

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
87R885 MAW-D

S.B. 111
By: West
Criminal Justice
3/17/2021
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Under Article 39.14, Code of Criminal Procedure, prosecutors are required to turn over to the defense all material evidence except those items that are exempted by statute. Prosecutors are obligated to disclose this evidence to the defendant, but in many instances prosecutors are reliant on the release of evidence, known or not known to exist, collected by the investigating law enforcement agency.

If an investigating law enforcement agency does not turn over information or evidence to the prosecutor, the prosecutor can face sanctions including reprimand, censure, termination and even disbarment for his subsequent failure to disclose the information to the defense. Law enforcement agencies however, are not compelled to disclose the information, nor do they face sanctions for their inadvertent or willful failure to release all evidence or required information to prosecutors.

S.B. 111 would amend Chapter 2, Code of Criminal Procedure, to require a law enforcement agency that files a case with the attorney representing the state to submit to the prosecutor, a written statement from an officer employed by the agency which attests that all exculpatory, impeaching, or mitigating evidence in possession of the investigating agency has been released to the state's attorney at the time the case is filed.

The bill also requires that any exculpatory, impeaching, or mitigating evidence collected after the investigating agency files a case with the county or district attorney which is subject to discovery is also promptly turned over to the state's attorney.

The language of S.B. 111 is identical to S.B. 2114, which was approved by the Senate during the 86th Legislature.

As proposed, S.B. 111 amends current law relating to certain duties of law enforcement agencies concerning certain information subject to disclosure to a defendant.

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 Chapter 2, Code of Criminal Procedure, by adding Article 2.1397, as follows:

Art. 2.1397. DUTIES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY FILING CASE. (a) Defines "attorney representing the state" and "law enforcement agency."

(b) Requires a law enforcement agency filing a case with the attorney representing the state to submit to the attorney representing the state a written statement by an agency employee with knowledge of the case acknowledging that all documents, items, and information in the possession of the agency that are required to be

disclosed to the defendant in the case under Article 39.14 (Discovery) have been transmitted to the attorney representing the state.

(c) Requires an agency employee, if at any time after the case is filed with the attorney representing the state the law enforcement agency discovers or acquires any additional document, item, or information required to be disclosed to the defendant under Article 39.14, to promptly transmit the document, item, or information to the attorney representing the state.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2021.