

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

**FISCAL NOTE, 81ST LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION**

**April 16, 2009**

**TO:** Honorable Todd Hunter, Chair, House Committee on Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence

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

**IN RE: HB856** by Laubenberg (Relating to the creation of an additional judicial district composed of Rockwall County.), **As Introduced**

**Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds** for HB856, As Introduced: a negative impact of (\$76,609) through the biennium ending August 31, 2011.

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) Impact to General Revenue Related Funds
2010	\$0
2011	(\$76,609)
2012	(\$91,931)
2013	(\$91,931)
2014	(\$91,931)

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

Fiscal Year	Probable Savings/(Cost) from <i>General Revenue Fund</i> 1	Probable Savings/(Cost) from <i>Judicial Fund</i> 573	Change in Number of State Employees from FY 2009
2010	\$0	\$0	0.0
2011	(\$76,609)	(\$55,475)	1.0
2012	(\$91,931)	(\$66,570)	1.0
2013	(\$91,931)	(\$66,570)	1.0
2014	(\$91,931)	(\$66,570)	1.0

**Fiscal Analysis**

The bill would amend Chapter 24, Government Code, to create a new judicial district in Rockwall County, the 456<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. The district would be created November 1, 2010, and the bill would take effect November 1, 2010.

## **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 \$33,501 annually. The total annual salary and benefits cost for a district judge is estimated to be \$158,501. Because the court would be created on November 1, 2010, the fiscal impact for the first year of court operations is prorated to reflect 10 rather than a full 12 months of operations. The county would pay all other costs.

## **Local Government Impact**

Rockwall County is currently served by the 382nd Judicial District. Rockwall County's fiscal year begins October 1.

For fiscal years 2012-2014, Rockwall County would be responsible for paying the salary and benefits for court personnel. According to the Rockwall County Auditor, the estimated annual salary and benefits for court personnel would be three percent above the projected \$350,000 for each year after 2011. The new District Court would require a Court Administrator, Court Reporter, and a Bailiff. The annual operating expense would be \$232,131.

For fiscal year 2011, Rockwall County would be responsible for the 11 month pro-rated amount paying the salary and benefits for court personnel totaling \$320,816. The annual operating expense would be \$212,804. The county is in the process of designing a new courthouse which would house all current district courts and county courts at law plus the new court if granted. These are would be built with \$30 million bond instruments.

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

**LBB Staff:** JOB, MN, JP, TP