

By: A. Johnson of Harris

H.B. No. 130

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of additional judicial districts composed of Harris County.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that:

(1) in the last six years, Harris County has been devastated by multiple disasters, including Hurricane Harvey and the COVID-19 pandemic, that have resulted in the closure of courthouses in the county and created a backlog of criminal cases waiting to be heard;

(2) ongoing restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and construction at the Harris County Criminal Justice Center will continue to restrict access to jury trials;

(3) an increase in defendants released on personal or monetary bond while awaiting trial has lead to an increase in the levels of crime in Harris County; and

(4) without additional courts, the Harris County Criminal District Courts will take 15 years to clear the backlog of criminal cases and return to the number of pending criminal cases seen prior to Hurricane Harvey, further endangering the safety of the Harris County community, law enforcement, and victims.

SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 24, Government Code, is amended by adding Sections 24.60031, 24.60032, and 24.60033 to read as follows:

Sec. 24.60031. 486TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT (HARRIS COUNTY).

(a) The 486th Judicial District is composed of Harris County.

(b) The 486th District Court shall give preference to criminal cases.

Sec. 24.60032. 487TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT (HARRIS COUNTY).

(a) The 487th Judicial District is composed of Harris County.

(b) The 487th District Court shall give preference to criminal cases.

Sec. 24.60033. 488TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT (HARRIS COUNTY).

(a) The 488th Judicial District is composed of Harris County.

(b) The 488th District Court shall give preference to criminal cases.

Sec. 24.60034. 489TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT (HARRIS COUNTY).

(a) The 489th Judicial District is composed of Harris County.

(b) The 489th District Court shall give preference to criminal cases.

Sec. 24.60035. 490TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT (HARRIS COUNTY).

(a) The 490th Judicial District is composed of Harris County.

(b) The 490th District Court shall give preference to criminal cases.

Sec. 24.60036. 491ST JUDICIAL DISTRICT (HARRIS COUNTY).

(a) The 491st Judicial District is composed of Harris County.

(b) The 491st District Court shall give preference to criminal cases.

SECTION 3. The 486th, 487th, 488th, 489th, 490th, and 491st Judicial Districts are created on the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.