

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 609  
By: Castro  
Corrections  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Under current law, the juvenile board in each county has the power to designate which courts hear juvenile matters. In some counties, juvenile matters are heard by county courts, and in others, they are heard by state district courts; the rules of procedure pertaining to jury selection differ in each case. District courts that hear juvenile matters must defer to the Rules of Civil Procedure when selecting juries, which results in a burdensome jury selection process that requires a district court sitting as a juvenile court to select a twelve-member jury rather than a six-member jury in a case in which the child is accused of conduct that would be a misdemeanor if the child were in the adult system. However, if a county court is sitting as the juvenile court, that court would seat a six-member jury regardless of whether the alleged conduct was in the nature of a misdemeanor or felony. Reducing the number of jurors in a district court acting as a juvenile court would reduce costs associated with a twelve-member jury selection and make the adjudication process more efficient.

H.B. 609 requires that a jury consist of six qualified jurors for an adjudication hearing in juvenile court if the hearing is on a petition that alleges conduct that violates a penal law of the grade of misdemeanor.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 609 amends the Family Code to require that a jury consist of six qualified jurors for an adjudication hearing in juvenile court if the hearing is on a petition that alleges conduct that violates a penal law of the grade of misdemeanor.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2009.