

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 80TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

March 8, 2007

TO: Honorable Jeff Wentworth, Chair, Senate Committee on Jurisprudence

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

IN RE: SB660 by Wentworth (Relating to the creation of an additional statutory county court in Travis County.), **As Introduced**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would amend Chapter 25, Government Code, to establish County Court at Law Number 8 of Travis County. The court would be established on January 1, 2008 and would give preference to criminal cases.

If the new judge chooses not to engage in the private practice of law and the county meets the other provisions of Section 25.0015, Government Code, the state impact would be \$35,000, annually; otherwise, there would be no fiscal impact to the state.

Local Government Impact

Travis County's fiscal year begins October 1. Because the Travis County Court at Law Number 8 would be created on January 1, 2008, the fiscal impact for the first year of operation has been prorated for nine months.

The Comptroller of Public Accounts contacted the Travis County Planning and Budget Office regarding costs and revenue estimates related to establishing the new court. Travis County plans to use an existing courtroom and therefore would incur a one-time capital expenditure of \$109,840 for furniture, supplies and technology equipment. The county would be responsible for the annual salaries and benefits of the new court's judge, judicial aide specialist, court reporter and office specialist, and compensation for a visiting judge, totaling \$322,899. The county estimates first year operating expenses for the court at \$18,250 and decreasing to \$16,050 in subsequent years. Adding in other estimated annual expenses that would be incurred by the court and related departments, as well as one-time capital expenses for the other departments, total costs to Travis County would be \$1,026,637 in fiscal year 2008 and \$1,176,612 each subsequent fiscal year through 2012.

Travis County currently receives revenue from statutory county court costs and fees. It is assumed that the creation of a court would result in additional revenues, although no estimates were provided.

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

LBB Staff: JOB, MN, JP, DB