2 Accordingly, any attempt, such as the information presented  
3 on the following page, to reduce such complexity to mere  
4 statistics is inherently imperfect.

5 [ ] I understand and wish to proceed.

6 8. This section does not authorize the state commissioner of  
7 elections to supervise, direct, or regulate any judge.

8 9. *a.* The state commissioner of elections may adopt rules  
9 pursuant to chapter 17A to administer this section. A rule  
10 adopted by the state commissioner of elections pursuant to  
11 chapter 17A for purposes of this section shall not become  
12 effective until it is ratified by the general assembly by  
13 passage of a joint resolution subject to approval of the  
14 governor.

15 *b.* If the state commissioner of elections determines that  
16 such a rule must become effective while the general assembly is  
17 not in session, the state commissioner of elections may request  
18 temporary approval of the rule by the legislative council.  
19 The rule shall become effective upon temporary approval by  
20 the legislative council. A rule temporarily approved by the  
21 legislative council shall cease to be effective upon the  
22 adjournment of the next regular session of the general assembly  
23 following the effective date of the rule unless the general  
24 assembly ratifies the rule before adjournment.

25 *c.* The administrative code editor shall publish a notice in  
26 the Iowa administrative bulletin if such a rule is ratified,  
27 temporarily approved, or ceases to be effective. If such a  
28 rule ceases to be effective, the administrative code editor  
29 shall remove the rule from the Iowa administrative code as  
30 soon as practicable, but no sooner than two weeks after such  
31 publication.