

By: Guillen

H.B. No. 169

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to the establishment of a grant program to provide
3 financial assistance to qualified sheriff's departments in certain
4 rural counties; making an appropriation.

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

6 ARTICLE 1. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS

7 SECTION 1.01. The legislature finds that:

8 (1) the legislature acting with the governor has the
9 solemn duty to protect the citizens of this state;

10 (2) many rural counties of this state are experiencing
11 rapid population growth due to the influx of individuals from
12 metropolitan areas and from outside the state;

13 (3) many of these individuals settle in developments
14 like Colony Ridge in Liberty County, leading to population growth
15 and population density previously unseen in these rural counties;
16 and

17 (4) the increases in population and density strain the
18 resources of these rural counties to provide adequate public
19 services to their citizens, particularly when it comes to providing
20 law enforcement in unincorporated areas of the county.

21 ARTICLE 2. RURAL SHERIFF'S DEPUTY SHORTAGE RELIEF

22 SECTION 2.01. Subchapter Z, Chapter 130, Local Government
23 Code, is amended by adding Section 130.914 to read as follows:

24 Sec. 130.914. RURAL SHERIFF'S DEPUTY SHORTAGE RELIEF GRANT

1 PROGRAM. (a) In this section:

2 (1) "Grant" means a grant authorized to be awarded by
3 the comptroller under the rural sheriff's deputy shortage relief
4 grant program established by this section.

5 (2) "Qualified county" means a county:

6 (A) with a population of 300,000 or less; and

7 (B) for which on January 1, 2024, the ratio of the
8 number of deputy sheriffs who make motor vehicle stops in the
9 routine performance of the deputies' duties to the number of
10 residents of the unincorporated areas of the county on that date, as
11 determined by population estimates provided by the state
12 demographer under Section 468.004, Government Code, is less than 15
13 deputies to each 10,000 residents.

14 (3) "Qualified deputy position" means a deputy sheriff
15 position in a qualified county that:

16 (A) is held or will be held by a deputy sheriff
17 who makes motor vehicle stops in the routine performance of the
18 deputy's duties;

19 (B) is in addition to a deputy sheriff position
20 held in the county on January 1, 2024; and

21 (C) when aggregated with each other qualified
22 deputy position would result in a number of deputy sheriffs who
23 perform the duty described by Paragraph (A) equal to the number of
24 deputies needed to meet the ratio of 15 deputies to each 10,000
25 residents, calculated as described by Subdivision (2)(B) as of
26 January 1, 2024.

27 (b) The comptroller shall establish and administer the

1 rural sheriff's deputy shortage relief grant program to support
2 the state purpose of ensuring professional law enforcement
3 throughout the state by providing financial assistance to
4 sheriff's departments in qualified counties.

5 (c) Not later than the 30th day after the first day of a
6 qualified county's fiscal year, the county may submit an
7 application for a grant to the comptroller. The county must
8 indicate in the application the number of qualified deputy
9 positions the county is requesting for inclusion in the
10 determination of the amount of the grant for that fiscal year and
11 the number for which the county is requesting additional funds
12 described by Subsection (d)(2). A county may submit only one
13 application each fiscal year.

14 (d) The comptroller shall award a grant to a qualified
15 county that applies for the grant using money appropriated to the
16 comptroller for that purpose. The grant must be in the following
17 amount:

18 (1) \$50,000 for each qualified deputy position
19 indicated by the county in the application for that fiscal year; and

20 (2) an additional \$50,000 for each qualified deputy
21 position indicated in the application for that fiscal year, unless
22 the county has received a grant under this subdivision for that
23 position in a preceding fiscal year.

24 (e) A county that is awarded a grant shall use or authorize
25 the use of the grant money only:

26 (1) to provide to each deputy sheriff who fills a
27 qualified deputy position a minimum annual salary of at least

1 \$45,000; and

2 (2) subject to Subsection (f), to purchase vehicles,
3 firearms, and safety equipment for the use of a deputy sheriff who
4 fills a qualified deputy position.

5 (f) A county that is awarded a grant may not use or authorize
6 the use of the grant money for a purpose other than prescribed by
7 Subsection (e)(1) until that requirement is satisfied.

8 (g) A county that is awarded a grant may not reduce the
9 sheriff's department budget for the county's fiscal year following
10 the fiscal year in which the comptroller awards the grant.

11 (h) Subject to Subsections (h-1) and (i), a county that
12 received a grant under this subdivision in a preceding fiscal year
13 is eligible for an award if it maintains the ratio of the number of
14 deputy sheriffs who make motor vehicle stops in the routine
15 performance of the deputies' duties to the number of residents of
16 the unincorporated areas of the county for the calendar year the
17 application is made, as determined by population estimates provided
18 by the state demographer under Section 468.004, Government Code,
19 equal to or above 15 deputies to each 10,000 residents.

20 (h-1) Subsection (h) only applies to a county that received
21 a grant under this subdivision in a preceding fiscal year and its
22 ratio of the number of deputy sheriffs who make motor vehicle stops
23 in the routine performance of the deputies' duties to the number of
24 residents of the unincorporated areas of the county for that
25 preceding fiscal year was, as determined by population estimates
26 provided by the state demographer under Section 468.004, Government
27 Code, equal to or above 15 deputies to each 10,000 residents.

1 SECTION 3.01. APPROPRIATION TO THE COMPTROLLER OF PUBLIC
2 ACCOUNTS. The amount of \$100,000,000 is appropriated from the
3 general revenue fund to the Fiscal Programs within the Comptroller
4 of Public Accounts for use during the two-year period beginning on
5 the effective date of this Act for the establishment of a grant
6 program to provide financial assistance to qualified sheriff's
7 departments in certain rural counties.

8 ARTICLE 4. TRANSITIONS AND EFFECTIVE DATE

9 SECTION 4.01. A qualified county, as defined by Section
10 130.914, Local Government Code, as added by this Act, may not apply
11 for a grant under that section before March 1, 2024.

12 SECTION 4.02. Not later than March 1, 2024, the comptroller
13 of public accounts shall comply with the requirements of Section
14 130.914, Local Government Code, as added by this Act.

15 SECTION 4.03. This Act takes effect immediately if it
16 receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each
17 house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution.
18 If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate
19 effect, this Act takes effect on the 91st day after the last day of
20 the legislative session.