

By: Guillen

H.B. No. 18

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
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) "Deputy-to-resident ratio" means the ratio of the
3 number of deputy sheriffs to the number of residents of the
4 unincorporated areas of the county, as determined by the population
5 estimates provided by the state demographer under Section 468.004,
6 Government Code.

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

10 (3) "Qualified county" means a county:

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

12 (B) for which on January 1, 2024, the
13 deputy-to-resident ratio is less than 15 to 10,000.

14 (4) "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 deputy-to-resident ratio of 15 to
23 10,000, determined as of January 1, 2024.

24 (b) The comptroller shall establish and administer the
25 rural sheriff's deputy shortage relief grant program to support the
26 state purpose of ensuring professional law enforcement throughout
27 the state by providing financial assistance to sheriff's

1 departments in qualified counties.

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

11 (d) Subject to Subsections (e), (f), and (j), the
12 comptroller shall award a grant to a qualified county that applies
13 for the grant using money appropriated to the comptroller for that
14 purpose. The grant must be in the following amount:

15 (1) \$50,000 for each qualified deputy position
16 indicated by the county in the application for that fiscal year; and

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

21 (e) This subsection applies only to a fiscal year of a
22 qualified county that meets the deputy-to-resident ratio described
23 by Subsection (a)(4)(C) during a calendar year that begins on or
24 after January 1, 2024, but before the calendar year in which the
25 fiscal year begins. A qualified county is not eligible to receive a
26 grant under this section for a fiscal year unless the county adopts
27 a budget for the fiscal year that provides for the employment of a

1 number of deputy sheriffs necessary to meet the deputy-to-resident
2 ratio of at least 15 to 10,000, determined as of January 1 of the
3 calendar year in which the fiscal year begins.

4 (f) This subsection applies only to a fiscal year of a
5 qualified county for which the number of qualified deputy positions
6 the county is otherwise entitled to receive a grant for under this
7 section is greater than the number of qualified deputy positions
8 the county would be entitled to receive a grant for under this
9 section if the deputy-to-resident ratio described by Subsection
10 (a)(4)(C) is determined as of January 1 of the calendar year in
11 which the fiscal year begins instead of January 1, 2024. A qualified
12 county is entitled to receive a grant under this section only for
13 the number of qualified deputy positions the county would be
14 entitled to receive a grant for if the deputy-to-resident ratio
15 described by Subsection (a)(4)(C) is determined as of January 1 of
16 the calendar year in which the fiscal year begins instead of January
17 1, 2024.

18 (g) A county that is awarded a grant shall use or authorize
19 the use of the grant money only:

20 (1) to provide to each deputy sheriff who fills a
21 qualified deputy position a minimum annual salary of at least
22 \$45,000; and

23 (2) subject to Subsection (h), to purchase vehicles,
24 firearms, and safety equipment for the use of a deputy sheriff who
25 fills a qualified deputy position.

26 (h) A county that is awarded a grant may not use or authorize
27 the use of the grant money for a purpose other than prescribed by

1 Subsection (g)(1) until that requirement is satisfied.

2 (i) A county that is awarded a grant may not reduce the
3 sheriff's department budget for the county's fiscal year following
4 the fiscal year in which the comptroller awards the grant.

5 (k) The total amount that may be used to provide grants
6 under Subsection (d) may not exceed \$50 million per fiscal year. If
7 the total amount of grants to which the qualified counties are
8 entitled under Subsection (d) for a fiscal year exceeds the amount
9 permitted under this subsection, the comptroller shall
10 proportionately reduce each qualified county's grant award under
11 this section by reducing the number of awards under Subsection
12 (d)(1) and (d)(2).

13 (k) The comptroller shall adopt rules necessary to
14 implement this section, including rules that establish:

15 (1) a standardized application process, including the
16 form to be used to apply for a grant and the manner of submitting the
17 form;

18 (2) deadlines for:

19 (A) applying for the grant;

20 (B) disbursement of grant money; and

21 (C) spending grant money; and

22 (3) procedures for:

23 (A) monitoring the disbursement of grant money to
24 ensure compliance with this section; and

25 (B) the return of grant money that was not used by
26 a county for a purpose authorized by this section.

27 ARTICLE 3. APPROPRIATION

1 SECTION 3.01. On the effective date of this Act, the amount
2 of \$100,000,000 is appropriated from the general revenue fund to
3 the Fiscal Programs-Comptroller of Public Accounts for use during
4 the two-year period beginning on the effective date of this Act for
5 a use or purpose described by Section 130.914, Local Government
6 Code, as added by this Act.

7 ARTICLE 4. TRANSITIONS AND EFFECTIVE DATE

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

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

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