

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 4593
By: Vasut
Criminal Jurisprudence
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

One of the many duties of a justice of the peace is to conduct death inquests. Texas law currently requires justices of the peace to conduct death inquests in person, regardless of the circumstances. This requirement can be time-consuming and tie up law enforcement resources and is particularly unnecessary when an individual dies of natural causes. C.S.H.B. 4593 seeks to address this issue by authorizing a justice of the peace to conduct death inquests by videoconference with an individual designated by the justice of the peace who is present with the body of the decedent in certain circumstances.

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. 4593 amends the Code of Criminal Procedure to authorize a justice of the peace to conduct an inquest into a death by videoconference with an individual who is designated by the justice of the peace and is present with the body for a death that was not attended by a physician or was attended by a physician who is unable to certify the cause of death and who requests the justice of the peace to conduct an inquest.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 4593 differs from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways by conforming to certain bill drafting conventions.