

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 84TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 6, 2015

TO: Honorable Harold V. Dutton, Jr., Chair, House Committee on Juvenile Justice & Family Issues

FROM: Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: **HB547** by White, James (Relating to the creation and dissolution of a covenant marriage.), **As Introduced**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would amend the Family Code to establish the process of entering into a covenant marriage in a county. The bill would permit a commissioners court of a county to establish an order to permit covenant marriages in a county. The bill prescribes the content of the affidavit, requirements of the marriage license, and counseling requirements of a couple to enter into a covenant marriage. Under the provisions of the bill, the Attorney General would be required to select a not-for-profit to prepare and publish a pamphlet explaining a covenant marriage, distribute those pamphlets to counties throughout the state, and develop material to educate county clerks about the requirements of a covenant marriage. The bill prescribes the process, court requirements, and grounds for a dissolution of a covenant marriage and legal separation. The bill would require a county clerk to file a copy of each covenant marriage affidavit with the Bureau of Vital Statistics. The bill would require the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission to prescribe the format and content of the affidavit used in a covenant marriage. The Bureau of Vital Statistics would be required to print and distribute the covenant marriage affidavit forms to each county clerk throughout the state. Under the provisions of the bill, a county clerk would be prohibited from charging a fee for issuing a covenant marriage license.

Local Government Impact

There would be fees associated with the issuance of a covenant marriage. However, it is assumed that a commissioners court would establish an order permitting covenant marriages only if sufficient funds were available or it would not result in a negative fiscal impact; therefore, no significant fiscal impact is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 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, ESi, SD, EK, SS, SJ, CH, TBo