

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the Specialty Courts Advisory Council.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 772, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 772.0061 to read as follows:

Sec. 772.0061. SPECIALTY COURTS ADVISORY COUNCIL. (a) In this section:

(1) "Council" means the Specialty Courts Advisory Council.

(2) "Specialty court" means:

(A) a drug court program established under Chapter 469, Health and Safety Code;

(B) a mental health court program established under Chapter 616, Health and Safety Code; and

(C) a veterans court program established under Chapter 617, Health and Safety Code.

(b) The governor shall establish the Specialty Courts Advisory Council within the criminal justice division established under Section 772.006 to evaluate applications for grant funding for specialty courts in this state and to make funding recommendations to the criminal justice division.

(c) The council is composed of seven members appointed by the governor as follows:

1 (1) three members with experience as judges of a
2 specialty court; and

3 (2) four members who represent the public.

4 (d) The members appointed under Subsection (c)(2) must:

5 (1) reside in various geographic regions of the state;
6 and

7 (2) have experience practicing law in a specialty
8 court or possess knowledge and expertise in a field relating to
9 behavioral or mental health issues or to substance abuse treatment.

10 (e) Members are appointed for staggered six-year terms. The
11 terms of either two or three members, as applicable, expire
12 February 1 of each odd-numbered year.

13 (f) A person may not be a member of the council if the person
14 is required to register as a lobbyist under Chapter 305 because of
15 the person's activities for compensation on behalf of a profession
16 related to the operation of the council.

17 (g) If a vacancy occurs on the council, the governor shall
18 appoint a person to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

19 (h) The council shall select a presiding officer.

20 (i) The council shall meet at the call of its presiding
21 officer or at the request of the governor.

22 SECTION 2. Not later than February 1, 2012, the governor
23 shall appoint the members of the Specialty Courts Advisory Council
24 created by Section 772.0061, Government Code, as added by this Act.
25 The governor shall appoint two members to terms expiring February
26 1, 2013, two members to terms expiring February 1, 2015, and three
27 members to terms expiring February 1, 2017.

1 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
2 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
3 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
4 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
5 Act takes effect September 1, 2011.

H.B. No. 1771

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1771 was passed by the House on April 26, 2011, by the following vote: Yeas 148, Nays 0, 2 present, not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1771 was passed by the Senate on May 20, 2011, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: _____

Date

Governor