

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 616
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Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Section 51.605, Government Code, sets out certain initial and annual continuing education requirements for county and district clerks. The law does not require any particular topics to be covered during the initial or continuing education courses. One of the duties of a district clerk is the proper selection of juries. In 2021, allegations were raised that the Brazoria County district clerk did not properly select certain petit juries. During the course of the investigation into these allegations, a concern was raised whether the district clerk was properly trained on the selection of juries either during her initial training or during her annual continuing education. It is paramount that district clerks are properly trained on the selection of juries to ensure our justice system is fair and impartial. C.S.H.B. 616 seeks to address any potential gap in training by requiring at least one hour of the initial and continuing education required of district clerks to cover the proper selection of petit and grand juries.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 616 amends the Government Code to require at least one hour of instruction on impaneling petit and grand juries to be completed as part of the 20 hours of required initial instruction and continuing education for a district clerk.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 616 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The introduced established instruction requirements for a county clerk, district clerk, or county and district clerk but the substitute establishes substantially similar requirements for only a district clerk.