

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1897
By: Nixon
Judicial Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Harris County is currently having difficulty retaining top judicial talent. One of the main reasons for this is financial. The gap between judicial salaries and those of private practice has grown much larger over the past few years. In addition, Harris County's population growth has made it much more expensive in terms of cost of living, while there have been no salary increases for judges in over five years.

District judges in Harris County are paid from two sources: a base salary from the state and a supplemental salary from the county. This supplemental salary is currently limited to \$9,300. C.S.H.B. 1897 lifts this statutory cap to allow Harris County to pay its judges a supplemental amount set by the commissioner's court.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1987 amends the Government Code to provide that notwithstanding Section 659.012 of the Government Code, the Commissioners Court of Harris County may budget for and pay the judges of the district courts having jurisdiction in that county an annual salary in an amount set by the commissioners court for judicial and administrative services.

The bill also raises the maximum supplemental salary to \$30,000.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2003.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The substitute raises the maximum supplemental salary to \$30,000. The substitute also changes a reference in the bill's caption from "district judges" to "certain judges."