

By: Zaffirini

S.B. No. 24

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the amount in controversy in the civil jurisdiction of statutory county courts.

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

SECTION 1. Section 22.004(h-1), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(h-1) In addition to the rules adopted under Subsection (h), the supreme court shall adopt rules to promote the prompt, efficient, and cost-effective resolution of civil actions filed in county courts at law in which the amount in controversy does not exceed \$325,000 [~~\$250,000~~]. The rules shall balance the need for lowering discovery costs in these actions against the complexity of and discovery needs in these actions. The supreme court may not adopt rules under this subsection that conflict with other statutory law.

SECTION 2. Section 25.0003(c), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c) In addition to other jurisdiction provided by law, a statutory county court exercising civil jurisdiction concurrent with the constitutional jurisdiction of the county court has concurrent jurisdiction with the district court in:

(1) civil cases in which the matter in controversy exceeds \$500 but does not exceed \$325,000 [~~\$250,000~~], excluding interest, statutory or punitive damages and penalties, and

1 attorney's fees and costs, as alleged on the face of the petition;  
2 and

3 (2) appeals of final rulings and decisions of the  
4 division of workers' compensation of the Texas Department of  
5 Insurance regarding workers' compensation claims, regardless of  
6 the amount in controversy.

7 SECTION 3. Section 25.0007(c), Government Code, is amended  
8 to read as follows:

9 (c) In a civil case pending in a statutory county court in  
10 which the matter in controversy exceeds \$325,000 [~~\$250,000~~], the  
11 jury shall be composed of 12 members unless all of the parties agree  
12 to a jury composed of a lesser number of jurors.

13 SECTION 4. Section 25.0062(b), Government Code, is amended  
14 to read as follows:

15 (b) The district clerk serves as clerk of a county court at  
16 law in felony cases, in family law cases and proceedings, and in  
17 civil cases in which the matter in controversy exceeds \$325,000  
18 [~~\$250,000~~]. The county clerk serves as clerk of a county court at  
19 law in all other cases. The district clerk shall establish a  
20 separate docket for a county court at law. The commissioners court  
21 shall provide the deputy clerks, bailiffs, and other personnel  
22 necessary to operate a county court at law.

23 SECTION 5. Sections 25.0003(c), 25.0007(c), and  
24 25.0062(b), Government Code, as amended by this Act, apply only to a  
25 civil case filed in a statutory county court on or after the  
26 effective date of this Act. A civil case filed in a statutory  
27 county court before the effective date of this Act is governed by

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1 the law in effect immediately before the effective date of this Act,  
2 and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

3 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect on the 91st day after the  
4 last day of the legislative session.