

**BELIZE:**

**JUSTICES OF THE PEACE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025**

ARRANGEMENT OF CLAUSES

1. Short title.
2. Amendment of section 4.
3. Insertion of new section 4A.
4. Amendment of section 6.
5. Insertion of new section 7A.
6. Addition of new section 16.
7. Addition of new Schedules VIII and IX.

**BELIZE:**

**BILL**

**for**

**AN ACT** to amend the Justices of the Peace Act, Chapter 119:01 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020; to empower select Senior Justices of the Peace to issue interim protection orders under the Domestic Violence Act, Chapter 178 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020, in urgent and exceptional circumstances; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

(Gazetted .....2025).

**BE IT ENACTED**, by and with the advice and consent of the House of Representatives and Senate of Belize and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Short title.

**1.** This Act may be cited as the

**JUSTICES OF THE PEACE (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2025**

CAP. 119:01.

and shall be read and construed as one with the Justices of the Peace Act, which is hereinafter referred to as the principal Act.

Amendment of section 4.

**2.** The principal Act is amended in section 4 by inserting after sub-section (2), the following new sub-section—

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“ (2A) A select Senior Justice of the Peace shall have the powers of a magistrate to issue *ex parte* interim protection orders under the Domestic Violence Act, in any one or more of the following circumstances—

(a) where a magistrate is not available;

(b) outside of normal working hours of the court;

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- (c) during any closure or otherwise unavailability of the court;
- (d) in an emergency situation where a life is at risk or there is an imminent threat of harm or injury and accessing a magistrate is, for reasons of distance or otherwise, not reasonable, practical or possible;
- (e) in any other exceptional situation.

(2B) An interim protection order issued under sub-section (2A) shall not be for more than seventy-two hours.”

3. The principal Act is amended by inserting immediately after section 4, the following new section—

Insertion of new section 4A.

“Select Senior Justices of the Peace.

**4A.** (1) A Senior Justice of the Peace who fulfils the following criteria is eligible to be designated a Select Senior Justice of the Peace for the purposes of section 4(2A)—

- (a) is a reputable Senior Justice of the Peace having served as Senior Justice of the Peace for a period of at least 5 years; and
- (b) has not been the subject of any complaint since the person’s initial appointment as Justice of the Peace to present day;
- (c) does not have a criminal record;
- (d) is not a respondent nor a defendant in any criminal or civil proceedings in any matter under the Domestic Violence Act;

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(e) is willing and able to undertake the duties required of a Select Senior Justice of the Peace. Schedule VIII.

(2) A Senior Justice of the Peace possessing the requirements under sub-section (1) and desiring to be designated as a Select Senior Justice of the Peace shall apply to the Attorney General in the form prescribed in Schedule VIII submitting therewith a copy of a national identification along with a copy of his Commission as a Senior Justice of the Peace.

(3) Where the Attorney General is satisfied that a Senior Justice of the Peace satisfies the requirements in sub-section (1), in consultation with the Director of the Family Court, he may designate that person as a Select Senior Justice of the Peace.(4) A Senior Justice of the Peace

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designated as a Select Senior Justice shall undergo training necessary to equip him to undertake the duties under section 4(2A).

(5) A Select Senior Justice of the Peace shall not undertake duties as a Select Senior Justice of the Peace for the purpose of the Domestic Violence Act unless the Select Senior Justice of the Peace has been—

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- (a) duly sworn into office for the purpose of duties under section 4(2A) of this Act and section 11A of the Domestic Violence Act; and
- (b) duly trained under sub-section (4).

(6) A Select Senior Justice of the Peace may be remunerated in the maximum amount of one hundred dollars for reasonable costs such as fuel costs incurred in the performance of duties as a Select Senior Justice of the Peace under this Act.

Amendment of section 6.

4. Section 6 of the principal Act is amended as follows—

- (a) by renumbering that section as sub-section (1);
- (b) by inserting the following as sub-section (2)—

“ (2) Every Select Senior Justice of the Peace shall in addition to his requirement to keep proper records pursuant to section 6, keep record of every *ex parte* interim protection order issued pursuant to section 2A recording therein the following—

- (a) name of the parties;
- (b) marital status of the parties and whether there are any children;
- (c) the particulars of the domestic violence leading to the issue of the interim protection order;
- (d) date of issue of the interim protection order;
- (e) duration of the interim protection order;

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(f) any other relevant detail.

(3) The Select Senior Justice of the Peace shall within seventy-two hours make available to the Director of the Family Court and the magistrate of the court in the judicial district where the interim protection order was made, the record kept under sub-section (2).”

5. The principal Act is amended by inserting immediately after section 7, the following new section–

Insertion of new section 7A.

“Designated space at police stations. CAP. 178.

7A. The Commissioner of Police shall make available a private enclosed space in the police stations listed in Schedule IX for the processing of applications of interim protection orders under the Domestic Violence Act.”

6. The Act is amended by adding immediately after section 15, the following new section 16–

Addition of new section 16.

“Amendment of Schedules.

16. The Attorney General may, by Order published in the Gazette, amend the Schedules to this Act.”

7. The principal Act is amended by adding immediately after Schedule VII, the following new Schedules–

Addition of new Schedules VIII and IX.

“SCHEDULE VIII

*Application for Select Senior Justice of the Peace*

[section 4A(2)]

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Commission–

As Justice of the Peace: \_\_\_\_\_

As Senior Justice of the Peace: \_\_\_\_\_



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|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                         | Ladyville Police Station      |
|                         | San Pedro Town Police Station |
|                         | Caye Caulker Police Station   |
| 4. Cayo District        | Belmopan Police Station       |
|                         | San Ignacio Police Station    |
|                         | Benque Viejo Police Station   |
| 5. Stann Creek District | Dangriga Police Station       |
|                         | Independence Police Station   |
| 6. Toledo District      | Punta Gorda Police Station    |