

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1608
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Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, a juror has the option of donating the daily reimbursement received for jury service to one of several causes. One of the options a juror has is to donate to the county's child welfare board. Most people are not familiar with the county's child welfare board and do not understand its function. Child welfare boards are composed of county-commissioner-appointed volunteers to assist in supporting the work of Child Protective Services (CPS) and the children served by CPS. Child welfare boards host caseworker appreciation activities and child abuse prevention events, provide needed items for children, assist with the adoption of foster children, and much more.

Additionally, the term welfare does not adequately reflect the board's work with child protection and often is confused with traditional definitions of welfare as government hand-outs. The child welfare boards have found that the negative connotation of the term welfare by some individuals diverts needed community support from the boards.

C.S.H.B. 1608 seeks to increase contributions to the activities and programs conducted by a county's child welfare board. The bill clarifies that a person who reports for jury service and signs a certain form letter is directing the county treasurer to donate all or a specified amount of the person's daily juror reimbursement to the child welfare and child protective services board of the county that serves abused and neglected children.

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

C.S.H.B. 1608 reenacts and amends Section 61.003(a), Government Code, as amended by Chapters 661 (H.B. 1204) and 1378 (S.B. 560), Acts of the 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007, to clarify that a person who reports for jury service and signs a certain form letter is directing the county treasurer to donate all or a specified amount of the person's daily juror reimbursement to the child welfare and child protective services board of the county that serves abused and neglected children, rather than the child welfare board, in addition to other funds and programs.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 1608 differs from the original by clarifying that a person who reports for jury service and signs a certain form letter is directing the county treasurer to donate all or a specified amount of the person's daily juror reimbursement to the child welfare and child protective services board

of the county that serves abused and neglected children, rather than to the child welfare board as in the original.

C.S.H.B. 1608 differs from the original by removing a provision included in the original that adds any programs or resources selected by the commissioners court that provide support for child abuse prevention and child protection to the list of funds, boards, and other programs to which a person who reports for jury service and signs a certain form letter may donate all or a specific amount of the person's daily juror reimbursement.