

**LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD**  
**Austin, Texas**

**FISCAL NOTE, 83RD LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION**

**April 21, 2013**

**TO:** Honorable Tryon D. Lewis, Chair, House Committee on Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence

**FROM:** Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

**IN RE: HB1673** by Perry (Relating to the creation and dissolution of a covenant marriage.), As  
**Introduced**

<p><b>No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.</b></p>
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The bill would amend the Family Code to specify the requirements for entering into and dissolving covenant marriages. The bill specifies that a county clerk may not charge a fee for a covenant marriage license. The bill would require the attorney general to select a not-for-profit organization to prepare and publish a pamphlet on covenant marriages at the expense of the selected organization. The bill also charges the attorney general with developing materials to educate county clerks on the distinctions between covenant and noncovenant marriages. The bill would require the Department of Family and Protective Services to prepare and provide materials to county clerks for marriage license applicants on family violence.

The bill would amend the Health and Safety Code and the Local Government Code to reflect provisions on covenant marriages. The bill requires the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission to prescribe the format and content of certain forms relating to covenant marriages. The bill would take effect September 1, 2013.

The Office of Attorney General and the Department of Family and Protective Services both report that the bill could be implemented by their agencies within existing resources and will not result in a significant fiscal impact to the agencies. The Office of Court Administration does not anticipate any significant fiscal impact to the court system resulting from the bill. The Health and Human Services Commission reports that the bill will not result in a fiscal impact to the agency, and that the responsibility for prescribing the format and content of the covenant marriage documents will be delegated to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

While implementation of the bill will require one-time information technology programming changes for DSHS, this analysis assumes that the costs could be absorbed within existing agency resources. It is assumed that the bill's creation of a type of marriage license without a fee will decrease the issuance of licenses with fees and will have a negative fiscal impact to the state, but that such impact will not be significant.

## **Local Government Impact**

It is assumed that the bill's creation of a type of marriage license without a fee will have a negative fiscal impact on local governmental entities, but that such impact will not be significant.

**Source Agencies:** 212 Office of Court Administration, Texas Judicial Council, 302 Office of the Attorney General, 529 Health and Human Services Commission, 530 Family and Protective Services, Department of, 537 State Health Services, Department of

**LBB Staff:** UP, CL, AM, NB, TB, CH, KKR