

By: Jones of Harris

H.B. No. 1698

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to prospective jurors summoned for jury service in the justice courts of a county with a population of one million or more.

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

SECTION 1. Section 62.016(e), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(e) Subject to Section 62.413, when ~~When~~ impaneled, the prospective jurors constitute a general jury panel for service as jurors in all justice, county, and district courts in the county and shall be used interchangeably in all of those courts. A county may summon jurors chosen for service under this section to the justice court in the manner prescribed by Section 62.412.

SECTION 2. Section 62.017(e), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(e) When impaneled, the prospective jurors constitute a general jury panel for service as jurors in both district courts in the county and shall be used interchangeably in those courts. With the approval of both district judges, and subject to Section 62.413, prospective jurors impaneled under this section may constitute a general jury panel for service as jurors in the justice courts, the county court, and all statutory county courts in the county, in addition to service as jurors in both district courts, and in that event, shall be used interchangeably in all district, justice, and county courts.

SECTION 3. Section 62.0175(e), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(e) When impaneled, the prospective jurors constitute a general panel for service as jurors in both courts and shall be used interchangeably in those courts. With the approval of both judges, prospective jurors impaneled under this section may constitute a general panel for service as jurors in the justice courts, the county court, and all other county courts at law in the county, in addition to service as jurors in the district court and the county court at law that has concurrent jurisdiction. In that event, and subject to Section 62.413, the general panel shall be used interchangeably in the district court, county court, county courts at law, and justice courts.

SECTION 4. Section 62.412(a), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) Subject to Section 62.413, a ~~[A]~~ county that uses interchangeable juries under Section 62.016 may summon a prospective juror to report directly to a justice court in the precinct in which that person resides.

SECTION 5. Subchapter E, Chapter 62, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 62.413 to read as follows:

Sec. 62.413. SUMMONING PROSPECTIVE JURORS DIRECTLY TO JUSTICE COURT IN CERTAIN COUNTIES. (a) In a county with a population of one million or more, the county shall summon a prospective juror for jury service in a justice court of that county to report directly to the justice court in the precinct in which that person resides.

1 (b) The justice of the peace of the justice court to which
2 prospective jurors are summoned for jury service under this section
3 shall hear the excuses of the prospective jurors and swear them in
4 for jury service.

5 (c) A justice of the peace may command the sheriff or
6 constable to immediately summon additional persons for jury service
7 in the justice court if the number of qualified jurors is less than
8 the number necessary for the justice to conduct the court's
9 proceedings.

10 SECTION 6. Section 62.412(a-1), Government Code, is
11 repealed.

12 SECTION 7. Section 62.413, Government Code, as added by
13 this Act, applies only to prospective jurors summoned to jury
14 service under that section on or after the effective date of this
15 Act. Prospective jurors summoned to jury service before the
16 effective date of this Act are governed by the law in effect at the
17 time the jurors were summoned, and the former law is continued in
18 effect for that purpose.

19 SECTION 8. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.