

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1481  
By: Murr  
Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Recent reports indicate that the volume of court cases in Medina County necessitates the creation of a new judicial district to serve that county specifically. H.B. 1481 seeks to address this issue by creating the 454th Judicial District composed of Medina County.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1481 amends the Government Code to remove Medina County from the 38th Judicial District and to create the 454th Judicial District, which is composed of Medina County. The bill requires the local administrative district judge to transfer to the 454th District Court all cases from Medina County that are pending in the 38th District Court on the bill's effective date.

H.B. 1481 abolishes the office of county attorney of Medina County, requires the voters of the county to elect a criminal district attorney, and provides for the criminal district attorney's qualifications, general powers, duties, and privileges. The bill provides for the criminal district attorney's compensation and for the appointment, composition, and compensation of the attorney's staff. The bill requires the criminal district attorney, with the advice and consent of the commissioners court, to designate one or more individuals to act as an assistant criminal district attorney with exclusive responsibility for assisting the commissioners court and prescribes qualifications for an assistant criminal district attorney.

H.B. 1481 authorizes the criminal district attorney or the Commissioners Court of Medina County to accept gifts and grants from any individual, partnership, corporation, trust, foundation, association, or governmental entity for the purpose of financing or assisting certain county programs and requires the criminal district attorney to account for and report to the commissioners court all such gifts or grants accepted. The bill entitles the county to receive from the state an amount equal to the amount provided in the General Appropriations Act to district attorneys for the payment of staff salaries and office expenses and authorizes the legislature to provide for additional staff members to be paid from state funds if it considers supplementation of the criminal district attorney's staff to be necessary. The bill prohibits the criminal district attorney and assistant criminal district attorney from engaging in the private practice of law or receiving a fee for the referral of a case and subjects the criminal district attorney to statutory provisions governing professional prosecutors.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2019.