



Consolidation of Orleans Parish Courts Changes Facing Court System Affect All Lawyers

Hurricane Katrina dramatically changed the landscape of New Orleans. In the storm's aftermath, the landscape of our local judicial system changed too.

Consolidation was all the buzz in the 2006 legislature and the intent was to eliminate the "duplication of effort of local government". The future held uncomfortable levels of uncertainty and the legislature acted quickly in response. Orleans Parish civil and criminal courts, the parochial offices, the clerks of courts and the sheriffs were consolidated by Act 621.

Stating concern for the "future financial stability of the city", Act 621 was intended to provide economies of scale through consolidation since "the costs of operating one district court, one clerk of court and one sheriff will be inherently be less...". The legislature decreed there would be one district court in Orleans Parish, intended to become the 41st Judicial District.

While there was broad support for consolidation of Orleans Parish government in the 2006 legislature, in New Orleans the consolidation of courts was and is controversial. Court consolidation is the subject of confusion, criticism and of course, a lawsuit.