By:  Rodríguez S.B. No. 815

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation and preservation of certain records of criminal proceedings.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Articles 15.17(a) and (f), Code of Criminal Procedure, are amended to read as follows:

(a)  In each case enumerated in this Code, the person making the arrest or the person having custody of the person arrested shall without unnecessary delay, but not later than 48 hours after the person is arrested, take the person arrested or have him taken before some magistrate of the county where the accused was arrested or, to provide more expeditiously to the person arrested the warnings described by this article, before a magistrate in any other county of this state. The arrested person may be taken before the magistrate in person or the image of the arrested person may be presented to the magistrate by means of a videoconference. The magistrate shall inform in clear language the person arrested, either in person or through a videoconference, of the accusation against him and of any affidavit filed therewith, of his right to retain counsel, of his right to remain silent, of his right to have an attorney present during any interview with peace officers or attorneys representing the state, of his right to terminate the interview at any time, and of his right to have an examining trial. The magistrate shall also inform the person arrested of the person's right to request the appointment of counsel if the person cannot afford counsel. The magistrate shall inform the person arrested of the procedures for requesting appointment of counsel. If the person does not speak and understand the English language or is deaf, the magistrate shall inform the person in a manner consistent with Articles 38.30 and 38.31, as appropriate. The magistrate shall ensure that reasonable assistance in completing the necessary forms for requesting appointment of counsel is provided to the person at the same time. If the person arrested is indigent and requests appointment of counsel and if the magistrate is authorized under Article 26.04 to appoint counsel for indigent defendants in the county, the magistrate shall appoint counsel in accordance with Article 1.051. If the magistrate is not authorized to appoint counsel, the magistrate shall without unnecessary delay, but not later than 24 hours after the person arrested requests appointment of counsel, transmit, or cause to be transmitted to the court or to the courts' designee authorized under Article 26.04 to appoint counsel in the county, the forms requesting the appointment of counsel. The magistrate shall also inform the person arrested that he is not required to make a statement and that any statement made by him may be used against him. The magistrate shall allow the person arrested reasonable time and opportunity to consult counsel and shall, after determining whether the person is currently on bail for a separate criminal offense, admit the person arrested to bail if allowed by law. A record of the communication between the arrested person and the magistrate shall be made. [~~The record shall be preserved until the earlier of the following dates: (1) the date on which the pretrial hearing ends; or (2) the 91st day after the date on which the record is made if the person is charged with a misdemeanor or the 120th day after the date on which the record is made if the person is charged with a felony.~~] For purposes of this subsection, "videoconference" means a two-way electronic communication of image and sound between the arrested person and the magistrate and includes secure Internet videoconferencing.

(f)  A record required under Subsection (a) or (e) may consist of written forms, electronic recordings, or other documentation as authorized by procedures adopted in the county under Article 26.04(a). The record must be retained in compliance with the applicable records retention schedule prepared by the director and librarian of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission under Section 441.158, Government Code. The counsel for the defendant may obtain a copy of the record on payment of a reasonable amount to cover the costs of reproduction or, if the defendant is indigent, the court shall provide a copy to the defendant without charging a cost for the copy.

SECTION 2.  Article 27.18, Code of Criminal Procedure, is amended by amending Subsection (d) and adding Subsection (h) to read as follows:

(d)  A defendant who is confined in a county other than the county in which charges against the defendant are pending may use the videoconference method provided by this article [~~or by Article 15.17~~] to enter a plea or waive a right in the court with jurisdiction over the case.

(h)  For purposes of this article, "videoconference" means a two-way electronic communication of image and sound between the arrested person and the magistrate and includes secure Internet videoconferencing.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.