

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 81ST LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 6, 2009

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

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

IN RE: HB3723 by Woolley (Relating to the creation of an additional judicial district composed of Harris County and the preference given by the district court to domestic violence cases.), **As Introduced**

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for HB3723, As Introduced: a negative impact of (\$195,793) 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	(\$93,640)
2011	(\$102,153)
2012	(\$102,153)
2013	(\$102,153)
2014	(\$102,153)

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	(\$93,640)	(\$51,651)	1.0
2011	(\$102,153)	(\$56,347)	1.0
2012	(\$102,153)	(\$56,347)	1.0
2013	(\$102,153)	(\$56,347)	1.0
2014	(\$102,153)	(\$56,347)	1.0

Fiscal Analysis

The bill would amend Chapter 24, Government Code, to create a new judicial district in Harris County, the 476th Judicial District. The court would be created September 1, 2009, and would give preference to domestic violence cases.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2009.

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 the the Judicial Retirement System) which are estimated to be \$33,500 annually. The total annual salary and benefits cost for a district judge is estimated to be \$158,500.

Because the court would be created September 1, 2009, the estimate prorates the applicable judge's salary and benefits at 11 out of 12 months the first year the court would be created.

Local Government Impact

The bill would create the 476th Judicial District composed of Harris County, and would allow the district court to give preference to domestic violence cases.

Harris County's fiscal year begins March 1. The Harris County budget office reported the estimated cost for fiscal year 2010 is \$1,954,085 which would include costs for start-up, operational, technology, furnishings, equipment and staffing. The costs for operations and staffing for fiscal year 2011 would be \$3,848,169; for fiscal years 2012 to 2013 the cost would be \$3,904,267; and for fiscal year 2014 the cost would be \$3,962,048.

Harris County indicated that they could not estimate the amount of revenue that would be collected since they have not collected for domestic violence cases in a judicial district court. Because the new 476th Judicial District would be in start-up mode, no additional revenue is projected for fiscal year 2010; however, it is assumed that the increased caseload by the creation of a new judicial district could result in higher revenues that could offset a portion of the costs.

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

LBB Staff: JOB, MN, JP, TP