

By: Van de Putte

S.B. No. 719

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to discharging fines and costs assessed against certain juvenile defendants through community service or tutoring.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 45, Code of Criminal Procedure, is amended by adding Article 45.0492 to read as follows:

Art. 45.0492. COMMUNITY SERVICE OR TUTORING IN SATISFACTION OF FINE OR COSTS FOR CERTAIN JUVENILE DEFENDANTS. (a) This article applies only to a defendant younger than 17 years of age who is assessed a fine or costs for a Class C misdemeanor occurring in a building or on the grounds of the primary or secondary school at which the defendant was enrolled at the time of the offense.

(b) A justice or judge may require a defendant described by Subsection (a) to discharge all or part of the fine or costs by performing community service or attending a tutoring program that is satisfactory to the court. A defendant may discharge an obligation to perform community service or attend a tutoring program under this article by paying at any time the fine and costs assessed.

(c) In the justice's or judge's order requiring a defendant to participate in community service work or a tutoring program under this article, the justice or judge must specify the number of hours the defendant is required to work or attend tutoring.

(d) The justice or judge may order the defendant to perform

1 community service work under this article only for a governmental
2 entity or a nonprofit organization that provides services to the
3 general public that enhance social welfare and the general
4 well-being of the community. A governmental entity or nonprofit
5 organization that accepts a defendant under this article to perform
6 community service must agree to supervise the defendant in the
7 performance of the defendant's work and report on the defendant's
8 work to the justice or judge who ordered the community service.

9 (e) A tutoring program that accepts a defendant under this
10 article must agree to supervise the defendant in the attendance of
11 the tutoring program and report on the defendant's work to the
12 justice or judge who ordered the tutoring.

13 (f) A justice or judge may not order a defendant to perform
14 more than 16 hours of community service per week or attend more than
15 16 hours of tutoring per week under this article unless the justice
16 or judge determines that requiring additional hours of work or
17 tutoring does not cause a hardship on the defendant or the
18 defendant's family. For purposes of this subsection, "family" has
19 the meaning assigned by Section 71.003, Family Code.

20 (g) A defendant is considered to have discharged not less
21 than \$50 of fines or costs for each eight hours of community service
22 performed or tutoring program attended under this article.

23 (h) A sheriff, employee of a sheriff's department, county
24 commissioner, county employee, county judge, justice of the peace,
25 municipal court judge, officer or employee of a political
26 subdivision other than a county, nonprofit organization, or
27 tutoring program is not liable for damages arising from an act or

1 failure to act in connection with an activity performed by a
2 defendant under this article if the act or failure to act:

3 (1) was performed pursuant to court order; and

4 (2) was not intentional, grossly negligent, or
5 performed with conscious indifference or reckless disregard for the
6 safety of others.

7 (i) A community supervision and corrections department or a
8 court-related services office may provide the administrative and
9 other services necessary for supervision of a defendant required to
10 perform community service under this article.

11 SECTION 2. Article 45.051(a-1), Code of Criminal Procedure,
12 is amended to read as follows:

13 (a-1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, as an
14 alternative to requiring a defendant charged with one or more
15 offenses to make payment of all court costs as required by
16 Subsection (a), the judge may:

17 (1) allow the defendant to enter into an agreement for
18 payment of those costs in installments during the defendant's
19 period of probation;

20 (2) require an eligible defendant to discharge all or
21 part of those costs by performing community service or attending a
22 tutoring program under Article 45.049 or 45.0492; or

23 (3) take any combination of actions authorized by
24 Subdivision (1) or (2).

25 SECTION 3. The changes in law made by this Act apply only to
26 an offense committed or conduct that occurs on or after the
27 effective date of this Act. An offense committed or conduct that

1 occurs before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law
2 in effect when the offense was committed or the conduct occurred,
3 and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose. For
4 purposes of this section, an offense is committed or conduct occurs
5 before the effective date of this Act if any element of the offense
6 or conduct occurs before the effective date.

7 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2011.