

By: Lozano

H.B. No. 4608

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to the creation of an additional county court at law in San
3 Patricio County and the operation of the county courts at law in
4 that county.

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

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

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

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

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

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

17 (a) In addition to the jurisdiction provided by Section
18 25.0003 and other law, a county court at law in San Patricio County
19 has concurrent jurisdiction with the district court except that a
20 county court at law does not have jurisdiction of:

21 (1) felony criminal matters; and

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

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

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

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

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

1 [~~both~~] courts.

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

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