

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 84TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

May 5, 2015

TO: Honorable Joan Huffman, Chair, Senate Committee on State Affairs

FROM: Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB3003 by Thompson, Senfronia (Relating to the appointment of counsel in certain suits affecting the parent-child relationship.), **As Engrossed**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would amend the Family Code to authorize the commissioners of one county or a collection of counties to establish an Office of Family Representation that would provide attorneys to represent parents and/or children in termination of parental rights cases or for the appointment of a conservator for children in which appointment is mandatory. The bill would require a written plan of operations for the office and would require a court operating in a county with such an office to appoint an attorney from that office unless certain circumstances exist. The Office of Family Representation would be funded by county funds.

The bill would also amend the Family Code to authorize a county to establish a Managed Assigned Counsel Program that would provide attorneys to represent parents and/or children in termination of parental rights cases or for the appointment of a conservator for children in which appointment is mandatory. The program would be funded by the county and run by a governmental entity, nonprofit organization, or the local bar association. The bill would require a written plan of operations for the program and would require a court operating in a county with such a program to appoint an attorney from that program's list.

Based on the analysis of the Office of Court Administration, duties and responsibilities associated with implementing the provisions of the bill could be accomplished by utilizing existing resources.

Local Government Impact

There could be costs to a county that chose to establish an Office of Family Representation or a Managed Assigned Counsel Program. However, it is assumed that a county would establish a program 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: 212 Office of Court Administration, Texas Judicial Council

LBB Staff: UP, AG, FR, GDz, KVe