

1-1 By: Bettencourt, et al. S.B. No. 38
1-2 (In the Senate - Filed March 14, 2025; March 17, 2025, read
1-3 first time and referred to Committee on State Affairs;
1-4 April 1, 2025, reported adversely, with favorable Committee
1-5 Substitute by the following vote: Yeas 9, Nays 1; April 1, 2025,
1-6 sent to printer.)

1-7	COMMITTEE VOTE				
1-8		Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-9	Hughes	X			
1-10	Paxton	X			
1-11	Bettencourt	X			
1-12	Birdwell	X			
1-13	Hall	X			
1-14	Hinojosa of Nueces	X			
1-15	Middleton	X			
1-16	Parker			X	
1-17	Perry	X			
1-18	Schwertner	X			
1-19	Zaffirini		X		

1-20 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR S.B. No. 38 By: Bettencourt

1-21 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
1-22 AN ACT

1-23 relating to the eviction from real property of certain persons not
1-24 entitled to enter, occupy, or remain in possession of the premises.
1-25 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:
1-26 SECTION 1. Section 24.004, Property Code, is amended by
1-27 amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (c) to read as
1-28 follows:
1-29 (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), a justice court in
1-30 the precinct in which the real property is located or to which the
1-31 suit is transferred under Section 24.0041 has jurisdiction in an
1-32 eviction suit [suits]. Eviction suits include forcible entry and
1-33 detainer and forcible detainer suits. A justice court has
1-34 jurisdiction to issue a writ of possession under this chapter
1-35 [Sections 24.0054(a), (a-2), and (a-3)].
1-36 (c) A justice court in which a petition is filed under
1-37 Section 24.00505 must adjudicate the right to actual possession of
1-38 the premises. The justice court may not adjudicate title to the
1-39 premises. Counterclaims and the joinder of suits against third
1-40 parties are not permitted in eviction suits. This subsection does
1-41 not preclude a claim that may not be asserted under this subsection
1-42 from being brought in a separate suit in a court of proper
1-43 jurisdiction.
1-44 SECTION 2. Chapter 24, Property Code, is amended by adding
1-45 Sections 24.0041, 24.0042, and 24.0043 to read as follows:
1-46 Sec. 24.0041. VENUE. (a) An eviction suit must be brought
1-47 in the justice precinct in which the real property is located. On
1-48 the motion of the plaintiff, the justice court shall transfer the
1-49 eviction suit to a justice court in an adjacent precinct in the
1-50 county in which the real property is located if:
1-51 (1) the sheriff or constable is unable to serve the
1-52 citation on the defendant on or before the third business day after
1-53 the date the petition is filed;
1-54 (2) the justice court is unable to conduct the trial of
1-55 the eviction suit on or before the 21st day after the date the
1-56 petition is filed; or
1-57 (3) any other sufficient cause exists, as determined
1-58 by the justice court.
1-59 (b) If the justice court finds sufficient cause for a change
1-60 in venue under this section, the eviction suit must be transferred

to the justice court identified by the plaintiff in the plaintiff's motion. On granting the motion, the justice court shall immediately forward the transcript and original papers in the case, by electronic means or otherwise, to the clerk of the justice court to which the suit is transferred.

(c) On a transfer of an eviction suit under this section, the justice court to which the suit is transferred may not require the plaintiff to pay:

- (1) any additional filing fees; or
- (2) an additional service fee, unless additional service is required.

Sec. 24.0042. COMPUTATION OF TIME. A period of time prescribed by this chapter:

- (1) does not include the day of the event that begins the period;
- (2) includes Saturdays, Sundays, and state or federal holidays;
- (3) includes the last day of the period; and
- (4) if the last day of the period is a Saturday, Sunday, or state or federal holiday, is extended so that the last day of the period is the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or state or federal holiday.

Sec. 24.0043. AUTHORITY TO MODIFY OR SUSPEND EVICTION PROCEDURES. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) but notwithstanding any other law, including Section 22.004, Government Code, only the legislature may modify or suspend procedures prescribed by this chapter.

(b) This section does not affect the authority of the supreme court to modify or suspend certain provisions for the conduct of any court proceedings affected by a disaster under Section 22.0035(b), Government Code, but such a modification or suspension may be applied to an eviction suit only if:

- (1) the modification or suspension is applicable to all courts similarly affected by the disaster without regard to the subject matter of an action; and
- (2) any request for the modification or suspension is made in writing and available to the public.

SECTION 3. The heading to Section 24.005, Property Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 24.005. NOTICE REQUIRED BEFORE ~~[TO VACATE PRIOR TO]~~ FILING CERTAIN EVICTION SUITS ~~[SUIT]~~.

SECTION 4. Section 24.005, Property Code, is amended by amending Subsections (a) and (e) and adding Subsections (c-1), (f-3), and (f-4) to read as follows:

(a) If the occupant is a tenant under a written lease or oral rental agreement, the landlord must give a tenant who defaults or holds over beyond the end of the rental term or renewal period at least three days' written notice to vacate the premises before the landlord files a forcible detainer suit, unless the parties have contracted for a shorter or longer notice period in a written lease or agreement. In a forcible detainer suit against a tenant whose right of possession is terminated based on nonpayment of rent, written notice under this section shall be given in the form of either a notice to pay rent or vacate or a notice to vacate. A landlord who files a forcible detainer suit on grounds that the tenant is holding over beyond the end of the rental term or renewal period must also comply with the tenancy termination requirements of Section 91.001.

(c-1) If a federal law or rule requires a landlord to give notice to a tenant before the landlord requires the tenant to vacate the premises:

- (1) a landlord that satisfies the notice requirements of this section is not required to delay the filing of an eviction suit based on the federal requirement;
- (2) the federal requirement is not a basis for a court to delay or abate the conduct of the eviction suit; and
- (3) a writ of possession may not be served on the tenant until the period between the delivery of the notice under this section and the service of the writ equals or exceeds the

period prescribed by the federal requirement.

(e) If the lease or applicable state or federal law or rule requires a ~~the~~ landlord to give a tenant an opportunity to respond to a notice of proposed eviction before filing an eviction suit:

(1) the notice period in a notice to pay rent or vacate or ~~a~~ notice to vacate under Subsection (a) may, at the landlord's discretion, run concurrently with ~~not be given until~~ the period provided for the tenant to respond to the notice of proposed eviction; and

(2) the notice to pay rent or vacate or notice to vacate may include the required opportunity to respond to the notice of proposed eviction ~~notice has expired~~.

(f-3) A notice required by this section must be delivered:

(1) in any manner the parties agree to in writing; or

(2) if no agreement is made in writing:

(A) in any other manner in which the tenant has communicated in writing with the landlord, including by electronic means; or

(B) if the tenant has not communicated in writing with the landlord, in a manner reasonably expected to provide actual notice.

(f-4) Subsection (f-3) does not apply if the tenant actually receives the notice.

SECTION 5. Chapter 24, Property Code, is amended by adding Sections 24.00505 and 24.00506 to read as follows:

Sec. 24.00505. PETITION. (a) To initiate an eviction suit, a sworn petition must be filed with the court. The petition must include the contents required by the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

(b) A landlord that satisfies the petition requirements of this section is not required to prove that the landlord complied with any presuit requirement unless the tenant specifically denies that the requirement was satisfied.

Sec. 24.00506. RULES OF COURT. (a) A court may adopt local rules, forms, or standing orders for eviction suits in accordance with the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

(b) A court may not adopt local rules, forms, or standing orders for eviction suits that:

(1) require content in or with the petition other than the content required by the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure;

(2) require any mediation, pretrial conference, or other proceeding before trial; or

(3) authorize the dismissal of an eviction suit on the basis that the petition is improper if the petition:

(A) meets the requirements of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure; or

(B) can be amended to meet the requirements of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

SECTION 6. Section 24.0051, Property Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 24.0051. PROCEDURES APPLICABLE IN SUIT TO EVICT AND RECOVER UNPAID RENT. (a) In a suit filed in justice court in which the landlord files a sworn petition ~~statement~~ seeking judgment against a tenant for possession of the premises and unpaid rent, personal service on the tenant or service on the tenant under the ~~Rule 742a,~~ Texas Rules of Civil Procedure~~]~~ is procedurally sufficient to support a default judgment for possession of the premises and unpaid rent.

(b) A landlord may recover unpaid rent under this section regardless of whether the tenant vacated the premises after the date the landlord filed the sworn petition ~~statement~~ and before the date the court renders judgment.

(c) In a suit to recover possession of the premises, whether or not unpaid rent is claimed, the citation ~~required by Rule 739, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure,~~ must include the following notice to the tenant ~~defendant~~:

FAILURE TO APPEAR FOR TRIAL MAY RESULT IN A DEFAULT JUDGMENT BEING ENTERED AGAINST YOU.

(d) In a suit described by Subsection (c), the citation

~~[required by Rule 739, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure,]~~ must include the following notice to the tenant ~~[defendant]~~ on the first page of the citation in English and Spanish and in conspicuous bold print:

SUIT TO EVICT

THIS SUIT TO EVICT INVOLVES IMMEDIATE DEADLINES. A TENANT WHO IS SERVING ON ACTIVE MILITARY DUTY MAY HAVE SPECIAL RIGHTS OR RELIEF RELATED TO THIS SUIT UNDER FEDERAL LAW, INCLUDING THE SERVICEMEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT (50 U.S.C. APP. SECTION 501 ET SEQ.), OR STATE LAW, INCLUDING SECTION 92.017, TEXAS PROPERTY CODE. CALL THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS TOLL-FREE AT 1-877-9TEXBAR IF YOU NEED HELP LOCATING AN ATTORNEY. IF YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO HIRE AN ATTORNEY, YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR LOW-COST LEGAL ASSISTANCE.

(e) If the landlord files a motion for summary disposition under Section 24.005106 with the petition, the citation must include the following notice to the tenant on the first page of the citation in English and Spanish and in conspicuous bold print:

THE PETITION INCLUDES A MOTION FOR SUMMARY DISPOSITION. IF THE MOTION SHOWS THERE ARE NO GENUINELY DISPUTED FACTS THAT WOULD PREVENT A JUDGMENT IN FAVOR OF THE LANDLORD, THE COURT MAY ENTER JUDGMENT IN FAVOR OF THE LANDLORD WITHOUT A TRIAL UNLESS:

(1) NOT LATER THAN THE FOURTH DAY AFTER YOU ARE SERVED WITH THE LANDLORD'S SWORN PETITION, YOU FILE A RESPONSE SETTING OUT SUPPORTING FACTS AND ANY APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS ON WHICH YOUR RESPONSE RELIES; AND

(2) THE JUSTICE COURT DETERMINES THAT SERVICE ON YOU WAS PROPER AND, BASED ON THE LANDLORD'S SWORN PETITION AND YOUR RESPONSE, THERE ARE GENUINELY DISPUTED FACTS THAT WOULD PREVENT A JUDGMENT IN FAVOR OF THE LANDLORD.

(f) A sheriff or constable, including a deputy sheriff or deputy constable, shall make a diligent effort to serve the citation and petition not later than the third business day after the date the petition is filed. If the citation and petition are not served on or before the third business day after the date the petition is filed, the landlord may, but is not obligated to, provide for the citation and petition to be served by any other law enforcement officer, including an off-duty officer, that has received appropriate training in the service of process, eviction procedures, and the execution of writs, as determined by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement.

(g) The court:

(1) shall, subject to this subsection, hold the trial of an eviction suit on a date that is not earlier than the 10th day or later than the 21st day after the date the petition is filed;

(2) may not hold the trial on a date that is earlier than the fourth day after the date the tenant is served with the petition; and

(3) may not postpone the date of a trial for more than seven days unless the parties agree to the postponement in writing.

SECTION 7. Chapter 24, Property Code, is amended by adding Sections 24.005105, 24.005106, and 24.005107 to read as follows:

Sec. 24.005105. ELECTRONIC PROCEEDINGS. If the parties agree, a justice court may allow the parties in an eviction suit to appear at a court proceeding in the suit by videoconference, teleconference, or other available electronic means.

Sec. 24.005106. SUMMARY DISPOSITION AND TRIAL. (a) A landlord that files a sworn petition under Section 24.00505 may include with the petition a sworn motion for summary disposition without trial. The motion must set out all supporting facts, and documents on which the motion relies must be attached. If the motion shows that there are no genuinely disputed facts that would prevent a judgment in favor of the landlord, the court may enter judgment in favor of the landlord without a trial unless:

(1) not later than the fourth day after the date the tenant is served with the landlord's sworn petition, the tenant files a response setting out supporting facts, and providing any applicable documents, on which the response relies; and

(2) the justice court determines that service on the

tenant was proper and, based on the landlord's sworn petition and the tenant's response, if any, there are genuinely disputed facts that would prevent a judgment in favor of the landlord.

(b) The justice court:

(1) may enter judgment for the landlord regardless of the tenant's response if the response does not show there is a genuinely disputed fact that would prevent judgment in favor of the landlord; and

(2) may consider a response filed by the tenant later than the fourth day after the date the tenant was served with the landlord's sworn petition and motion if the response shows there is a genuinely disputed fact that would prevent judgment in favor of the landlord and the tenant has filed the response before judgment has been entered.

(c) If the justice court determines that there are genuinely disputed facts that would prevent a judgment in favor of the landlord, the justice court shall set a trial date that is not earlier than the 10th day and not later than the 21st day after the date the petition is filed by the landlord.

(d) A judgment on summary disposition under this section has the same effect as any other judgment in an eviction suit.

Sec. 24.005107. APPEAL TO COUNTY COURT. (a) A party may appeal the judgment of a justice court in an eviction suit by filing a bond, cash deposit, or statement of inability to afford payment of court costs with the justice court not later than the fifth day after the date the judgment is signed. A tenant who files an appeal must affirm, under penalty of perjury, the tenant's good faith belief that the tenant has a meritorious defense and that the appeal is not for the purpose of delay. An appeal is perfected when a bond, cash deposit, or statement of inability to afford payment of court costs is timely filed with the justice court in accordance with this section.

(b) The justice court shall forward the transcript and original papers in an appeal of an eviction case to the county court, by electronic means or otherwise, not earlier than 4 p.m. on the sixth day or later than 4 p.m. on the 10th day after the date the tenant files the appeal, except that, if the court confirms that the tenant has timely paid the initial rent payment into the justice court registry in accordance with Section 24.0053, the court may forward the transcript and original papers immediately.

(c) The county court shall hold a trial not later than the 21st day after the date the transcript and original papers are delivered to the county court.

SECTION 8. Section 24.00511(a), Property Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) In a residential eviction suit [~~for nonpayment of rent~~], the justice court shall state in the court's judgment the amount of the appeal bond, taking into consideration the money required to be paid into the court registry under Section 24.0053.

SECTION 9. Section 24.00512(f), Property Code, is amended to read as follows:

(f) If an appeal of a decision disapproving the appeal bond is filed, the justice court shall transmit to the county court the contest to the appeal bond and all relevant documents. The county court shall docket the appeal, schedule a hearing to be held not later than the fifth day after the date the appeal is docketed, notify the parties and the surety of the hearing time and date, and hear the contest de novo. The failure of the county court to hold a timely hearing is not grounds for approval or denial of the appeal. A writ of possession may not be issued before the county court issues a final decision on the appeal bond, except as provided by Section 24.0054.

SECTION 10. Section 24.0052, Property Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 24.0052. TENANT APPEAL ON STATEMENT OF INABILITY TO AFFORD PAYMENT OF COURT COSTS [~~PAUPER'S AFFIDAVIT~~]. (a) If a tenant in a residential eviction suit is unable to pay the costs of appeal or file an appeal bond as required by the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, the tenant may appeal the judgment of the justice

court by filing with the justice court, not later than the fifth day after the date the judgment is signed, a statement of inability to afford payment of court costs ~~[pauper's affidavit]~~ sworn before the clerk of the justice court or a notary public that states that the tenant is unable to pay the costs of appeal or file an appeal bond. The statement ~~[affidavit]~~ must contain the following information:

- (1) the tenant's identity;
- (2) the nature and amount of the tenant's employment income;
- (3) the income of the tenant's spouse, if applicable and available to the tenant;
- (4) the nature and amount of any governmental entitlement income of the tenant;
- (5) all other income of the tenant;
- (6) the amount of available cash and funds available in savings or checking accounts of the tenant;
- (7) real and personal property owned by the tenant, other than household furnishings, clothes, tools of a trade, or personal effects;
- (8) the tenant's debts and monthly expenses; and
- (9) the number and age of the tenant's dependents and where those dependents reside.

(b) The justice court shall make available a form that a person may use to comply with the requirements of Subsection (a).

(c) The justice court shall promptly notify the landlord if a statement described by Subsection (a) ~~[pauper's affidavit]~~ is filed by the tenant.

(d) A landlord may contest a statement filed under this section ~~[pauper's affidavit]~~ on or before the fifth day after the date the statement ~~[affidavit]~~ is filed. If the landlord contests the statement ~~[affidavit]~~, the justice court shall notify the parties and hold a hearing to determine whether the tenant is unable to pay the costs of appeal or file an appeal bond. The hearing shall be held not later than the fifth day after the date the landlord notifies the court clerk of the landlord's contest. At the hearing, the tenant has the burden to prove by competent evidence, including documents or credible testimony of the tenant or others, that the tenant is unable to pay the costs of appeal or file an appeal bond.

(e) If the justice court approves a statement filed by ~~[the pauper's affidavit of]~~ a tenant under this section, the tenant is not required to pay the county court filing fee or file an additional statement ~~[affidavit]~~ in the county court under Subsection (a).

SECTION 11. Section 24.0053, Property Code, is amended by amending Subsections (a), (a-1), (a-2), (a-3), (b), (c), (d), and (e) and adding Subsection (a-5) to read as follows:

(a) If the justice court enters judgment for the landlord in a residential eviction case ~~[based on nonpayment of rent]~~, the court shall determine the amount of rent to be paid each rental pay period during the pendency of any appeal and shall note that amount in the judgment. If a portion of the rent is payable by a government agency, the court shall determine and note in the judgment the portion of the rent to be paid by the government agency and the portion to be paid by the tenant. The court's determination shall be in accordance with the terms of the rental agreement and applicable laws and regulations. If there is no rental agreement, the court shall determine:

- (1) the rental pay period; and
- (2) the amount of rent to be paid by the tenant in each rental pay period, which must be the greater of:

- (A) \$250; or
- (B) the fair market rent, if determined by the court. ~~[This subsection does not require or prohibit payment of rent into the court registry or directly to the landlord during the pendency of an appeal of an eviction case based on grounds other than nonpayment of rent.]~~

(a-1) If ~~[In an eviction suit for nonpayment of rent, if]~~ a tenant files an appeal of a justice court's judgment in an eviction

~~suit [a pauper's affidavit in the period prescribed by Section 24.0052 or an appeal bond pursuant to the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure], the justice court shall provide to the tenant a written notice at the time the [pauper's affidavit or] appeal [bond] is filed that contains the following information in bold or conspicuous type:~~

~~(1) the amount of [the initial deposit of] rent stated in the judgment that the tenant must pay into the justice court or county court registry, as applicable, during the pendency of the appeal;~~

~~(2) whether the rent [initial deposit] must be paid in cash, cashier's check, or money order, and to whom the cashier's check or money order, if applicable, must be made payable;~~

~~(3) the calendar date by which the rent [initial deposit] must be paid into the justice court or county court registry, as applicable;~~

~~(4) for a court that closes before 5 p.m. on the date specified by Subdivision (3), the time the court closes; and~~

~~(5) a statement that failure to pay the required amount into the justice court or county court registry, as applicable, by the date prescribed by Subdivision (3) may result in the justice court or county court issuing a writ of possession without a hearing.~~

~~(a-2) The tenant shall:~~

~~(1) not later than the fifth day after the date the tenant files the appeal, pay rent for one rental pay period into the justice court registry; and~~

~~(2) on or before the beginning of each rental pay period during the pendency of the appeal, pay rent for one rental pay period into the justice court or county court registry, as applicable, according to the court in which the case is pending at the time of payment [The date by which an initial deposit must be paid into the justice court registry under Subsection (a-1)(3) must be within five days of the date the tenant files the pauper's affidavit as required by the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure].~~

~~(a-3) The justice court or county court, as applicable, shall disburse rent paid into the justice court or county court registry to the landlord on request at any time during or after the pendency of the appeal [If a tenant files an appeal bond to appeal an eviction for nonpayment of rent, the tenant must, not later than the fifth day after the date the tenant filed the appeal bond, pay into the justice court registry the amount of rent to be paid in one rental pay period as determined by the court under Subsection (a). If the tenant fails to timely pay that amount into the justice court registry and the transcript has not yet been transmitted to the county court, the plaintiff may request a writ of possession. On request and payment of the applicable fee, the justice court shall issue the writ of possession immediately and without a hearing. Regardless of whether a writ of possession is issued, the justice court shall transmit the transcript and appeal documents to the county court for trial de novo on issues relating to possession, rent, or attorney's fees].~~

~~(a-5) A tenant's payment of rent into a court registry under this section relieves the tenant of the obligation to pay rent to the landlord only for the rental pay period for which the payment is made.~~

~~(b) [If an eviction case is based on nonpayment of rent and the tenant appeals by filing a pauper's affidavit, the tenant shall pay the rent, as it becomes due, into the justice court or the county court registry, as applicable, during the pendency of the appeal, in accordance with the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure and Subsection (a).] If a government agency is responsible for all or a portion of the rent under an agreement with the landlord, the tenant shall pay only that portion of the rent determined by the justice court under Subsection (a) to be paid by the tenant during appeal, subject to either party's right to contest that determination under Subsection (c).~~

~~(c) If [an eviction case is based on nonpayment of rent and] the tenant's rent during the rental agreement term has been paid~~

wholly or partly by a government agency, either party may contest the portion of the rent that the justice court determines must be paid into the county court registry by the tenant under this section. The contest must be filed on or before the fifth day after the date the justice signs the judgment. If a contest is filed, not later than the fifth day after the date the contest is filed the justice court shall notify the parties and hold a hearing to determine the amount owed by the tenant in accordance with the terms of the rental agreement and applicable laws and regulations. After hearing the evidence, the justice court shall determine the portion of the rent that must be paid by the tenant under this section.

~~(d) [If the tenant objects to the justice court's ruling under Subsection (c) on the portion of the rent to be paid by the tenant during appeal, the tenant shall be required to pay only the portion claimed by the tenant to be owed by the tenant until the issue is tried de novo along with the case on the merits in county court.]~~ During the pendency of the appeal, either party may file a motion with the county court to reconsider the amount of the rent that must be paid by the tenant into the registry of the court.

(e) If either party files a contest under Subsection (c) and the tenant files a statement of inability to afford payment of court costs ~~[pauper's affidavit]~~ that is contested by the landlord under Section 24.0052(d), the justice court shall hold the hearing on both contests at the same time.

SECTION 12. Sections 24.0054(a), (a-1), (a-2), and (f), Property Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a) During an appeal of an eviction case ~~[for nonpayment of rent]~~, the justice court or county court, as applicable, on request shall immediately issue a writ of possession, without hearing, if ~~[+]~~

~~[(1)] a tenant fails to pay [the initial] rent [deposit] into the appropriate [justice] court registry [within five days of the date the tenant filed a pauper's affidavit] as required by [Rule 749b(1), Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, and] Section 24.0053 and~~ ~~[+]~~

~~[(2)] the justice court has provided the written notice required by Section 24.0053(a-1) [+ and~~

~~[(3) the justice court has not yet forwarded the transcript and original papers to the county court as provided by Subsection (a-2)].~~

(a-1) The sheriff, the ~~[or]~~ constable, or another law enforcement officer shall execute a writ of possession under Subsection (a) in accordance with Sections 24.0061(d) through (h). The landlord shall bear the costs of issuing and executing the writ of possession.

(a-2) If the justice court issues a writ of possession under this section, the [The justice court shall forward the transcript and original papers in an appeal of an eviction case to the county court but may not forward the transcript and original papers before the sixth day after the date the tenant files a pauper's affidavit, except that, if the court confirms that the tenant has timely paid the initial deposit of rent into the justice court registry in accordance with Section 24.0053, the court may forward the transcript and original papers immediately. If the tenant has not timely paid the initial deposit into the justice court registry, the justice court on request shall issue a writ of possession notwithstanding the fact that the tenant has perfected an appeal by filing a pauper's affidavit that has been approved by the court. The] justice court shall forward the transcript and original papers in the eviction case to the county court for trial de novo to resolve any remaining issues in the case, such as rent or attorney's fees, notwithstanding the fact that the [a] writ [of possession under this section] has [already] been issued or executed.

(f) During the appeal of an eviction case, if a government agency is responsible for payment of a portion of the rent and does not pay that portion to the landlord or into the justice court or county court registry, the landlord may file a motion with the county court requesting that the tenant be required to pay into the county court registry, as a condition of remaining in possession, the full amount of each rental period's rent, as it becomes due

under the rental agreement. After notice and hearing, the court shall grant the motion if the landlord proves by credible evidence that:

(1) a portion of the rent is owed by a government agency;

(2) the portion of the rent owed by the government agency is unpaid;

(3) the landlord did not cause wholly or partly the agency to cease making the payments; and

(4) the landlord did not cause wholly or partly the agency to pay the wrong amount[~~, and~~

~~[(5) the landlord is not able to take reasonable action that will cause the agency to resume making the payments of its portion of the total rent due under the rental agreement]].~~

SECTION 13. Section [24.0061](#), Property Code, is amended by amending Subsections (a), (b), (c), (h), and (i) and adding Subsection (b-1) to read as follows:

(a) A landlord who prevails in an eviction suit is entitled to a judgment for possession of the premises and a writ of possession. In this chapter, "premises" means:

(1) a ~~[the]~~ unit that is occupied or rented; and

(2) [and] any outside area or facility:

(A) that a ~~[the]~~ tenant is entitled to use under a written lease or oral rental agreement;

(B) ~~[, or]~~ that is held out for the use of tenants generally; and

(C) that is occupied by or in the possession of the person against whom the eviction suit is filed.

(b) A writ of possession may not be issued before the sixth day after the date on which the judgment for possession is rendered unless a possession bond has been filed and approved under the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure ~~[and judgment for possession is thereafter granted by default].~~

(b-1) The issuance of a writ of possession is a ministerial act not subject to review or delay. A sheriff or constable, including a deputy sheriff or deputy constable, shall serve the writ of possession not later than the third business day after the date the writ is issued. If the writ of possession is not served on or before the third business day after the date the writ is issued, the landlord may, but is not obligated to, provide for the writ to be served by any other law enforcement officer, including an off-duty officer, who has received training as described by Section [24.0051](#)(f).

(c) The court shall notify a tenant in writing of a default judgment for possession or a judgment for possession under Section [24.005106](#) by sending a copy of the judgment to the premises by first class mail not later than 48 hours after the entry of the judgment.

(h) An officer ~~[A sheriff or constable]~~ may use reasonable force in executing a writ under this section.

(i) A landlord is not liable for damages to the tenant resulting from the enforcement of a judgment in favor of the landlord under this chapter, including the execution of a writ of possession by an officer under this section.

SECTION 14. Section [24.011](#), Property Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 24.011. NONLAWYER REPRESENTATION. (a) In an eviction suit ~~[suits]~~ in justice court ~~[for nonpayment of rent or holding over beyond a rental term]~~, the parties may represent themselves or be represented by their authorized agents, who need not be attorneys. ~~[In any eviction suit in justice court, an authorized agent requesting or obtaining a default judgment need not be an attorney.]~~

(b) In an appeal of an eviction suit for nonpayment of rent in a county or district court, an owner of a multifamily residential property may be represented by the owner's authorized agent, who need not be an attorney~~[, or, if the owner is a corporation or other entity, by an employee, owner, officer, or partner of the entity, who need not be an attorney].~~

SECTION 15. Chapter [24](#), Property Code, is amended by adding

Section 24.012 to read as follows:

Sec. 24.012. SUPPORT FOR TENANTS IN EVICTION PROCESS. (a) A state or local government entity, other than the supreme court, that funds a legal aid service or organization to provide information, advice, or representation to eligible tenants in the eviction process shall provide an equal amount of funding to pay for relocation assistance for tenants.

(b) Relocation assistance provided to a tenant under Subsection (a) must be in a sufficient amount to enable the tenant to move out of the premises from which the tenant is being evicted, including, at a minimum:

(1) the tenant's moving expenses;

(2) a security deposit, if one is required; and

(3) one month's rent.

SECTION 16. The following provisions of the Property Code are repealed:

(1) Sections 24.005(f), (f-1), (f-2), (g), (h), and (i);

(2) Section 24.0053(a-4); and

(3) Sections 24.0054(a-3), (a-4), (b), (c), (d), and (e).

SECTION 17. The supreme court shall adopt rules as necessary to clarify eviction procedures consistent with Chapter 24, Property Code, as amended by this Act.

SECTION 18. The changes in law made by this Act apply only to an eviction suit in which the petition is filed on or after January 1, 2026. An eviction suit in which the petition is filed before January 1, 2026, is governed by the law as it existed immediately before January 1, 2026, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 19. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) of this section, this Act takes effect January 1, 2026.

(b) Section 17 of this Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

* * * * *