

By: Neave

H.B. No. 1531

Substitute the following for H.B. No. 1531:

By: White

C.S.H.B. No. 1531

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a specialty court program for sexual assault victim services.

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

SECTION 1. Title 2, Government Code, is amended by adding Subtitle K-1 to read as follows:

SUBTITLE K-1. SPECIALTY COURTS FOR VICTIMS

CHAPTER 141. SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIM SERVICES COURT PROGRAM

Sec. 141.001. SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIM SERVICES COURT PROGRAM

DEFINED. In this chapter, "sexual assault victim services court program" means a program that has the following essential characteristics:

(1) the integration of services provided by public agencies and community organizations for victims in sexual assault cases;

(2) the use of prosecutors with experience in prosecuting sexual assault cases and judges with experience in hearing sexual assault cases;

(3) early identification and prompt assignment of eligible cases to the court designated under Section 141.002(b);

(4) access by victims to counseling and other related services provided by public agencies and community organizations;

(5) development of partnerships with public agencies and community organizations;

1 (6) monitoring and evaluation of program goals and
2 effectiveness;

3 (7) continuing interdisciplinary education to promote
4 effective program planning, implementation, and operations;

5 (8) inclusion of a participant's family members who
6 agree to be involved in the services provided to the participant
7 under the program;

8 (9) prosecution of sexual assault offenses;

9 (10) issuance of orders of protection to victims on
10 the victim's consent and as authorized by state law; and

11 (11) continued monitoring of sexual assault
12 defendants through prosecution and adjudication and for the
13 duration of an offender's sentence.

14 Sec. 141.002. AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH PROGRAM; ELIGIBILITY.

15 (a) The commissioners court of a county may establish a sexual
16 assault victim services court program for participants who are
17 victims of an alleged sexual assault in which a person is arrested
18 for or charged with an offense under Chapter 21 or 22, Penal Code.

19 (b) The local administrative judge, for the courts for which
20 the judge serves as local administrative judge, may designate a
21 court in the county for assignment of cases described by Subsection

22 (a). The judge of the court must have experience hearing sexual
23 assault cases under Chapter 21 or 22, Penal Code. The prosecuting
24 attorney for the court must have experience in prosecuting sexual
25 assault offenses under Chapter 21 or 22, Penal Code.

26 Sec. 141.003. DUTIES OF SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIM SERVICES
27 COURT PROGRAM. (a) A sexual assault victim services court program

1 established under this chapter must:

2 (1) ensure that a victim eligible for participation in
3 the program volunteers to proceed through the program; and

4 (2) allow a participant to withdraw from the program
5 at any time.

6 (b) A sexual assault victim services court program
7 established under this chapter shall make, establish, and publish
8 local procedures to ensure maximum participation of eligible
9 victims in the county.

10 Sec. 141.004. GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS. A county may
11 accept a gift, grant, donation, or bequest of money, services,
12 equipment, goods, or other tangible or intangible property from any
13 source for the sexual assault victim services court program.

14 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.