

**LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD**  
**Austin, Texas**

**FISCAL NOTE, 80TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION**

**March 29, 2007**

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

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

**IN RE: HB3129** by Cook, Robby (Relating to the creation of a judicial district composed of Bastrop County.), **As Introduced**

**Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds** for HB3129, As Introduced: a negative impact of (\$67,982) through the biennium ending August 31, 2009.

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)<br>Impact to General Revenue Related<br>Funds |
|-------------|--|
| 2008        | \$0  |
| 2009        | (\$67,982)   |
| 2010        | (\$101,973)  |
| 2011        | (\$101,973)  |
| 2012        | (\$101,973)  |

**All Funds, Five-Year Impact:**

| Fiscal Year | Probable Revenue Gain/<br>(Loss) from<br><i>GENERAL REVENUE<br/>FUND<br/>1</i> | Probable Revenue Gain/<br>(Loss) from<br><i>JUDICIAL FUND<br/>573</i> | Change in Number of State<br>Employees from FY 2007 |
|-------------|--|---|---|
| 2008        | \$0  | \$0   | 0.0   |
| 2009        | (\$67,982)   | (\$37,500)  | 1.0   |
| 2010        | (\$101,973)  | (\$56,250)  | 1.0   |
| 2011        | (\$101,973)  | (\$56,250)  | 1.0   |
| 2012        | (\$101,973)  | (\$56,250)  | 1.0   |

**Fiscal Analysis**

The bill would amend Chapter 24, Government Code, to create a new judicial district in Bastrop County, the 423rd Judicial District. The district would be created January 1, 2009 and the bill would take effect September 1, 2007.

## **Methodology**

The annual salary provided by the state for a district judge is \$125,000, in addition to benefits (state contributions for group insurance and to the Judicial Retirement System) which are estimated to be \$33,223 annually. The total annual salary and benefits cost for a district judge is estimated to be \$158,223. Because the court would be created on January 1, 2009, the fiscal impact for the first year of court operations is prorated to reflect 8 rather than a full 12 months of operations. The county would pay all other costs.

## **Local Government Impact**

According to Bastrop County officials, the start-up costs for the new judicial district would total \$281,050 for salaries, benefits, transportation, equipment and furniture, including a one-time cost of approximately \$8,000. (Bastrop County is currently constructing a new jail facility, which will include a new courtroom. Courthouse security personnel for the newly constructed courthouse have already been included in the county budget.) Because all furniture and equipment would not have to be replaced each year, annual costs after the first year would total \$273,050.

Bastrop County's fiscal year begins on October 1. For fiscal year 2009, it is assumed that the proposed 423rd Judicial District would be in start-up mode and would generate about the same amount of revenue that each of the other district courts generate for the county; therefore, no additional revenue would be available to offset the cost of the additional judicial district. In the future, it is assumed that improved caseload management brought about by the creation of a new judicial district could result in higher revenues; however, the amount of increased revenues cannot be estimated.

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

**LBB Staff:** JOB, MN, ZS, JP, KJG