

By: Hinojosa  
(Coleman)

S.B. No. 1353

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the provision and administration of indigent defense services.

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

SECTION 1. Section 79.037, Government Code, is amended by amending Subsections (b) and (c) and adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

(b) The commission shall distribute funds as described ~~[required]~~ by Subsection (a)(2) or (e) based on the applicable ~~[a]~~ county's compliance with standards adopted by the board and the county's demonstrated commitment to compliance with the requirements of state law relating to indigent defense.

(c) The board shall adopt policies to ensure that funds under Subsection (a)(2) or (e) are allocated and distributed ~~[to~~ ~~counties]~~ in a fair manner.

(e) The commission may award a grant to an entity described by Section 791.013 that provides to a county administrative services under an interlocal contract entered into for the purpose of providing or improving the provision of indigent defense services in the county. The commission shall monitor each entity that receives a grant under this subsection and enforce compliance with the conditions of the grant in the same manner as if the grant were awarded directly to a county under Subsection (a)(2).

SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 79, Government Code, is

1 amended by adding Section 79.040 to read as follows:

2 Sec. 79.040. INDIGENT DEFENSE INFORMATION SYSTEM. (a) By  
3 entering into an interlocal contract with one or more counties  
4 under Chapter 791, the commission may participate and assist  
5 counties in the creation, implementation, operation, and  
6 maintenance of a computerized system to be used to assist those  
7 counties in the provision and administration of indigent defense  
8 services and to be used to collect data from those counties  
9 regarding representation of indigent defendants in this state.

10 (b) The commission may use appropriated funds to pay costs  
11 incurred under an interlocal contract described by Subsection (a),  
12 including license fees, implementation costs, maintenance and  
13 operations costs, administrative costs, and any other costs  
14 specified in the interlocal contract.

15 (c) The commission may provide training services to  
16 counties on the use and operation of a system created, implemented,  
17 operated, or maintained by one or more counties under Subsection  
18 (a).

19 (d) Subchapter L, Chapter 2054, does not apply to an  
20 indigent defense information system created under this section.

21 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.