

Amend HB 3637 on third reading by adding the following appropriately numbered SECTIONS to the bill and renumbering subsequent SECTIONS of the bill accordingly:

SECTION _____. Chapter 25, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 25.0020 to read as follows:

Sec. 25.0020. APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL IN CERTAIN APPEALS.

(a) On a written application of any party to an eviction suit, the county court or county court at law in which an appeal of the suit is filed may appoint any qualified attorney who is willing to provide pro bono services in the matter or counsel from a list provided by a pro bono legal services program of counsel willing to be appointed to handle appeals under this section to attend to the cause of a party who:

(1) was in possession of the residence at the time the eviction suit was filed in the justice court; and

(2) has perfected the appeal on a pauper's affidavit approved in accordance with Rule 749a, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

(b) The appointed counsel shall represent the individual in the proceedings of the suit in the county court or county court at law. At the conclusion of those proceedings, the appointment terminates.

(c) The court may terminate representation appointed under this section for cause.

(d) Appointed counsel may not receive attorney's fees unless the recovery of attorney's fees is provided for by contract, statute, common law, court rules, or other regulations. The county is not responsible for payment of attorney's fees to appointed counsel.

(e) The court shall provide for a method of service of written notice on the parties to an eviction suit of the right to request an appointment of counsel on perfection of appeal on approval of a pauper's affidavit.

SECTION _____. Chapter 26, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 26.010 to read as follows:

Sec. 26.010. APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL IN CERTAIN APPEALS.

(a) On a written application of any party to an eviction suit, the

county court or county court at law in which an appeal of the suit is filed may appoint any qualified attorney who is willing to provide pro bono services in the matter or counsel from a list provided by a pro bono legal services program of counsel willing to be appointed to handle appeals under this section to attend to the cause of a party who:

(1) was in possession of the residence at the time the eviction suit was filed in the justice court; and

(2) has perfected the appeal on a pauper's affidavit approved in accordance with Rule 749a, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

(b) The appointed counsel shall represent the individual in the proceedings of the suit in the county court or county court at law. At the conclusion of those proceedings, the appointment terminates.

(c) The court may terminate representation appointed under this section for cause.

(d) Appointed counsel may not receive attorney's fees unless the recovery of attorney's fees is provided for by contract, statute, common law, court rules, or other regulations. The county is not responsible for payment of attorney's fees to appointed counsel.

(e) The court shall provide for a method of service of written notice on the parties to an eviction suit of the right to request an appointment of counsel on perfection of appeal on approval of a pauper's affidavit.

SECTION _____. The change in law made by this Act in adding Sections 25.0020 and 26.010, Government Code, as added by this Act applies only to an eviction suit filed on or after the effective date of this Act. A suit filed before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect immediately before that date, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.