

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 78TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 14, 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 efficient administration of county government.), As Introduced

No fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would address several issues regarding administration of county government, including authorizing a county commissioners court to appoint a county administrator with duties and responsibilities set by the commissioners court; 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 fund in its budget; and allowing a county official or a vendor providing services for the county to collect funds owed to the county and deposit those funds in a financial institution other than the county depository. Another change proposed in the bill is to authorize 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Portions of the Local Government Code that would conflict with proposed changes in statute would be repealed.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to employment contracts and personnel and payroll records in a county with a population of 500,000 or more would be repealed.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.

There are two proposals in the bill, however, that the counties of Brazos, El Paso, Fort Bend, and Williamson estimate would have a significant fiscal impact: if the county commissioners court were to establish the position of county administrator and the authorization of vendors to collect county funds and deposit those into an account other than the county treasury. The costs of creating a county administrator office were estimated between \$100,000 and \$200,000 annually, while no estimates were given regarding vendors collecting county funds.

Local Government Impact

The fiscal impact would vary depending on which of the proposals a county would choose to implement. 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