

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1748

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Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill author has informed the committee that while state law currently requires courts to appoint a certified or licensed spoken language interpreter when translation services are needed, exceptions to this requirement exist in part due to the difficulty that finding or retaining these interpreters poses to smaller jurisdiction courts. While the Office of Court Administration (OCA), through the Texas Court Remote Interpreter Service, does provide remote interpreter services to courts that lack resources, the bill author has also informed the committee that the demand for the program can exceed the supply of interpreters available, leading to OCA having to prioritize higher-level courts that deal with more significant legal issues. C.S.H.B. 1748 seeks to address this issue by allowing a justice court, municipal court, or municipal court of record conducting a Class C misdemeanor case in a county with a population of 50,000 or more to appoint an interpreter who is not certified or licensed as a court interpreter to provide those services.

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. 1748 amends the Government Code to authorize a justice court, municipal court, or municipal court of record conducting a Class C misdemeanor case proceeding other than a jury trial in a county with a population of 50,000 or more to appoint a spoken language interpreter who is not a certified or licensed court interpreter. An interpreter appointed under that authority is subject to the same eligibility criteria as an interpreter appointed under the existing conditional authority for any court in such a county to appoint a spoken language interpreter who is not a certified or licensed court interpreter if the language necessary in the proceeding is one other than Spanish and the court finds that there is no applicable licensed court interpreter within 75 miles.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 1748 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

Both the introduced and the substitute authorize a justice court, municipal court, or municipal court of record in a county with a population of 50,000 or more to appoint a spoken language interpreter who is not a certified or licensed court interpreter. However, the substitute includes a specification absent from the introduced that the authorization applies to a court conducting a Class C misdemeanor case proceeding other than a jury trial.