

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1477
By: Keffer, Bill
Judiciary
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Jury service can be burdensome where trials are extraordinarily long. The purpose of this bill is to raise a fund through filing fees for use in compensating jurors in such circumstances.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

The bill imposes on the Office of Court Administration the duty to make rules by January 1, 2006 for the distribution of the lengthy trial trust funds and for the exemption of certain defendants and litigants from liability for the fees.

ANALYSIS

The bill imposes a new filing fee of \$20 on any civil action requiring a filing fee. The bill contains exemptions for certain categories of litigants and causes of action. The bill also imposes a \$20 fee on convicted defendants and provides for certain exemptions.

The funds are to be used to reimburse qualified jurors with the leftover amounts at the end of each fiscal year in excess of \$500,000 to be transferred one half to the judicial fund held by the Comptroller (for the support of the judicial branch- Sec. 21.006, Government Code) and one half to the judicial and court personnel training fund.

The bill also contains mandatory provisions for an up to 6 month postponement of jury service for any juror not granted a postponement within the preceding year. The qualifications for reimbursement from the lengthy trial trust fund require jury service over 5 days. Such jurors may receive up to \$300 per day for lost income due to jury service and up to \$100 extra per day if the judge finds that the juror incurred costs due to jury service that have a substantial adverse effect on the necessary daily living expenses of the juror or persons for whom the juror provides the primary financial support.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2005

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The Substitute changes the fee from a filing fee to a fine for not showing up for jury duty to be paid when renewing drivers license.