

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 84TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 21, 2015

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

FROM: Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: **SB1931** by Garcia (Relating to the appointment of an attorney ad litem for a parent in certain suits affecting the parent-child relationship.), **Committee Report 1st House, Substituted**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would amend the Family Code to require a court to inform an unrepresented parent in a termination of parental rights case at the parent's first court appearance that the parent has the right to be represented by an attorney and, if the parent is indigent and appears in opposition to the suit, the right to an appointed attorney. The bill would clarify that in order for two parents to share an attorney, there must be no pattern or history of family violence, and would list indigence standards.

The bill would amend provisions regarding a temporary attorney ad litem appointment for certain parents. The court would be authorized to appoint an attorney from the time the court ordered the child removed until the court's determination of whether the parent is indigent before the full adversary hearing. The bill outlines the duties of such an attorney. If the court determines the parent is indigent, the attorney may be appointed to continue his or her representation. The Office of Court Administration indicates bill provisions are not anticipated to have a significant fiscal implication for the court system.

Local Government Impact

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 212 Office of Court Administration, Texas Judicial Council

LBB Staff: UP, AG, TB