

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1184
By: Rose
Homeland Security & Public Safety
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Recidivism is an important performance measure for justice agencies and is critical in evaluating program outcomes. At the federal level, criminal history data is stored in the National Crime Information Center, operated by the Department of Homeland Security, and in Texas this information is stored in the Texas Crime Information Center (TCIC), which is operated by the Department of Public Safety. Currently, only research projects that are funded using state funds are allowed to access these databases. Many agencies fund their research through grants and municipal or county funds and cannot pull bulk data from these databases. This is an especially big problem for specialty courts. Fundamental to the effective operation of these courts is monitoring and evaluating outcomes. Without the ability to pull these databases, specialty courts must go through costly and labor-intensive research running individual criminal histories. H.B. 1184 aims to allow researchers funded by any government funds, not just state funds, or by criminal justice grants to access these databases. Allowing these bulk data pulls will drastically cut back on the hours necessary to complete these projects and thus will be a more efficient use of government funds.

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

H.B. 1184 amends the Government Code to revise the requisite conditions that trigger the requirement for the Department of Public Safety to grant access to criminal history record information for use in certain research or statistical projects as follows:

- limits the subject matter of the projects for which a person may receive access to the information to projects related to the administration of criminal justice; and
- expands the qualifying sources of funding for the project from funding in whole or in part by state funds to funding in whole or in part by a criminal justice grant or by government funds.

The bill specifies that research organizations or public or private institutions of higher education are considered persons for purposes of receiving access to the information for use in the project.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.