



**House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section**

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**REVISE COURT REPORTER  
REGULATIONS**

**House Bill 5953**

**Sponsor: Rep. Rick Johnson**

**Committee: Family and Civil Law**

**Complete to 11-6-00**

**A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5953 AS INTRODUCED 9-26-00**

Court reporters and court recorders take verbatim records (either transcribed by shorthand or stenographically) of testimony during court proceedings or during related proceedings. Although some court reporters and recorders are appointed to courts to keep records of court proceedings, many others work "free-lance" for attorneys or parties to litigation to provide services for a particular case by taking down a record of testimony, such as a deposition, outside the courtroom. Public Act 249 of 1998 established business practice guidelines for free-lance court reporters including restrictions on the types of contracts a free-lance reporter or recorders could enter. [For further explanation of the changes made by Public Act 249 of 1998, see the House Legislative Analysis Section's analysis of enrolled House Bill 5604 of the 1997-98 session, dated 9-2-98.]

House Bill 5953 would eliminate all restrictions on, and references to, blanket contracts. Under current law, court reporters, recorders, and the firms that employ them are prohibited from entering "blanket contracts," unless all of the parties in the action are informed on the record at each deposition of the fees that each party will be charged. A blanket contract is one where the individual court reporter or court reporting firm agrees to perform all court reporting or recording services for a particular client on two or more cases at a fixed rate. Reporters or recorders are also required to get information from prospective clients in order to determine whether an anticipated contract would be a blanket contract before accepting a court reporting or recording assignment as an independent contractor or employee.

The bill would also eliminate the following restrictions on the business practices of court reporters: 1) A requirement that a reporter or recorder must charge all parties in a particular case the same rate for the same or similar services; 2) a restriction prohibiting a reporter or recorder from charging more than two-thirds of the price of the original for a copy of a transcript; 3) a prohibition against reporters, recorders or firms directly or indirectly giving more than nominal (no more than \$25 per transaction and no more than \$100 in aggregate for a year) incentives or rewards to attorneys, clients, or their representatives or agents.

MCL 600.1490 - 600.1492

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