

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 78TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 7, 2003

TO: Honorable Joe Driver, Chair, House Committee on Law Enforcement

FROM: John Keel, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB353 by Dutton (Relating to the creation of a Forensic Science Review Committee within the Department of Public Safety.), **As Introduced**

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for HB353, As Introduced: a negative impact of (\$826,512) through the biennium ending August 31, 2005.

The bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation of funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

General Revenue-Related Funds, Five-Year Impact:

Fiscal Year	Probable Net Positive/(Negative) Impact to General Revenue Related Funds
2004	(\$429,666)
2005	(\$396,846)
2006	(\$396,846)
2007	(\$396,846)
2008	(\$396,846)

All Funds, Five-Year Impact:

Fiscal Year	Probable (Cost) from GENERAL REVENUE FUND 1	Change in Number of State Employees from FY 2003
2004	(\$429,666)	5.0
2005	(\$396,846)	5.0
2006	(\$396,846)	5.0
2007	(\$396,846)	5.0
2008	(\$396,846)	5.0

Fiscal Analysis

The bill would amend the Government Code by creating a Forensic Science Review Committee for the purpose of regulating and overseeing the activities of forensic laboratories in the state. The committee would be responsible for adopting accreditation standards for forensic laboratories; establishing qualification standards for examiners, analysts, and scientists; establishing protocols for the examination of evidence; the routine internal and external proficiency testing of laboratory personnel; the annual accreditation of laboratories; and initial and routine inspections of laboratories. The bill would require the Department of Public Safety to provide the committee with administrative, professional, clerical and other support staff as required to perform the duties of the committee.

Methodology

It is estimated that approximately 250 scientists in the state would be subject to forensic laboratory proficiency testing. Costs associated with testing include; test kits at an estimated annual expense of \$50,000 (\$200 x 250 kits) and two FTEs to perform the mandated testing tasks. Additionally, three FTEs would be required to develop, maintain, and update standards and protocols, and for the inspection of laboratories. Total FTEs and related operational costs equal \$346,846 per year. In the first year, an additional \$32,820 would be required for travel and technology equipment purchases.

Technology

The technology impact of the bill is related to computer equipment and software packages estimated at \$15,280.

Local Government Impact

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated. However, if the local laboratories are not in compliance with the standards adopted by the committee, there may be costs associated with implementing the recommendations of the committee in their laboratories.

Source Agencies: 301 Office of the Governor, 405 Department of Public Safety, 501 Department of Health, 696 Department of Criminal Justice

LBB Staff: JK, VDS, AR, WK