

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1179
By: Birdwell
Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

A person who reports for jury service is entitled to receive a daily reimbursement in a certain amount for travel and other expenses. The court often presents jurors with donation cards inviting them to donate all or a portion of that amount to a number of different programs and funds, such as the victims of crime fund, prior to trial. Research has shown that presenting jurors with the option to donate to such a fund at the beginning of a criminal proceeding produces an undue influence on their disposition to convict a defendant, since they are confronted with an opportunity to help victims before the proceeding begins. S.B. 1179 seeks to address this issue by requiring any distribution of such cards to be done after jury service is concluded in order to avoid the risk of unduly influencing the jury's decision-making process.

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

S.B. 1179 amends the Government Code to specify that a certain form letter inviting a person who reported for jury service to donate all or a portion of the person's daily reimbursement for that service to certain public programs is to be provided after the person's jury service is concluded.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.