87R9995 ANG-D

By:  Lozano H.B. No. 4608

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of an additional county court at law in San Patricio County and the operation of the county courts at law in that county.

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

SECTION 1.  Effective January 1, 2023, Section 25.2071(a), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  San Patricio County has the following [~~one~~] statutory county courts:

(1)  [~~court,~~] the County Court at Law of San Patricio County; and

(2)  the County Court at Law No. 2 of San Patricio County.

SECTION 2.  Section 25.2072, Government Code, is amended by amending Subsections (a), (d), and (m) and adding Subsections (g-1) and (g-2) to read as follows:

(a)  In addition to the jurisdiction provided by Section 25.0003 and other law, a county court at law in San Patricio County has concurrent jurisdiction with the district court except that a county court at law does not have jurisdiction of:

(1)  felony criminal matters; and

(2)  civil cases in which the matter in controversy exceeds the maximum amount provided by Section 25.0003 [~~in matters involving the juvenile and child welfare law of this state~~].

(d)  [~~The judge of a county court at law shall be paid an annual salary in an amount of not less than $43,000.~~] The judge of a county court at law is entitled to receive travel and necessary office expenses, including administrative and clerical assistance.

(g-1)  The county clerk serves as clerk of a county court at law except in family law cases. In family law cases, including juvenile and child welfare cases, the district clerk serves as clerk of a county court at law. The district clerk shall establish a separate family law docket for each county court at law.

(g-2)  The commissioners court shall provide the deputy clerks, bailiffs, and other personnel necessary to operate the county courts at law.

(m)  The judge of the county court and the judges [~~judge~~] of the [~~a~~] county courts [~~court~~] at law may agree on a plan governing the filing, numbering, and docketing of cases within the concurrent jurisdiction of their courts and the assignment of those cases for trial. The plan may provide for the centralized institution and filing of all such cases with one court, clerk, or coordinator designated by the plan and for the systemized assignment of those cases to the courts participating in the plan, and the provisions of the plan for the centralized filing and assignment of cases shall control notwithstanding any other provisions of this section. If the judges of the county court and the county courts [~~court~~] at law are unable to agree on a filing, docketing, and assignment of cases plan, a board of judges composed of the district judges and the county court at law judges for San Patricio County [~~the presiding judge of the 36th Judicial District~~] shall design a plan for the [~~both~~] courts.

SECTION 3.  The County Court at Law No. 2 of San Patricio County is created January 1, 2023.

SECTION 4.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.