

By: Thompson of Harris

H.B. No. 251

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to repealing civil asset forfeiture provisions and
establishing criminal asset forfeiture in this state.

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

SECTION 1. Title 1, Code of Criminal Procedure, is amended
by adding Chapter 59A to read as follows:

CHAPTER 59A. CRIMINAL ASSET FORFEITURE

Art. 59A.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Abandoned property" means personal property left
by an owner who has intentionally relinquished all rights to
control of the property.

(2) "Actual knowledge" means direct and clear
awareness of information, facts, or conditions.

(3) "Contraband" means tangible or intangible goods
that are illegal to import, export, or possess, including a
scheduled drug without a valid prescription.

(4) "Conveyance" means a device or structure used for
transportation. The term includes a motor vehicle, trailer,
snowmobile, airplane, or vessel, and any attached equipment.

(5) "Department" means the Department of Public
Safety.

(6) "Instrumentality" means property that is
otherwise lawful to possess and that is used in the furtherance or
commission of an offense subject to forfeiture. The term includes

1 land, buildings, containers, conveyances, equipment, materials,
2 products, computer hardware or software, telecommunications
3 devices, firearms, ammunition, tools, and money, securities,
4 negotiable instruments, or other means of exchange. The term does
5 not include stolen property.

6 (7) "Law enforcement agency" means a law enforcement
7 agency of this state or a political subdivision of this state that
8 has authority under state law to engage in seizure and forfeiture.

9 (8) "Offense subject to forfeiture" means:

10 (A) a first or second degree felony under the
11 Penal Code;

12 (B) a third degree or state jail felony under
13 Chapter 49, Penal Code, if the defendant has been previously
14 convicted three times of an offense under that chapter;

15 (C) a felony under:

16 (i) Chapter 151, Finance Code;

17 (ii) Chapter 481 or 483, Health and Safety
18 Code;

19 (iii) Chapter 32, Human Resources Code, or
20 Chapter 35A or 37, Penal Code, that involves a health care program,
21 as defined by Section 35A.01, Penal Code;

22 (iv) Section 15.031, 21.11, or 38.04, Penal
23 Code;

24 (v) Chapter 20A, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 33A,
25 34, 35, or 43, Penal Code; or

26 (vi) The Securities Act (Article 581-1 et
27 seq., Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes);

1 (D) a Class A misdemeanor under:

2 (i) Section 306.051, Business & Commerce
3 Code; or

4 (ii) Subchapter B, Chapter 365, Health and
5 Safety Code, if the defendant has been previously convicted two
6 times of an offense under that subchapter;

7 (E) a Class B misdemeanor under Chapter 522,
8 Business & Commerce Code;

9 (F) an offense under:

10 (i) Section 326.002, Business & Commerce
11 Code;

12 (ii) Section 20.05, 20.06, 20.07, 42.10,
13 46.06(a)(1), or 46.14, Penal Code;

14 (iii) Chapter 71, Penal Code; or

15 (iv) Section 550.021, Transportation Code;

16 or

17 (G) any other offense that results in a personal
18 injury to a victim and that is provided under:

19 (i) the Penal Code; or

20 (ii) a federal criminal law.

21 Art. 59A.002. PURPOSE. The purpose of this chapter is to:

22 (1) deter criminal activity by reducing the economic
23 incentives;

24 (2) increase the pecuniary loss that results from
25 engaging in criminal activity; and

26 (3) protect against the wrongful forfeiture of
27 property.

1 Art. 59A.003. CRIMINAL ASSET FORFEITURE; PROPERTY SUBJECT
2 TO FORFEITURE. (a) The convicting court may order a person
3 convicted of an offense subject to forfeiture to forfeit any:

4 (1) property the person derived from the commission of
5 the offense;

6 (2) property directly traceable to property derived
7 from the commission of the offense; or

8 (3) instrumentality the person used in the commission
9 of the offense.

10 (b) For purposes of this chapter, a person is considered
11 convicted if:

12 (1) a sentence is imposed on the person; or

13 (2) the person receives community supervision,
14 including deferred adjudication community supervision.

15 Art. 59A.004. EXEMPT PROPERTY. The following are exempt
16 from forfeiture:

17 (1) property that is homestead property;

18 (2) a motor vehicle valued at less than \$10,000; and

19 (3) United States currency totaling \$200 or less.

20 Art. 59A.005. CONTRABAND. A person may not have a property
21 interest in contraband. Contraband is subject to seizure and shall
22 be disposed of in accordance with state law. Contraband is not
23 subject to forfeiture under this chapter.

24 Art. 59A.006. CONVICTION REQUIRED; STANDARD OF PROOF. (a)
25 Property may be forfeited under this chapter only if:

26 (1) a person is convicted of an offense subject to
27 forfeiture; and

1 (2) the state establishes by clear and convincing
2 evidence that the applicable requirements of Articles
3 59A.003-59A.005 are met.

4 (b) This chapter does not prevent property from being
5 forfeited by plea agreement approved by the convicting court.

6 Art. 59A.007. SUBSTITUTION OF ASSETS. On the state's
7 motion following conviction, the convicting court may order the
8 forfeiture of substitute property owned by the defendant if the
9 state proves by a preponderance of the evidence that the defendant
10 intentionally transferred, sold, or deposited property with a third
11 party to avoid the court's jurisdiction. The value of substitute
12 property forfeited may not exceed the value of the property
13 transferred, sold, or deposited.

14 Art. 59A.008. NO JOINT AND SEVERAL LIABILITY. A defendant
15 convicted of an offense subject to forfeiture is not jointly and
16 severally liable for a forfeiture award owed by any other
17 defendant. If ownership is unknown, the convicting court may order
18 each defendant to forfeit property on a pro rata basis or by other
19 equitable means.

20 Art. 59A.009. SEIZURE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY WITH PROCESS.
21 At the request of the state made at any time, a court may issue an ex
22 parte preliminary order to seize or secure personal property for
23 which forfeiture is sought and to provide for its custody.

24 Art. 59A.010. SEIZURE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY WITHOUT PROCESS.
25 Personal property subject to forfeiture may be seized at any time
26 without a court order if:

27 (1) the seizure is incident to a lawful arrest or

1 search;

2 (2) the personal property has been the subject of a
3 previous judgment in favor of the state; or

4 (3) the law enforcement agency seizing the property
5 has probable cause to believe that:

6 (A) the seizure is immediately necessary to
7 prevent the removal or destruction of the personal property; and

8 (B) the personal property is forfeitable under
9 this chapter.

10 Art. 59A.011. SEIZURE OF REAL PROPERTY WITH PROCESS. (a)
11 Real property may be seized only under a court order. A court may
12 issue an order to seize or secure real property for which forfeiture
13 is sought only after the property owners are provided notice and an
14 opportunity for a contested hearing to determine the sufficiency of
15 the probable cause for the seizure.

16 (b) This article does not prohibit the attorney
17 representing the state from seeking a lis pendens or restraining
18 order to prohibit the sale or destruction of the real property.

19 Art. 59A.012. RECEIPT. A law enforcement officer who
20 seizes property shall give an itemized receipt to the person
21 possessing the property, or in the absence of any person, leave a
22 receipt in the place where the property was found, if reasonably
23 possible.

24 Art. 59A.013. TITLE TO PROPERTY. (a) At the time of a
25 seizure or the issuance of a lis pendens or restraining order, the
26 state acquires provisional title to the seized property and may
27 hold and protect the property.

1 (b) Title to the property vests with the state on the date
2 the court orders the property to be forfeited and the vesting
3 relates back to the date the state acquired provisional title.
4 Title acquired under this subsection is subject to a claim by a
5 third party that is adjudicated as provided by this chapter.

6 Art. 59A.014. PRETRIAL HEARING REGARDING REPLEVIN. (a) In
7 this article, "claimant" means a person claiming an ownership
8 interest in property that has been seized under this chapter.

9 (b) Following a seizure of property subject to forfeiture, a
10 claimant has the right to a pretrial hearing to determine the
11 validity of the seizure.

12 (c) The claimant may claim, at any time on or before the 60th
13 day before the scheduled start of the trial of the related criminal
14 offense or as soon as otherwise practicable, the right to
15 possession of property by motion to the court to issue a writ of
16 replevin.

17 (d) The claimant must file a motion establishing the
18 validity of the alleged interest in the property.

19 (e) The court shall hear the motion not later than the 30th
20 day after the date the motion is filed.

21 (f) The state must file an answer showing probable cause for
22 the seizure or a cross motion not later than the 10th day before the
23 hearing on the claimant's motion.

24 (g) The court shall grant the claimant's motion if the court
25 finds that:

26 (1) the final judgment is likely to require the state
27 to return the property to the claimant;

1 (2) the property is not reasonably required to be held
2 for investigatory reasons; or

3 (3) the property is the only reasonable means for a
4 defendant to pay for legal representation in the forfeiture
5 proceeding or in the prosecution of the related criminal offense.

6 (h) At the court's discretion under Subsection (g)(3), the
7 court may order the return of funds or property sufficient for the
8 defendant to obtain legal counsel but less than the total amount
9 seized, and may require an accounting for the use of the returned
10 funds or property.

11 (i) Instead of ordering the issuance of the writ of
12 replevin, the court may order the state to give security or written
13 assurance for satisfaction of any judgment, including damages, that
14 may be rendered in the action or may order other appropriate relief.

15 Art. 59A.015. FORFEITURE PROCEEDING. A proceeding for the
16 forfeiture of property shall be held following the trial of the
17 related alleged offense. If the value of the property is less than
18 \$10,000, the proceeding must be held before the judge only.

19 Art. 59A.016. PROPORTIONALITY HEARING. (a) At any time
20 following a determination of forfeiture by the trier of fact, the
21 defendant may petition the court to determine whether the
22 forfeiture is unconstitutionally excessive under the United States
23 Constitution or the Texas Constitution.

24 (b) The defendant has the burden of establishing by a
25 preponderance of the evidence that the forfeiture is grossly
26 disproportional to the seriousness of the offense. The hearing
27 must be held before the judge only.

1 (c) In determining whether the forfeiture of property is
2 unconstitutionally excessive, the court may consider all relevant
3 factors, including:

4 (1) the seriousness of the offense and its impact on
5 the community, including the duration of the activity and the harm
6 caused by the defendant;

7 (2) the extent to which the defendant participated in
8 the offense;

9 (3) the extent to which the property was used in
10 committing the offense;

11 (4) the sentence imposed for the offense; and

12 (5) whether the offense was completed or attempted.

13 (d) In determining the value of the property subject to
14 forfeiture, the court may consider all relevant factors, including:

15 (1) the fair market value of the property;

16 (2) the value of the property to the defendant,
17 including hardship to the defendant if the court orders the
18 property to be forfeited; and

19 (3) the hardship to a defendant's family member or
20 other person from the loss of a primary residence, motor vehicle, or
21 other property if the court orders the property to be forfeited.

22 (e) The court may not consider the value of the property to
23 the state in determining whether the forfeiture of property is
24 unconstitutionally excessive.

25 Art. 59A.017. SECURITY INTEREST. A bona fide security
26 interest is not subject to forfeiture unless the person claiming
27 the security interest had actual knowledge that the property was

1 subject to forfeiture at the time the security interest was
2 created. A person claiming a security interest must establish the
3 validity of the interest by a preponderance of the evidence.

4 Art. 59A.018. INNOCENT OWNER. (a) The property of an
5 innocent owner may not be forfeited.

6 (b) A person who has an ownership interest in property
7 subject to forfeiture that existed at the time of the conduct giving
8 rise to the forfeiture and who claims to be an innocent owner must
9 show that the person has a legal right, title, or interest in the
10 property seized under this chapter. If the person shows legal
11 right, title, or interest in the property, the state must prove by a
12 preponderance of the evidence that the person had actual or
13 constructive knowledge of the underlying offense giving rise to the
14 forfeiture. A person is presumed to have constructive knowledge of
15 the underlying offense if the person is a family or household member
16 of the defendant alleged to have committed or convicted of the
17 underlying offense and if the defendant, during the 10 years
18 preceding the underlying offense, was convicted three or more times
19 for the same or a similar offense.

20 (c) A person who, after the commission of an offense giving
21 rise to the forfeiture, acquired an ownership interest in property
22 subject to forfeiture and who claims to be an innocent owner must
23 show that the person has legal right, title, or interest in the
24 property seized under this chapter. If the person shows legal
25 right, title, or interest in the property, the state must prove by a
26 preponderance of the evidence that at the time the person acquired
27 the property, the person:

1 (1) had actual or constructive knowledge that the
2 property was subject to forfeiture; or

3 (2) did not purchase the property for valuable
4 consideration without notice of any defect in title.

5 (d) A person is presumed to have constructive knowledge that
6 the property was subject to forfeiture if:

7 (1) the person:

8 (A) acquired the property from the defendant
9 alleged to have committed or convicted of the underlying offense;
10 and

11 (B) is a family or household member of the
12 defendant; and

13 (2) the defendant, during the 10-year period preceding
14 the underlying offense, was convicted three or more times for the
15 same or a similar offense.

16 (e) If the state fails to meet its burden in Subsection (b)
17 or (c), the court shall find that the person is an innocent owner
18 and shall order the state to relinquish all claims of title to the
19 property.

20 Art. 59A.019. APPEAL. A party to forfeiture litigation may
21 appeal the court's decision regarding the seizure, forfeiture, and
22 distribution of property under this chapter.

23 Art. 59A.020. DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY AND PROCEEDS. (a) If
24 abandoned property held for evidentiary purposes is no longer
25 needed for that purpose, the court may order that the property be
26 delivered, not later than the 30th day after the date of the order,
27 to the county treasurer in the county in which the property was

1 abandoned.

2 (b) If contraband held for evidentiary purposes is no longer
3 needed for that purpose, the court may order that the contraband be
4 destroyed not later than the 30th day after the date of the order.

5 (c) If property is forfeited under this chapter, the court
6 may order that the property be delivered, not later than the 30th
7 day after the date of the order, to the county treasurer in the
8 county in which the property was seized.

9 (d) All abandoned property shall be delivered to the county
10 treasurer in the county in which the property was abandoned.

11 (e) A county treasurer who receives forfeited or abandoned
12 property under this article shall dispose of the property, other
13 than currency, at public auction. The auction proceeds and
14 forfeited currency first shall be used to pay all outstanding
15 recorded liens on the forfeited property, and then shall be used to
16 comply with any court order regarding the payment of expenses.

17 (f) On the court's own motion or on the motion of any party,
18 the court may order that a portion of the currency seized or of the
19 proceeds from the public auction of property be used to pay
20 reasonable expenses for the seizure, storage, and maintenance or
21 custody of any forfeited items, other than expenses for personnel.

22 (g) The county treasurer shall, after making payments
23 required by Subsections (e) and (f), deposit any remaining money
24 into the general fund of the county.

25 Art. 59A.021. PROHIBITION ON RETAINING PROPERTY; SALE
26 RESTRICTIONS. A law enforcement agency may not:

27 (1) retain forfeited or abandoned property for the

1 agency's use; or

2 (2) sell forfeited or abandoned property directly or
3 indirectly to:

4 (A) an employee of the agency;

5 (B) a person related to an employee by
6 consanguinity or affinity; or

7 (C) another law enforcement agency.

8 Art. 59A.022. REPORTING. (a) Not later than February 1 of
9 each year, each law enforcement agency shall report to the
10 department the following information regarding seizures by the
11 agency for which, during the preceding calendar year, a forfeiture
12 order was issued under this chapter or the property was otherwise
13 forfeited under applicable federal law:

14 (1) the total number of forfeitures of currency;

15 (2) the total number of forfeitures and the number of
16 items of property forfeited according to categories specified by
17 the department;

18 (3) the total market value of each category of
19 property forfeited;

20 (4) the total number of occurrences of each type of
21 offense underlying the forfeitures, including offenses involving
22 controlled substances and driving while intoxicated; and

23 (5) any other information required by the department.

24 (b) The department shall prescribe a standardized form and
25 provide for electronic submission of the report required under
26 Subsection (a).

27 (c) A law enforcement agency shall file with the department

1 separate reports for forfeitures completed under this chapter and
2 federal law. If a law enforcement agency did not engage in a
3 seizure that resulted in forfeiture during the reporting period,
4 the agency shall file a report indicating that fact.

5 (d) Not later than April 1 of each year, the department
6 shall:

7 (1) issue an aggregate report of all forfeitures in
8 the state; and

9 (2) make the reports submitted by law enforcement
10 agencies and the department's aggregate report available on the
11 department's Internet website.

12 Art. 59A.023. RETURN OF PROPERTY; DAMAGES; COSTS. (a) A
13 law enforcement agency that holds property under this chapter shall
14 return the property to the owner not later than the fifth day after
15 the date:

16 (1) the court finds that the owner had a bona fide
17 security interest;

18 (2) the court finds that the owner was an innocent
19 owner;

20 (3) the owner is acquitted of the offense that is the
21 basis of the forfeiture proceeding; or

22 (4) the criminal charge against the owner that is the
23 basis of the forfeiture proceeding is dismissed.

24 (b) The law enforcement agency that holds the property is
25 responsible for all damages, storage fees, and related costs
26 applicable to property returned under Subsection (a).

27 Art. 59A.024. EFFECT OF OVERTURNED CONVICTION; PAYMENT TO

1 DEFENDANT. (a) If a defendant's conviction for an offense
2 underlying a forfeiture under this chapter is reversed, set aside,
3 or vacated on appeal, the defendant is entitled to recover any money
4 deposited in the county's general fund under Article 59A.020(g) as
5 a result of the disposition of the defendant's forfeited property.
6 The county shall pay to the defendant the deposited amount on the
7 91st day after the applicable date as follows:

8 (1) the date the conviction is reversed, set aside, or
9 vacated, if the attorney representing the state does not file:

10 (A) an appeal of the ruling that reversed, set
11 aside, or vacated the conviction; or

12 (B) a written notice with the court of the
13 attorney's intention to proceed with a new trial;

14 (2) the date a ruling described by Subdivision (1)(A)
15 is affirmed on appeal; or

16 (3) the date the attorney representing the state files
17 the notice described by Subdivision (1)(B), if the new trial has not
18 commenced.

19 (b) For purposes of this chapter, the outcome of a new trial
20 shall be treated in the same manner as any other conviction.

21 Art. 59A.025. CIVIL FORFEITURE FOR CERTAIN PROPERTY. (a)
22 Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, property is
23 subject to forfeiture under this article, regardless of whether a
24 person has been convicted of an offense subject to forfeiture in
25 connection with the property, if:

26 (1) the property was:

27 (A) seized with probable cause that it was

1 involved in the commission of a felony; or

2 (B) obtained, directly or indirectly, through
3 the commission of a felony; and

4 (2) the property owner:

5 (A) has not claimed the property or asserted any
6 interest in the property; or

7 (B) is unavailable.

8 (b) For purposes of Subsection (a)(2)(B), a property owner
9 is unavailable if the owner is deceased or, after the owner is
10 indicted for the felony offense or after a warrant has been issued
11 for the arrest of the owner in connection with the offense, the
12 owner is:

13 (1) outside the state and unable to be extradited to
14 this state for prosecution; or

15 (2) unable to be located after reasonable efforts by
16 law enforcement authorities.

17 (c) The attorney representing the state may bring a
18 forfeiture proceeding under this article by filing a complaint in a
19 district court in the county in which the property was seized. The
20 complaint must state facts that show the property is subject to
21 forfeiture under Subsection (a).

22 (d) A forfeiture proceeding under this article shall
23 proceed to trial in the same manner as in other civil cases. The
24 state has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence
25 that property is subject to forfeiture under Subsection (a).

26 Art. 59A.026. TRANSFER OF FORFEITABLE PROPERTY TO FEDERAL
27 GOVERNMENT. A law enforcement agency or attorney representing the

1 state may not directly or indirectly transfer seized property to
2 any federal law enforcement authority or other federal agency
3 unless:

4 (1) the value of the seized property exceeds \$50,000;
5 and

6 (2) the attorney representing the state determines
7 that:

8 (A) the activity giving rise to the investigation
9 or seizure is interstate in nature and sufficiently complex to
10 justify the transfer; or

11 (B) the seized property may only be forfeited
12 under federal law.

13 SECTION 2. Section 72.051(a), Business & Commerce Code, is
14 amended to read as follows:

15 (a) In this section, "law enforcement agency" means an
16 agency of the state or an agency of a political subdivision of the
17 state authorized by law to employ peace officers [~~has the meaning~~
18 ~~assigned by Article 59.01, Code of Criminal Procedure~~].

19 SECTION 3. Section 140A.111, Civil Practice and Remedies
20 Code, is amended to read as follows:

21 Sec. 140A.111. PREVIOUSLY SEIZED ASSETS. Notwithstanding
22 another provision of this chapter, no remedies provided by this
23 chapter may be assessed against proceeds [~~contraband~~] or [~~other~~]
24 property over which a law enforcement agency has previously
25 asserted jurisdiction under Chapter 59A [~~59~~], Code of Criminal
26 Procedure, at the time a suit under this chapter was filed.

27 SECTION 4. Article 18.01(g), Code of Criminal Procedure, is

1 amended to read as follows:

2 (g) A search warrant may not be issued under Article
3 18.02(a)(12) unless the sworn affidavit required by Subsection (b)
4 of this article sets forth sufficient facts to establish probable
5 cause that a specific felony offense has been committed and that the
6 specifically described property or items that are to be searched
7 for or seized are subject to forfeiture under Chapter 59A
8 ~~[constitute contraband as defined in Article 59.01 of this code]~~
9 and are located at or on the particular person, place, or thing to
10 be searched.

11 SECTION 5. Article 18.02(a), Code of Criminal Procedure, is
12 amended to read as follows:

13 (a) A search warrant may be issued to search for and seize:
14 (1) property acquired by theft or in any other manner
15 which makes its acquisition a penal offense;
16 (2) property specially designed, made, or adapted for
17 or commonly used in the commission of an offense;
18 (3) arms and munitions kept or prepared for the
19 purposes of insurrection or riot;
20 (4) weapons prohibited by the Penal Code;
21 (5) gambling devices or equipment, altered gambling
22 equipment, or gambling paraphernalia;
23 (6) obscene materials kept or prepared for commercial
24 distribution or exhibition, subject to the additional rules set
25 forth by law;
26 (7) a drug, controlled substance, immediate
27 precursor, chemical precursor, or other controlled substance

1 property, including an apparatus or paraphernalia kept, prepared,
2 or manufactured in violation of the laws of this state;

3 (8) any property the possession of which is prohibited
4 by law;

5 (9) implements or instruments used in the commission
6 of a crime;

7 (10) property or items, except the personal writings
8 by the accused, constituting evidence of an offense or constituting
9 evidence tending to show that a particular person committed an
10 offense;

11 (11) persons;

12 (12) property [~~contraband~~] subject to forfeiture
13 under Chapter 59A [~~59 of this code~~];

14 (13) electronic customer data held in electronic
15 storage, including the contents of and records and other
16 information related to a wire communication or electronic
17 communication held in electronic storage; or

18 (14) a cellular telephone or other wireless
19 communications device, subject to Article [18.0215](#).

20 SECTION 6. Articles [18.19\(c\)](#), (d-1), and (e), Code of
21 Criminal Procedure, are amended to read as follows:

22 (c) If there is no prosecution or conviction for an offense
23 involving the weapon seized, the magistrate to whom the seizure was
24 reported shall, before the 61st day after the date the magistrate
25 determines that there will be no prosecution or conviction, notify
26 in writing the person found in possession of the weapon that the
27 person is entitled to the weapon upon written request to the

1 magistrate. The magistrate shall order the weapon returned to the
2 person found in possession before the 61st day after the date the
3 magistrate receives a request from the person. If the weapon is not
4 requested before the 61st day after the date of notification, the
5 magistrate shall, before the 121st day after the date of
6 notification, order the weapon destroyed, sold at public sale by
7 the law enforcement agency holding the weapon or by an auctioneer
8 licensed under Chapter 1802, Occupations Code, or forfeited to the
9 state for use by the law enforcement agency holding the weapon or by
10 a county forensic laboratory designated by the magistrate. If the
11 magistrate does not order the return, destruction, sale, or
12 forfeiture of the weapon within the applicable period prescribed by
13 this subsection, the law enforcement agency holding the weapon may
14 request an order of destruction, sale, or forfeiture of the weapon
15 from the magistrate. Only a firearms dealer licensed under 18
16 U.S.C. Section 923 may purchase a weapon at public sale under this
17 subsection. Proceeds from the sale of a seized weapon under this
18 subsection shall be transferred, after the deduction of court costs
19 and ~~[to which a district court clerk is entitled under Article~~
20 ~~59.05(f), followed by the deduction of]~~ auction costs, to the law
21 enforcement agency holding the weapon.

22 (d-1) Only a firearms dealer licensed under 18 U.S.C.
23 Section 923 may purchase a weapon at public sale under Subsection
24 (d). Proceeds from the sale of a seized weapon under Subsection (d)
25 shall be transferred, after the deduction of court costs and ~~[to~~
26 ~~which a district court clerk is entitled under Article 59.05(f),~~
27 ~~followed by the deduction of]~~ auction costs, to the law enforcement

1 agency holding the weapon.

2 (e) If the person found in possession of a weapon is
3 convicted of an offense involving the use of the weapon, before the
4 61st day after the date of conviction the court entering judgment of
5 conviction shall order destruction of the weapon, sale at public
6 sale by the law enforcement agency holding the weapon or by an
7 auctioneer licensed under Chapter 1802, Occupations Code, or
8 forfeiture to the state for use by the law enforcement agency
9 holding the weapon or by a county forensic laboratory designated by
10 the court. If the court entering judgment of conviction does not
11 order the destruction, sale, or forfeiture of the weapon within the
12 period prescribed by this subsection, the law enforcement agency
13 holding the weapon may request an order of destruction, sale, or
14 forfeiture of the weapon from a magistrate. Only a firearms dealer
15 licensed under 18 U.S.C. Section 923 may purchase a weapon at public
16 sale under this subsection. Proceeds from the sale of a seized
17 weapon under this subsection shall be transferred, after the
18 deduction of court costs and ~~[to which a district court clerk is~~
19 ~~entitled under Article 59.05(f), followed by the deduction of]~~
20 auction costs, to the law enforcement agency holding the weapon.

21 SECTION 7. Article 47.01a(b), Code of Criminal Procedure,
22 is amended to read as follows:

23 (b) If it is shown in a hearing that probable cause exists to
24 believe that the property was acquired by theft or by another manner
25 that makes its acquisition an offense and that the identity of the
26 actual owner of the property cannot be determined, the court shall
27 order the peace officer to:

1 (1) deliver the property to a government agency for
2 official purposes;

3 (2) deliver the property for disposition under Article
4 59A.020 to the county treasurer of the county in which the property
5 was seized [~~to a person authorized by Article 18.17 of this code to~~
6 ~~receive and dispose of the property~~]; or

7 (3) destroy the property.

8 SECTION 8. Article 47.06, Code of Criminal Procedure, is
9 amended to read as follows:

10 Art. 47.06. DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY [~~SOLD~~]. If the
11 property is not claimed before the end of the 30-day period
12 following [~~within 30 days from~~] the conviction of the person
13 accused of illegally acquiring the property [~~it~~], the property
14 shall be delivered for disposition under Article 59A.020 to the
15 county treasurer of the county in which the property was seized
16 [~~same procedure for its disposition as set out in Article 18.17 of~~
17 ~~this Code shall be followed~~].

18 SECTION 9. Article 47.07, Code of Criminal Procedure, is
19 amended to read as follows:

20 Art. 47.07. OWNER MAY RECOVER. The real owner of the
21 property disposed of [~~sold~~] under the provisions of Article 47.06
22 may file a claim with the commissioners court of the county to
23 recover any money attributable to the property and deposited in the
24 county's general fund under Article 59A.020(g) [~~such property under~~
25 ~~the same terms as prescribed in Subsection (c) of Article 18.17 of~~
26 ~~this Code~~]. A claim by the real owner must be filed not later than
27 the 30th day after the date of disposition. If the claim is allowed

1 by the commissioners court, the county treasurer shall pay the
2 owner the amount deposited. If the claim is denied by the
3 commissioners court or if the court fails to act on the claim before
4 the 91st day after the date the claim was filed, the claimant may
5 sue the county treasurer in a court of competent jurisdiction in the
6 county, and on sufficient proof of ownership, recover judgment
7 against the county for the amount deposited.

8 SECTION 10. Section 51.406(c), Education Code, is amended
9 to read as follows:

10 (c) A rule or policy of a state agency, including the Texas
11 Higher Education Coordinating Board, in effect on June 1, 2011,
12 that requires reporting by a university system or an institution of
13 higher education has no effect on or after September 1, 2013, unless
14 the rule or policy is affirmatively and formally readopted before
15 that date by formal administrative rule published in the Texas
16 Register and adopted in compliance with Chapter 2001, Government
17 Code. This subsection does not apply to:

18 (1) a rule or policy for which the authorizing statute
19 is listed in Subsection (b);

20 (2) a rule or policy for which the authorizing statute
21 is repealed on or before September 1, 2013, by legislation enacted
22 by the legislature that becomes law; or

23 (3) a report required under any of the following
24 provisions:

25 (A) [~~Article 59.06(g)(1), Code of Criminal~~
26 ~~Procedure,~~

27 [~~(B)~~] Section 51.005;

- 1 (B) [~~(C)~~] Section 51.0051;
- 2 (C) [~~(D)~~] Subchapter F-1 of this chapter;
- 3 (D) [~~(E)~~] Section 51.402;
- 4 (E) [~~(F)~~] Section 56.039;
- 5 (F) [~~(G)~~] Section 61.059;
- 6 (G) [~~(H)~~] Section 62.095(b);
- 7 (H) [~~(I)~~] Section 62.098;
- 8 (I) [~~(J)~~] Section 411.187(b), Government Code;
- 9 (J) [~~(K)~~] Subchapter C, Chapter 606, Government
- 10 Code;
- 11 (K) [~~(L)~~] Subchapter E, Chapter 815, Government
- 12 Code; or
- 13 (L) [~~(M)~~] Chapter 1551, Insurance Code.

14 SECTION 11. Section 96.641(j), Education Code, is amended
15 to read as follows:

16 (j) As part of the initial training and continuing education
17 for police chiefs required under this section, the institute shall
18 establish a program on asset forfeiture under Chapter 59A [~~59~~],
19 Code of Criminal Procedure. The program must include an
20 examination of the best practices for educating peace officers
21 about asset forfeiture and monitoring peace officers' compliance
22 with laws relating to asset forfeiture.

23 SECTION 12. Section 157.317(a), Family Code, is amended to
24 read as follows:

25 (a) A child support lien attaches to all real and personal
26 property not exempt under the Texas Constitution or other law,
27 including:

1 (1) an account in a financial institution;

2 (2) a retirement plan, including an individual
3 retirement account;

4 (3) the proceeds of an insurance policy, including the
5 proceeds from a life insurance policy or annuity contract and the
6 proceeds from the sale or assignment of life insurance or annuity
7 benefits, a claim for compensation, or a settlement or award for the
8 claim for compensation, due to or owned by the obligor;

9 (4) property seized and subject to forfeiture under
10 Chapter 59A [~~59~~], Code of Criminal Procedure; and

11 (5) the proceeds derived from the sale of oil or gas
12 production from an oil or gas well located in this state.

13 SECTION 13. Section 392.303, Finance Code, is amended by
14 amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (d) to read as
15 follows:

16 (a) In debt collection, a debt collector may not use unfair
17 or unconscionable means that employ the following practices:

18 (1) seeking or obtaining a written statement or
19 acknowledgment in any form that specifies that a consumer's
20 obligation is one incurred for necessities of life if the
21 obligation was not incurred for those necessities;

22 (2) collecting or attempting to collect interest or a
23 charge, fee, or expense incidental to the obligation unless the
24 interest or incidental charge, fee, or expense is expressly
25 authorized by the agreement creating the obligation or legally
26 chargeable to the consumer; or

27 (3) collecting or attempting to collect an obligation

1 under a check, draft, debit payment, or credit card payment, if:

2 (A) the check or draft was dishonored or the
3 debit payment or credit card payment was refused because the check
4 or draft was not drawn or the payment was not made by a person
5 authorized to use the applicable account;

6 (B) the debt collector has received written
7 notice from a person authorized to use the account that the check,
8 draft, or payment was unauthorized; and

9 (C) the person authorized to use the account has
10 filed a report concerning the unauthorized check, draft, or payment
11 with a law enforcement agency [~~as defined by Article 59.01, Code~~
12 ~~of Criminal Procedure,~~] and has provided the debt collector with a
13 copy of the report.

14 (d) In this section, "law enforcement agency" means an
15 agency of the state or an agency of a political subdivision of the
16 state authorized by law to employ peace officers.

17 SECTION 14. Section 45.193(d), Government Code, is amended
18 to read as follows:

19 (d) The county attorney has no power, duty, or privilege in
20 Grimes County relating to criminal matters, including asset
21 forfeitures under Chapter 59A [~~59~~], Code of Criminal Procedure,
22 appearance bond forfeitures under Chapter 17, Code of Criminal
23 Procedure, and habeas corpus related to criminal matters.

24 SECTION 15. Section 54.2205(a), Government Code, is amended
25 to read as follows:

26 (a) The judge of a district court or county court at law or a
27 justice of the peace may refer to a magistrate any case or matter

1 relating to a case for proceedings involving:

2 (1) a negotiated plea of guilty or no contest and
3 sentencing before the court;

4 (2) a bond forfeiture, remittitur, and related
5 proceedings;

6 (3) a pretrial motion;

7 (4) a writ of habeas corpus;

8 (5) an examining trial;

9 (6) an occupational driver's license;

10 (7) a petition for an order of expunction under
11 Chapter 55, Code of Criminal Procedure;

12 (8) a [an asset] forfeiture proceeding [hearing] as
13 provided by Chapter 59A [59], Code of Criminal Procedure;

14 (9) a petition for an order of nondisclosure of
15 criminal history record information or an order of nondisclosure of
16 criminal history record information that does not require a
17 petition provided by Subchapter E-1, Chapter 411;

18 (10) a motion to modify or revoke community
19 supervision or to proceed with an adjudication of guilt;

20 (11) setting conditions, modifying, revoking, and
21 surrendering of bonds, including surety bonds;

22 (12) specialty court proceedings;

23 (13) a waiver of extradition;

24 (14) selection of a jury; and

25 (15) any other matter the judge or justice of the peace
26 considers necessary and proper.

27 SECTION 16. Section 54.2405(a), Government Code, is amended

1 to read as follows:

2 (a) The judge of a district court or county court at law or a
3 justice of the peace may refer to a magistrate any case or matter
4 relating to a case for proceedings involving:

5 (1) a negotiated plea of guilty or no contest and
6 sentencing before the court;

7 (2) a bond forfeiture, remittitur, and related
8 proceedings;

9 (3) a pretrial motion;

10 (4) a writ of habeas corpus;

11 (5) an examining trial;

12 (6) an occupational driver's license;

13 (7) a petition for an order of expunction under
14 Chapter 55, Code of Criminal Procedure;

15 (8) a an asset forfeiture proceeding ~~[hearing]~~ as
16 provided by Chapter 59A ~~[59]~~, Code of Criminal Procedure;

17 (9) a petition for an order of nondisclosure of
18 criminal history record information or an order of nondisclosure of
19 criminal history record information that does not require a
20 petition provided by Subchapter E-1, Chapter 411;

21 (10) a motion to modify or revoke community
22 supervision or to proceed with an adjudication of guilt;

23 (11) setting conditions, modifying, revoking, and
24 surrendering of bonds, including surety bonds;

25 (12) specialty court proceedings;

26 (13) a waiver of extradition;

27 (14) selection of a jury; and

1 (15) any other matter the judge or justice of the peace
2 considers necessary and proper.

3 SECTION 17. Section 54.656(a), Government Code, is amended
4 to read as follows:

5 (a) A judge may refer to a magistrate any criminal case or
6 matter relating to a criminal case for proceedings involving:

7 (1) a negotiated plea of guilty or no contest and
8 sentencing before the court;

9 (2) a bond forfeiture, remittitur, and related
10 proceedings;

11 (3) a pretrial motion;

12 (4) a writ of habeas corpus;

13 (5) an examining trial;

14 (6) an occupational driver's license;

15 (7) a petition for an order of expunction under
16 Chapter 55, Code of Criminal Procedure;

17 (8) a an asset forfeiture proceeding ~~[hearing]~~ as
18 provided by Chapter 59A ~~[59]~~, Code of Criminal Procedure;

19 (9) a petition for an order of nondisclosure of
20 criminal history record information or an order of nondisclosure of
21 criminal history record information that does not require a
22 petition provided by Subchapter E-1, Chapter 411;

23 (10) a motion to modify or revoke community
24 supervision or to proceed with an adjudication of guilt;

25 (11) setting conditions, modifying, revoking, and
26 surrendering of bonds, including surety bonds;

27 (12) specialty court proceedings;

1 (13) a waiver of extradition; and

2 (14) any other matter the judge considers necessary
3 and proper.

4 SECTION 18. Section 2007.003(b), Government Code, is
5 amended to read as follows:

6 (b) This chapter does not apply to the following
7 governmental actions:

8 (1) an action by a municipality except as provided by
9 Subsection (a)(3);

10 (2) a lawful forfeiture or seizure of property under
11 Chapter 59A [~~contraband as defined by Article 59.01~~], Code of
12 Criminal Procedure;

13 (3) a lawful seizure of property as evidence of a crime
14 or violation of law;

15 (4) an action, including an action of a political
16 subdivision, that is reasonably taken to fulfill an obligation
17 mandated by federal law or an action of a political subdivision that
18 is reasonably taken to fulfill an obligation mandated by state law;

19 (5) the discontinuance or modification of a program or
20 regulation that provides a unilateral expectation that does not
21 rise to the level of a recognized interest in private real property;

22 (6) an action taken to prohibit or restrict a
23 condition or use of private real property if the governmental
24 entity proves that the condition or use constitutes a public or
25 private nuisance as defined by background principles of nuisance
26 and property law of this state;

27 (7) an action taken out of a reasonable good faith

1 belief that the action is necessary to prevent a grave and immediate
2 threat to life or property;

3 (8) a formal exercise of the power of eminent domain;

4 (9) an action taken under a state mandate to prevent
5 waste of oil and gas, protect correlative rights of owners of
6 interests in oil or gas, or prevent pollution related to oil and gas
7 activities;

8 (10) a rule or proclamation adopted for the purpose of
9 regulating water safety, hunting, fishing, or control of
10 nonindigenous or exotic aquatic resources;

11 (11) an action taken by a political subdivision:

12 (A) to regulate construction in an area
13 designated under law as a floodplain;

14 (B) to regulate on-site sewage facilities;

15 (C) under the political subdivision's
16 [~~subdivisions's~~] statutory authority to prevent waste or protect
17 rights of owners of interest in groundwater; or

18 (D) to prevent subsidence;

19 (12) the appraisal of property for purposes of ad
20 valorem taxation;

21 (13) an action that:

22 (A) is taken in response to a real and
23 substantial threat to public health and safety;

24 (B) is designed to significantly advance the
25 health and safety purpose; and

26 (C) does not impose a greater burden than is
27 necessary to achieve the health and safety purpose; or

1 (14) an action or rulemaking undertaken by the Public
2 Utility Commission of Texas to order or require the location or
3 placement of telecommunications equipment owned by another party on
4 the premises of a certificated local exchange company.

5 SECTION 19. Section 481.159(a), Health and Safety Code, is
6 amended to read as follows:

7 (a) If a district court orders the forfeiture of a
8 controlled substance property or plant under the [~~Chapter 59,~~] Code
9 of Criminal Procedure[~~7~~] or under this code, the court shall also
10 order a law enforcement agency to:

11 (1) retain the property or plant for its official
12 purposes, including use in the investigation of offenses under this
13 code;

14 (2) deliver the property or plant to a government
15 agency for official purposes;

16 (3) deliver the property or plant to a person
17 authorized by the court to receive it;

18 (4) deliver the property or plant to a person
19 authorized by the director to receive it; or

20 (5) destroy the property or plant that is not
21 otherwise disposed of in the manner prescribed by this subchapter.

22 SECTION 20. Section 481.160(a), Health and Safety Code, is
23 amended to read as follows:

24 (a) If a controlled substance property or plant is forfeited
25 under this code or under the [~~Chapter 59,~~] Code of Criminal
26 Procedure, the law enforcement agency that seized the property or
27 plant or to which the property or plant is forfeited may summarily

1 destroy the property or plant without a court order before the
2 disposition of a case arising out of the forfeiture if the agency
3 ensures that:

4 (1) at least five random and representative samples
5 are taken from the total amount of the property or plant and a
6 sufficient quantity is preserved to provide for discovery by
7 parties entitled to discovery;

8 (2) photographs are taken that reasonably depict the
9 total amount of the property or plant; and

10 (3) the gross weight or liquid measure of the property
11 or plant is determined, either by actually weighing or measuring
12 the property or plant or by estimating its weight or measurement
13 after making dimensional measurements of the total amount seized.

14 SECTION 21. Section 573.0001(2), Health and Safety Code, is
15 amended to read as follows:

16 (2) "Law enforcement agency" means an agency of the
17 state or an agency of a political subdivision of the state
18 authorized by law to employ peace officers [~~has the meaning~~
19 ~~assigned by Article 59.01, Code of Criminal Procedure~~].

20 SECTION 22. Section 113.008(g), Local Government Code, is
21 amended to read as follows:

22 (g) Subsections (b-1) and (f)(2) do not apply to a special
23 fund administered by an attorney representing the state under
24 Chapter 18 or [7] 47, [~~or 59,~~] Code of Criminal Procedure.

25 SECTION 23. Section 1701.253(g), Occupations Code, is
26 amended to read as follows:

27 (g) As part of the minimum curriculum requirements, the

1 commission shall establish a statewide comprehensive education and
2 training program on criminal asset forfeiture under Chapter 59A
3 [59], Code of Criminal Procedure, for officers licensed under this
4 chapter. An officer shall complete a program established under
5 this subsection not later than the second anniversary of the date
6 the officer is licensed under this chapter or the date the officer
7 applies for an intermediate proficiency certificate, whichever
8 date is earlier.

9 SECTION 24. Section 37.08(b), Penal Code, is amended to
10 read as follows:

11 (b) In this section, "law enforcement agency" means an
12 agency of the state or an agency of a political subdivision of the
13 state authorized by law to employ peace officers [~~has the meaning~~
14 ~~assigned by Article 59.01, Code of Criminal Procedure~~].

15 SECTION 25. Section 38.152(c)(3), Penal Code, is amended to
16 read as follows:

17 (3) "Law enforcement agency" means an agency of the
18 state or an agency of a political subdivision of the state
19 authorized by law to employ peace officers [~~has the meaning~~
20 ~~assigned by Article 59.01, Code of Criminal Procedure~~].

21 SECTION 26. The following provisions are repealed:

22 (1) Section 140A.102(h), Civil Practice and Remedies
23 Code;

24 (2) Article 18.17, Code of Criminal Procedure;

25 (3) Chapter 59, Code of Criminal Procedure;

26 (4) Sections 24.377(c), 54.2205(b), 54.2405(b), and
27 54.656(b), Government Code;

1 (5) Section 365.012(i), Health and Safety Code; and

2 (6) Sections 12.101(1) and (2), 12.1106, 61.0221, and
3 62.017, Parks and Wildlife Code.

4 SECTION 27. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) of
5 this section, on the effective date of this Act, any property in the
6 possession of a law enforcement agency, game warden, or attorney
7 representing the state, that was seized under Chapter 59, Code of
8 Criminal Procedure, or Section 12.1106, 61.0221, or 62.017, Parks
9 and Wildlife Code, and that has not been ordered forfeited to the
10 state by a court, must be returned to the person from whom the
11 property was seized.

12 (b) Property that is evidence in the investigation or
13 prosecution of a criminal offense is not required to be returned
14 under Subsection (a) of this section until the disposition of all
15 charges relating to the offense.

16 SECTION 28. The repeal by this Act of Article 18.17, Code of
17 Criminal Procedure, does not apply to abandoned or unclaimed
18 property seized before the effective date of this Act, and the
19 former Article 18.17 is continued in effect for the purposes of the
20 disposition of property described by this section.

21 SECTION 29. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.