

THE RISKS OF TRX DIGITAL RECORDING & THE LEGAL NECESSITY OF CERTIFIED COURT REPORTERS

I. Documented Failures of TRX and Digital-Only Recording Systems

- Missing or unrecorded proceedings due to microphone malfunctions, software crashes, operator error, overlapping speakers, and background noise.
- Incomplete or corrupted audio including gaps, unintelligible portions, static, and missing sidebar discussions.
- No real-time readback, unlike certified court reporters who provide instant clarification and monitoring.
- Increased appeals, delays, and costs due to incomplete records.

II. Louisiana Appellate Courts Require a Complete and Accurate Record

State v. Landry

"A defendant is entitled to a complete transcript of the trial proceedings, particularly where appellate counsel was not trial counsel."

State v. Ford

"Where a substantial portion of the record is missing or incomplete, a defendant's right to appellate review may be compromised."

State v. Bright

"Material omissions from the trial transcript may require reversal if they preclude meaningful appellate review."

State v. Parker

"The absence of significant portions of the record may constitute reversible errors."

Why We Oppose HB 188

Undermines constitutional rights by failing to guarantee a complete record.

Removes accountability when digital systems fail.

Eliminates real-time safeguards provided by certified reporters.

Risks wrongful convictions, overturned cases, and delays.

Does not solve staffing issues; Louisiana has 998 active certified reporters as of January 2026.

The Real Solution: Modernization Without Replacing Court Reporters

Create a statewide court reporter availability database to ensure transcripts are accurately and efficiently completed by deadlines.

Integrate with the existing FTR platform.

Maintain certified reporters as the official record guardians.

Modernize responsibly while preserving accuracy and accountability.

Require a statewide MOU between districts so whenever there is a shortage, court reporters in neighboring parishes can assist.

Conclusion

Louisiana's justice system depends on accurate, complete, and reliable records. TRX and AI cannot meet this standard. The responsible path forward is a modernized statewide system that uses certified court reporters, not machines, to protect the record and the rights of every Louisiana citizen.