

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2671
By: Hughes
Judiciary
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Visiting judges help local courts by hearing cases when the judge of that court is unavailable due to scheduling conflicts or recusal. Visiting judges are appointed by the presiding judges of each administrative region.

Budget cuts in the 78th Legislative Session limited the funds available to pay visiting judges. HB 2671 is intended to help ease the burden on local courts by increasing the number of judges available to serve as visiting judges. In particular, the bill expands the number of available judges by allowing all appellate judges to serve as visiting judges at the trial court level.

This service as a visiting judge at the trial court level would be voluntary on the part of the appellate judge.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

The bill amends Section 74.054(a), Government Code, by removing the requirement of trial court experience from the qualifications of a visiting judge who is an active judge of the supreme court, court of criminal appeals or a court of appeals.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Immediately on receipt of required vote, otherwise September 1, 2005