

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 82ND LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

March 30, 2011

TO: Honorable Garnet Coleman, Chair, House Committee on County Affairs

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

IN RE: HB1426 by Farias (Relating to the collection of court costs, fees, fines, and other money by the commissioners courts of certain counties.), **As Introduced**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would amend the Code of Criminal Procedure to authorize the commissioners court of a county that has implemented a collection improvement program under Article 103.0033 to directly collect money payable under this title or under other law. Currently, the statute only applies to a county with a population of at least 50,000 or a municipality with a population of at least 100,000. According to the Office of Court Administration, the bill would apply to approximately 62 counties.

Local Government Impact

There could be an increase in collection of court costs, fees and fines to a county that has established a collection improvement program with the removal of the population criteria; however, those amounts would vary and is not anticipated to be significant.

According to the Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA), three counties provided fiscal impact information.

Bexar County reported the bill would authorize the county commissioners to create a centralized collection system that would be simpler to administer and more convenient to the public, who could then pay any fees owed to the county, including criminal court costs, at one centralized location. Bexar County stated that they would incur no fiscal impact.

Lubbock County stated that centralizing court collections could potentially eliminate three FTEs at an estimated annual savings of \$150,000. The fiscal impact on Lubbock County is based on the assumption that the bill would become effective on September 1, 2011 and be implemented by Lubbock County at the beginning of their fiscal year, October 1, 2011.

San Patricio County reported that if the county centralized court cost collections; it would involve only moving staff from other departments. San Patricio County stated there would be no fiscal impact.

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

LBB Staff: JOB, KKR, TP, TB, JJO