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By:  Zaffirini S.B. No. 725

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to procedures for identifying defendants suspected of having a mental illness or intellectual disability.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Article 16.22(a)(1), Code of Criminal Procedure, is amended to read as follows:

(a)(1)  Not later than 12 hours after the sheriff or municipal jailer having custody of a defendant [~~for an offense punishable as a Class B misdemeanor or any higher category of offense~~] receives credible information that may establish reasonable cause to believe that the defendant has a mental illness or is a person with an intellectual disability, the sheriff or municipal jailer shall provide written or electronic notice to the magistrate. The notice must include any information related to the sheriff's or municipal jailer's determination, such as information regarding the defendant's behavior immediately before, during, and after the defendant's arrest and, if applicable, the results of any previous assessment of the defendant. On a determination that there is reasonable cause to believe that the defendant has a mental illness or is a person with an intellectual disability, the magistrate, except as provided by Subdivision (2), shall order the service provider that contracts with the jail to provide mental health or intellectual and developmental disability services, the local mental health authority, the local intellectual and developmental disability authority, or another qualified mental health or intellectual and developmental disability expert to:

(A)  interview the defendant if the defendant has not previously been interviewed by a qualified mental health or intellectual and developmental disability expert on or after the date the defendant was arrested for the offense for which the defendant is in custody and otherwise collect information regarding whether the defendant has a mental illness as defined by Section 571.003, Health and Safety Code, or is a person with an intellectual disability as defined by Section 591.003, Health and Safety Code, including, if applicable, information obtained from any previous assessment of the defendant and information regarding any previously recommended treatment or service; and

(B)  provide to the magistrate a written report of an interview described by Paragraph (A) and the other information collected under that paragraph on the form approved by the Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments under Section 614.0032(c), Health and Safety Code.

SECTION 2.  Articles 16.22(b-2) and (d), Code of Criminal Procedure, are amended to read as follows:

(b-2)  The written report must include a description of the procedures used in the interview and collection of other information under Subsection (a)(1)(A) and the applicable expert's observations and findings pertaining to:

(1)  whether the defendant is a person who has a mental illness or is a person with an intellectual disability;

(2)  subject to Article 46B.022, whether there is clinical evidence to support a belief that the defendant may be incompetent to stand trial and should undergo a complete competency examination under Subchapter B, Chapter 46B; and

(3)  any appropriate or recommended treatment or service.

(d)  This article does not prevent the applicable court from, before, during, or after the interview and collection of other information regarding the defendant as described by this article:

(1)  releasing a defendant who has a mental illness or is a person with an intellectual disability from custody on personal or surety bond, including imposing as a condition of release that the defendant submit to an examination or other assessment; or

(2)  subject to Article 46B.002, ordering an examination regarding the defendant's competency to stand trial.

SECTION 3.  The change in law made by this Act applies only to a person who is arrested on or after the effective date of this Act. A person arrested before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date the person was arrested, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 4.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.