

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
86R5391 ATP-D

H.B. 1872  
By: Goldman; Toth (Hancock)  
State Affairs  
4/23/2019  
Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Under current law, every judge in Texas must file a personal financial statement (PFS) each year. Most judges file their PFS with the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC); some statutory probate judges, county judges, and justices of the peace, though, exercise an option under state law to file their PFS with their local county clerk instead.

Efforts in recent years to enhance courtroom security have included requiring the redaction of judges' personal information, such as their home address, from PFS filings with TEC. No such redactions, however, have been required for such filings from these judges with county clerks, and current law actually prohibits those redactions. H.B. 1872 simply requires personal information to be redacted from a PFS filed with a county clerk by a statutory probate judge, county judge, or justice of the peace, to ensure consistency with the relevant provisions applicable to such filings with TEC and ensure enhanced security and privacy for all Texas judges.

This bill was requested by local judges in Tarrant County who file their PFS with the Tarrant County clerk.

H.B. 1872 amends current law relating to public access to certain information included on personal financial statements filed by county judicial officers.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends the heading to Section 159.055, Local Government Code, to read as follows:

Sec. 159.055. PUBLIC ACCESS TO STATEMENTS AND RELATED RECORDS.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 159.055(b), Local Government Code, as follows:

(b) Requires the county clerk, or the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC) to remove a county judicial officer's or candidate's home address and the names of the officer's or candidate's dependent children from the officer's or candidate's financial statement and any county or TEC record derived from the financial statement before the statement or record is made available to a member of the public, rather than requiring the county clerk or TEC, on the written request of a county judicial officer or candidate to remove the names of the officer's or candidate's dependent children from the financial statement before the statement is made available to a member of the public.

SECTION 3. Provides that the change in law made by this Act to Section 159.055(b), Local Government Code, applies to information included in a financial statement regardless of whether the statement was filed before the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2019.