

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2524
By: Cook
Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill author has informed the committee that the Family Code contains several inconsistencies regarding the award of attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses in family law cases. These inconsistencies have resulted from numerous amendments over the years, with some sections providing for fees and costs, while others are silent or only mention certain expenses. H.B. 2524 seeks to harmonize when a court may award attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses in the family law context.

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

H.B. 2524 amends the Family Code to specify that a court, as applicable, may award or order or require payment of reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses in a proceeding under provisions relating to the marriage relationship, a child in relation to the family, protective orders and family violence, and a suit affecting the parent-child relationship.

H.B. 2524 authorizes a court, in a proceeding relating to the termination, modification, or enforcement of a spousal maintenance order, to award reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses incurred by a party to the divorce or annulment. The bill authorizes the court to order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest, as applicable, in a proceeding under provisions relating to the marriage relationship, protective orders, and a suit affecting the parent-child relationship to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

H.B. 2524 applies to a suit that is filed on or after the bill's effective date. A suit filed before that date is governed by the law in effect on the date the suit was filed, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.