

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.H.B. 2779
By: Leach (Huffman)
Finance
5/18/2023
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

One of the keys to an effective judiciary is exceptional judges and excellent support staff. According to a December 2022 report by the Judicial Compensation Commission, Texas district court judges ranked 41st in compensation compared to other states. Intermediate appellate-level judges ranked 23rd and the highest appellate courts, which include the Supreme Court of Texas and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, ranked 29th. C.S.H.B. 2779 increases the salary for certain judges.

C.S.H.B. 2779 amends current law relating to the compensation and retirement benefits of certain elected state officials.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 659.012(b), Government Code, as follows:

(b) Provides that a judge or justice for whom the amount of a state base salary is prescribed by Subsection (a) (relating to entitling certain judges and justices to certain annual base salaries) is entitled to an annual salary from the state in the amount equal to:

(1)-(2) makes nonsubstantive changes to these subdivisions; and

(3) 130 percent of the state base salary paid in accordance with Subsection (a) for the judge's or justice's position, beginning with the pay period that begins after the judge or justice accrues 12 years of:

(A) contributing service credit in the Judicial Retirement System of Texas Plan One or the Judicial Retirement System of Texas Plan Two;

(B) service as a judge of a statutory county court, multicounty statutory county court, or statutory probate court; or

(C) combined contributing service credit and service as provided by Paragraphs (A) and (B).

SECTION 2. Amends Section 659.0445(b), Government Code, as follows:

(b) Provides that the monthly amount of longevity pay under Section 659.0445 (Longevity Pay for State Judges and Justices) to which a judge or justice described by Subsection (a) (relating to entitling certain judges or justices to longevity pay) is entitled:

(1) makes no changes to this subdivision; and

(2) becomes payable beginning with the month following the month in which the judge or justice completes 14 years, rather than 12 years, of service for which credit is established in the applicable retirement system.

SECTION 3. Amends Sections 814.103(a) and (a-1), Government Code, as follows:

(a) Provides that the standard service retirement annuity for service credited in the elected class of membership, except as provided by certain subsections, is an amount equal to the number of years of service credit in that class, times 2.3 percent of the state base salary, excluding longevity pay payable under Section 659.0445, rather than excluding longevity pay payable under Section 659.0445 and as adjusted from time to time, being paid to a district judge as set by the General Appropriations Act in accordance with Section 659.012(a).

(a-1) Makes a conforming change to this subsection.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 834.102(a), Government Code, as follows:

(a) Provides that the base service retirement annuity for a person whose effective date of retirement is:

(1) before September 1, 2019, is an amount equal to 50 percent of the state base salary, rather than an amount equal to 50 percent of the state base salary as adjusted from time to time, being paid in accordance with Section 659.012(a) to a judge of a court of the same classification as the court on which the retiree last served before retirement; or

(2) makes a conforming change to this subdivision.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2023.