

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 888
By: Perry
County Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Local leaders of Cottle County have expressed concerns over a portion of the fire code after the historic courthouse in Paducah was anonymously flagged for investigation by the state fire marshal's office and found to be in violation of certain fire escape requirements. When originally constructed in 1930, the courthouse plans intentionally used materials such as marble and concrete to limit fire hazard risk. Additionally, the current required use of the building leaves the upper floors vacant, further minimizing the risk to any occupants within. Small counties, such as Cottle County, should have the ability to maintain the safety and integrity of their courthouses in a way that accommodates each individual use case and insurance requirements. Small counties simply do not have the tax base or funds available to retrofit fire escapes into historically significant designs to fit an ever-evolving fire code. S.B. 888 seeks to address this issue by exempting certain county courthouses from statutory provisions that require and regulate fire escapes.

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

S.B. 888 amends the Health and Safety Code to exempt a county courthouse that was constructed before September 1, 1989, and is located in a county with a population of less than 50,000 from statutory provisions that require and regulate fire escapes.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2023.