

By: Moody

H.B. No. 3544

Substitute the following for H.B. No. 3544:

By: Flores

C.S.H.B. No. 3544

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to payment of certain court costs associated with interpreters.

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

SECTION 1. The heading to Section 57.002, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 57.002. APPOINTMENT OF INTERPRETER OR CART PROVIDER; CART PROVIDER LIST; PAYMENT OF INTERPRETER COSTS.

SECTION 2. Section 57.002, Government Code, is amended by adding Subsections (g), (h), and (i) to read as follows:

(g) A party to a proceeding in a court who files a statement of inability to afford payment of court costs under Rule 145, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, is not required to provide an interpreter at the party's expense or pay the costs associated with the services of an interpreter appointed under this section that are incurred during the course of the action, unless the statement has been contested and the court has ordered the party to pay costs pursuant to Rule 145. Nothing in this subsection is intended to apply to interpreter services or other auxiliary aids for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have communication disabilities, which shall be provided to those individuals free of charge pursuant to federal and state laws.

(h) Each county auditor, or other individual designated by the commissioners court of a county, in consultation with the

1 district and county clerks shall submit to the Office of Court  
2 Administration of the Texas Judicial System, in the manner  
3 prescribed by the office, information on the money the county spent  
4 during the preceding fiscal year to provide court-ordered  
5 interpretation services in civil and criminal proceedings. The  
6 information must include:

7 (1) the number of interpreters appointed;

8 (2) the number of interpreters appointed for parties  
9 or witnesses who are indigent;

10 (3) the amount of money the county spent to provide  
11 court-ordered interpretation services; and

12 (4) for civil proceedings, whether a party to the  
13 proceeding filed a statement of inability to afford payment of  
14 court costs under Rule 145, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure,  
15 applicable to the appointment of an interpreter.

16 (i) Not later than December 1 of each year, the Office of  
17 Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System shall:

18 (1) submit to the legislature a report that aggregates  
19 by county the information submitted under Subsection (h) for the  
20 preceding fiscal year; and

21 (2) publish the report on the office's Internet  
22 website.

23 SECTION 3. The change in law made by this Act applies to an  
24 action pending on the effective date of this Act or filed on or  
25 after the effective date of this Act.

26 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
27 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as

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1 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
2 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
3 Act takes effect September 1, 2023.