

By: Aycock

H.B. No. 3844

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of criminal law magistrates for Burnet County.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 54, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter JJ to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER JJ. BURNET COUNTY CRIMINAL MAGISTRATES

Sec. 54.1951. APPOINTMENT. (a) The Commissioners Court of Burnet County may select magistrates to serve the courts of Burnet County having jurisdiction in criminal matters.

(b) The commissioners court shall establish the minimum qualifications, salary, benefits, and other compensation of each magistrate position and shall determine whether the position is full-time or part-time. The qualifications must require the magistrate to:

(1) have served as a justice of the peace or municipal court judge; or

(2) be an attorney licensed in this state.

(c) A magistrate appointed under this section serves at the pleasure of the commissioners court.

Sec. 54.1952. JURISDICTION. A magistrate has concurrent criminal jurisdiction with the judges of the justice of the peace courts of Burnet County.

Sec. 54.1953. POWERS AND DUTIES. (a) The Commissioners

1 Court of Burnet County shall establish the powers and duties of a  
2 magistrate appointed under this subchapter. Except as otherwise  
3 provided by the commissioners court, a magistrate has the powers of  
4 a magistrate under the Code of Criminal Procedure and other laws of  
5 this state and may administer an oath for any purpose.

6 (b) A magistrate shall give preference to performing the  
7 duties of a magistrate under Article 15.17, Code of Criminal  
8 Procedure.

9 (c) The commissioners court may designate one or more  
10 magistrates to hold regular hearings to:

11 (1) give admonishments;

12 (2) set and review bail and conditions of release;

13 (3) appoint legal counsel; and

14 (4) determine other routine matters relating to  
15 preindictment or pending cases within those courts' jurisdiction.

16 (d) In the hearings provided under Subsection (c), a  
17 magistrate shall give preference to the case of an individual held  
18 in county jail.

19 (e) A magistrate may inquire into a defendant's intended  
20 plea to the charge and set the case for an appropriate hearing  
21 before a judge or master.

22 Sec. 54.1954. JUDICIAL IMMUNITY. A magistrate has the same  
23 judicial immunity as a district judge.

24 Sec. 54.1955. WITNESSES. (a) A witness who is sworn and  
25 who appears before a magistrate is subject to the penalties for  
26 perjury and aggravated perjury provided by law.

27 (b) A referring court may fine or imprison a witness or

1 other court participant for failure to appear after being summoned,  
2 refusal to answer questions, or other acts of direct contempt  
3 before a magistrate.

4 SECTION 2. Article 2.09, Code of Criminal Procedure, is  
5 amended to read as follows:

6 Art. 2.09. WHO ARE MAGISTRATES. Each of the following  
7 officers is a magistrate within the meaning of this Code: The  
8 justices of the Supreme Court, the judges of the Court of Criminal  
9 Appeals, the justices of the Courts of Appeals, the judges of the  
10 District Court, the magistrates appointed by the judges of the  
11 district courts of Bexar County, Dallas County, or Tarrant County  
12 that give preference to criminal cases, the criminal law hearing  
13 officers for Harris County appointed under Subchapter L, Chapter  
14 54, Government Code, the criminal law hearing officers for Cameron  
15 County appointed under Subchapter BB, Chapter 54, Government Code,  
16 the magistrates appointed by the judges of the district courts of  
17 Lubbock County, Nolan County, or Webb County, the magistrates  
18 appointed by the judges of the criminal district courts of Dallas  
19 County or Tarrant County, the masters appointed by the judges of the  
20 district courts and the county courts at law that give preference to  
21 criminal cases in Jefferson County, the magistrates appointed by  
22 the judges of the district courts and the statutory county courts of  
23 Brazos County, Nueces County, or Williamson County, the magistrates  
24 appointed by the judges of the district courts and statutory county  
25 courts that give preference to criminal cases in Travis County, the  
26 criminal magistrates appointed by the Brazoria County  
27 Commissioners Court, the criminal magistrates appointed by the

1 Burnet County Commissioners Court, the county judges, the judges of  
2 the county courts at law, judges of the county criminal courts, the  
3 judges of statutory probate courts, the associate judges appointed  
4 by the judges of the statutory probate courts under Subchapter G,  
5 Chapter 54, Government Code, the associate judges appointed by the  
6 judge of a district court under Subchapter II, Chapter 54,  
7 Government Code, the justices of the peace, and the mayors and  
8 recorders and the judges of the municipal courts of incorporated  
9 cities or towns.

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