A bill to be entitled

An act relating to special protections in judicial proceedings; amending s. 92.55, F.S.; authorizing a court to require a pro se defendant to question certain victims and witnesses through standby counsel at any trial, hearing, or deposition upon specified findings; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (7) is added to section 92.55, Florida Statutes, to read:

92.55 Special protections in proceedings involving victim or witness under 18, person with intellectual disability, or sexual offense victim.—

(7) Upon motion of any party, upon motion of a parent, guardian, attorney, guardian ad litem, or other advocate appointed by the court under s. 914.17 for a victim or witness under the age of 18, a person who has an intellectual disability, or a sexual offense victim or witness, or upon its own motion, the court may require a pro se defendant to present, ask, or in any way communicate questions to such person, victim, or witness through standby counsel, using questions provided or approved by the defendant, at any trial, hearing, or deposition if the court makes specific findings on the record that such a

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requirement is necessary to protect the person, victim, or witness from emotional or mental harm that would result from direct communication with the defendant.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

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