

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 78TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 21, 2003

TO: Honorable John Whitmire, Chair, Senate Committee on Criminal Justice

FROM: John Keel, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: SB782 by Armbrister (Relating to the authority of a county or municipality to contract for collection services in criminal cases and certain cases involving the parking or stopping of motor vehicles.), **Committee Report 1st House, Substituted**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would authorize a county or municipality to enter into a contract for collection services in criminal cases and certain cases involving the parking or stopping of motor vehicles. In a municipality with a population of more than 1.9 million (City of Houston), collection fees in amounts authorized for paying a private attorney or private vendor for collection services may be added to collections performed by employees of the governing body.

The bill would take effect immediately if it receives a two-thirds vote in each house; otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2003 and would apply only to a debt incurred as a result of the commission of a criminal or civil offense committed on or after that date.

Municipalities and counties contacted by the Comptroller of Public Accounts and the Texas Municipal League reported that the fiscal impact would be positive.

The City of Houston estimates implementation of the provisions of the bill would generate approximately \$1 million in collections annually for the city. This amount does not include additional fees collected when the city's staff perform the collection function rather than a private attorney or contract vendor.

The City of Amarillo estimates an additional \$750,000 would be collected the first year of implementation and approximately \$200,000 each year thereafter. The City of Mesquite estimates implementation would result in an additional \$40,000 collected annually.

Travis County does not take additional collection actions of unpaid fines and fees other than probation revocations; therefore, that county would have no fiscal impact. Dallas County reports that the provisions of the bill would have a positive fiscal impact.

Local Government Impact

There would be a positive fiscal impact that would vary by county and municipality. It is not expected to be significant in comparison to an overall budget.

Source Agencies: 212 Office of Court Administration, Texas Judicial Council, 304 Comptroller of Public Accounts

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