

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 78TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 28, 2003

TO: Honorable Glenn Lewis, Chair, House Committee on County Affairs

FROM: John Keel, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB2931 by Lewis (Relating to the administration and finances of counties and certain other entities.), **Committee Report 1st House, Substituted**

No fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would address several issues regarding administration of county government, including allowing court and district or county attorney records to be kept in paper or electronic format; authorizing a county to establish a reserve or contingency item in its budget; authorizing a county commissioners court in a county with a population of 125,000 or more to appoint a county administrator with duties and responsibilities set by the commissioners court; and authorizing a county to acquire, apply for, register, secure, hold, protect, and renew a patent, a copyright, a trademark, or other evidence of protection or exclusivity issued for intellectual property. Additionally, the bill would authorize parties to an interlocal agreement to create an administrative agency.

Portions of the Local Government Code that would conflict with proposed changes in statute would be repealed. Additionally, sections related to employment contracts and personnel and payroll records in a county with a population of 500,000 or more would be repealed. The bill would take effect September 1, 2003.

A sampling of county auditors and county clerks were contacted regarding the fiscal implications of the bill. Collin, Dallas, Harris, and Tarrant counties estimate no significant fiscal impact from provisions of the bill. Most respondents indicated that the option of using paper or electronic formats for records would provide a minimal savings and that most other provisions of the bill would have an insignificant fiscal impact as well.

The counties of Brazos, El Paso, Fort Bend, and Williamson, however, estimate that if the county commissioners court were to establish the position of county administrator, the costs of creating a county administrator office would be between \$100,000 and \$200,000 annually.

Local Government Impact

The fiscal impact would vary depending on which of the proposals a county would choose to implement and the county's overall budget. Most of the proposals are estimated to have minimal fiscal impact; however, some counties anticipate that if a county administrator position were to be created, the impact would be between \$100,000 and \$200,000 annually for salaries, benefits, office space, and furnishings.

Source Agencies:

LBB Staff: JK, JB, DLBa