

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 79TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

February 28, 2005

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

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

IN RE: HB968 by Keel (Relating to the creation of an additional judicial district in Travis County.),
As Introduced

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for HB968, As Introduced: a negative impact of (\$75,634) through the biennium ending August 31, 2007.

The bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation of funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

General Revenue-Related Funds, Five-Year Impact:

Fiscal Year	Probable Net Positive/(Negative) Impact to General Revenue Related Funds
2006	\$0
2007	(\$75,634)
2008	(\$129,659)
2009	(\$129,659)
2010	(\$129,659)

All Funds, Five-Year Impact:

Fiscal Year	Probable (Cost) from GENERAL REVENUE FUND 1	Change in Number of State Employees from FY 2005
2006	\$0	0.0
2007	(\$75,634)	1.0
2008	(\$129,659)	1.0
2009	(\$129,659)	1.0
2010	(\$129,659)	1.0

Fiscal Analysis

The bill would amend Chapter 24, Government Code, to create an additional judicial district in Travis County, the 427th judicial district. The court would be created effective January 1, 2007 and would be required to give preference to criminal matters. The bill would take effect September 1, 2005.

Methodology

The annual salary provided by the state for a district judge is \$101,700, plus benefits estimated at \$27,959 annually. Because the court would not be created until January 1, 2007 the fiscal impact for the first year in which the court would exist has been prorated seven months. Thereafter, the estimated annual salary and benefits for the district judge of the proposed court would be \$129,659. The county would pay all other costs.

Local Government Impact

According to information provided by the Travis County auditor's office, the one-time start-up cost would be \$197,238. Based on the county's fiscal year and when the court would be created, costs for fiscal year 2007 would be prorated for nine months, resulting in a total cost of over \$1.4 million for the first year of operation. First year costs would include the start-up expenses; salaries for 20 new full-time employees (FTE), totaling \$879,113; benefits for 20 new FTEs, totaling \$305,036; mandatory/indigent attorney fees, totaling \$354,120; and supplies/travel/training, totaling \$102,008.

For fiscal 2007, it is assumed that the proposed 427th Judicial District would be in a start-up mode and would generate the same amount of revenue that each of the other six district courts generate for Travis County; therefore, there is no additional revenue to offset the cost of the additional judicial district. In the future, however, it is assumed that improved caseload management brought about by the creation of a new judicial district could result in higher revenues.

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

LBB Staff: JOB, ZS, TB, DLBa