

ACT No. 424

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 728

BY REPRESENTATIVE GAROFALO

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact Code of Civil Procedure Articles 4919(A)(introductory paragraph)
3 and (5), 4922, and 4925(A) and to enact Code of Civil Procedure Articles 4921.1(C)
4 and 4921.2, relative to justice of the peace courts; to provide relative to the service
5 of citations; to provide relative to trial procedures; to provide relative to notice of
6 judgment; and to provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. Code of Civil Procedure Articles 4919(A)(introductory paragraph) and
9 (5), 4922, and 4925(A) are hereby amended and reenacted and Code of Civil Procedure
10 Articles 4921.1(C) and 4921.2 are hereby enacted to read as follows:

11 Art. 4919. Citation; service of citation; justice of the peace courts; district courts
12 with concurrent jurisdiction

13 A. The citation must be signed by the justice of the peace or the clerk of
14 court issuing it, with an expression of his official capacity and under the seal of his
15 office, must be accompanied by a certified copy of any petition, which has been
16 filed, exclusive of exhibits, even if made a part thereof, and must contain the
17 following:

18 * * *

19 (5)(a) A statement that the person cited must either comply with the demand
20 contained ~~of~~ in the pleading filed by the plaintiff against him or make an appearance,
21 either by filing a pleading or otherwise, in the court issuing the citation within the
22 delay provided under Article 4920 under penalty of default.

23 (b) If the matter is set for hearing pursuant to Article 4921.1(C), the citation
24 must contain a statement that the person cited must either comply with the demand

1 of the plaintiff against him or appear in the court issuing the citation at the time and
2 date provided and that if he fails to appear, judgment may be entered against him.

3 * * *

4 Art. 4921.1. Demand for trial; abandonment; applicability

5 * * *

6 C.(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of Paragraph A of this Article, the
7 justice of the peace or clerk may set the matter for trial upon filing of a petition. The
8 date, time, and location of the trial shall be contained in the citation. The first
9 scheduled trial date shall be not more than forty-five days, nor less than ten days,
10 from the service of the citation. If the defendant appears, he need not file an answer
11 unless ordered to do so by the court. If a defendant who has been served with
12 citation fails to appear at the time and place specified in the citation, the judge may
13 enter a default judgment for the plaintiff in the amount proved to be due. If the
14 plaintiff does not appear, the judge may enter an order dismissing the action without
15 prejudice.

16 (2) If a matter has been set for trial pursuant to Paragraph (1) of this Article,
17 no default judgement shall be rendered prior to the trial date.

18 Art. 4921.2. Duties of the justice of the peace; trial procedure; rules of evidence;
19 depositions

20 A. At trial, it is the duty of the justice of the peace to conduct an informal
21 hearing and to develop all of the facts necessary and relevant to an impartial
22 determination of the case. The judge may take testimony, summon any party to
23 appear as a witness in the suit upon his own motion, and do other acts which in his
24 discretion appear necessary to effect a correct judgment and speedy disposition of
25 the case. He may attempt to mediate disputes and encourage fair settlements among
26 the parties.

27 B. The technical rules of evidence are relaxed, and all relevant evidence is
28 admissible, including hearsay, provided the justice of the peace satisfies himself of
29 its general reliability, and further provided that the judgment is founded upon
30 competent evidence.

1 C. No depositions shall be taken and no interrogatories or other discovery
 2 proceedings shall be used except upon approval of the court. The court shall grant
 3 discovery only upon notice and good cause shown, and limited to the necessities of
 4 the case.

5 Art. 4922. Notice of judgment; justice of the peace courts; district courts with
 6 concurrent jurisdiction

7 Notice of the signing of any final judgment shall be given as required by
 8 Article 1913, except that if the party is personally served with the judgment in open
 9 court, no further notice shall be required.

10 * * *

11 Art. 4925. Delay for appeal; justice of the peace courts; district courts with
 12 concurrent jurisdiction

13 A. The appellant from a judgment rendered by a justice of the peace court
 14 or the clerk of court shall file suit for a trial de novo in the district court or the parish
 15 court within fifteen days from the date of the judgment or from the service of notice
 16 of judgment, when such notice is necessary. A copy of the suit for trial de novo shall
 17 be provided to all parties or their attorney of record. A copy of either the notice of
 18 suit for trial de novo or the suit pleadings shall also be provided to the justice of the
 19 peace court whose judgment is being appealed. The rules of the district court or
 20 parish court shall thereafter apply.

21 * * *

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____

CODING: Words in ~~struck through~~ type are deletions from existing law; words underscored are additions.