

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1537
By: Zaffirini
Criminal Jurisprudence
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

According to the Texas Access to Justice Commission, there is a lack of clarity in criminal proceedings regarding interpreter qualifications, generating inconsistency, uncertainty, and the potential for the violation of due process. S.B. 1537 seeks to address this issue by clarifying the law to ensure that courts consistently apply the same standards for interpreter qualifications in criminal cases.

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

S.B. 1537 amends the Code of Criminal Procedure to revise provisions requiring an interpreter, in any criminal proceeding, when a motion for appointment of an interpreter is filed by any party or on motion of the court and if the court determines that a person charged or a witness does not understand and speak the English language, to be sworn to interpret for the person charged or the witness by specifying that such an interpreter must be appointed as provided by Government Code provisions relating to the appointment of an interpreter or a communication access realtime translation provider. The bill applies those same Government Code provisions to the authorization for any person to be subpoenaed, attached, or recognized in any criminal action or proceeding to appear before the proper judge or court to act as interpreter under the same rules and penalties as are provided for witnesses.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2025.