

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 675
By: Ramos
Juvenile Justice & Family Issues
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In light of the current COVID-19 precautions in place to protect public safety, it has been reported that courts are turning to video conference technology to conduct various hearings and that the ability of members of the armed forces who are deployed abroad to travel has been limited due to quarantine restrictions. While marriage by proxy allows an individual to stand in for another person while applying for a marriage license, it has been noted that there is no mechanism by which individuals may get married using video conference technology, which would ease the burdens faced by those armed forces members. H.B. 675 seeks to address this issue by providing an absent applicant for a marriage license who is a member of the U.S. armed forces stationed in another country and unable to attend the ceremony an opportunity to participate in the ceremony through the use of video conference technology as an alternative to appointing a proxy for purposes of that participation.

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. 675 amends the Family Code to give an absent applicant for a marriage license who is a member of the U.S. armed forces stationed in another country in support of a military operation and unable to attend the ceremony the option of including in the applicant's affidavit a statement indicating that the applicant prefers to participate in the ceremony through the use of video conference technology if available as an alternative to including the appointment of a proxy for the ceremony. An absent applicant may participate in the ceremony through the use of video conference technology.

H.B. 675 amends the Government Code to authorize an office of the justice of the peace that has video conference technology for courtroom use to make that technology available for use in a ceremony conducted by a justice of the peace.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.