

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 79TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

March 10, 2005

TO: Honorable Will Hartnett, Chair, House Committee on Judiciary

FROM: John S. O'Brien, Deputy Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB780 by Solis (Relating to the compensation of district judges in Cameron County.), **As Introduced**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would amend Section 32.031(a) and (b), Government Code, to remove the current salary cap that applies specifically to the district judges in Cameron County and to except Cameron County from the salary cap listed in Section 659.012, Government Code for district judges. It would also require the county's portion of the district judge's salary to be paid in equal monthly installments from either the county general fund or the officers' salary fund. The bill would take effect September 1, 2005.

Under current statute, the combined yearly salary paid to a judicial district judge in Cameron County by the state and county cannot exceed \$1,000 less than the combined yearly salary of an associate justice of the Thirteenth Court of Appeals. Current statute also provides that a district judge's salary from a county and the state combined cannot exceed \$2,000 less than the salary of a justice of the supreme court.

The bill would allow the Cameron County commissioners court to determine the amount of the county's portion of the judicial district judge's salary without any cap.

The state's portion of a district court judge's salary is \$101,700, plus benefits totaling \$27,959. The state's portion would not change, although the state would have to pay, under existing statute, a portion of the county's part of the salary to a visiting district judge to Cameron County.

Local Government Impact

Cameron County currently pays each district judge a supplemental salary of \$5,221 annually, and an annual travel allowance of \$5,400. The fiscal impact to Cameron County would depend on the amount of the county's portion of the judicial district judge's pay established by the commissioners court.

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

LBB Staff: JOB, DLBa