

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 2177
By: Hagenbuch
Criminal Justice
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 2177 proposes the creation of a state-administered grant program designed to assist local law enforcement agencies in improving clearance rates for violent and sexual offenses. It addresses a critical and specific problem in Texas: the persistently low clearance rates for crimes such as murder, aggravated assault, and sexual assault—offenses that profoundly impact victims, families, and communities.

Current law does not provide a dedicated, statewide funding mechanism to help local agencies improve their capacity to investigate and solve violent or sexual crimes. Many departments, particularly those in smaller or under-resourced jurisdictions, lack the specialized personnel, forensic tools, and technological infrastructure needed to conduct thorough investigations and process evidence efficiently. This contributes to delays and unresolved cases, eroding public trust and potentially allowing perpetrators to reoffend. S.B. 2177 creates Section 772.00791 of the Government Code and authorizes the Criminal Justice Division to administer grants to qualifying law enforcement agencies. These grants are targeted specifically to enhance investigative capabilities for the most serious crimes, including murder, capital murder, aggravated kidnapping, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, aggravated robbery, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, and indecency with a child.

This bill distinguishes itself from existing law by establishing comprehensive support not only for investigative personnel but also for technology upgrades, forensic processing, and crime analysis efforts. Importantly, it mandates detailed annual reporting from grant recipients, including data on clearance rates, average time to case resolution, and how funds were used. This builds accountability and helps identify best practices that can be shared statewide. It also protects the intent of the grants by prohibiting any reduction in local funding as a result of receiving state support.

S.B. 2177 amends current law relating to the creation of a grant program to assist local law enforcement agencies in solving violent and sexual offenses.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 772, Government Code, by adding Section 772.00791, as follows:

Sec. 772.00791. GRANT PROGRAM TO ASSIST LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT IN SOLVING VIOLENT AND SEXUAL OFFENSES. (a) Defines "clearance by arrest," "clearance by exception," "clearance rate," "criminal justice division," "sexual offense," and "violent offense."

(b) Provides that this section applies only to a law enforcement agency employing one or more peace officers described by Article 2A.001(1) (relating to a sheriff, a sheriff's deputy, or a reserve deputy sheriff who holds a permanent peace officer

license) or (3) (relating to a marshal or police officer of a municipality or a reserve municipal police officer who holds a permanent peace officer license), Code of Criminal Procedure.

(c) Requires the governor's criminal justice division (division) to establish and administer a grant program through which a law enforcement agency is authorized to apply for a grant designed to improve clearance rates for violent and sexual offenses.

(d) Requires the division to establish eligibility criteria for grant applications, grant application procedures, guidelines relating to grant amounts, and procedures for evaluating grant applications.

(e) Authorizes grant money awarded under this section to be used to pay for hiring, training, and retaining personnel to complete certain tasks; acquiring, upgrading, or replacing technology or equipment related to evidence collection, evidence processing, or forensic testing; and upgrading record management systems to achieve compliance with the reporting requirements under Subsection (f).

(f) Requires a law enforcement agency that receives a grant awarded under the program annually to report the clearance rate and the percentage of the clearance rate that is clearance by arrest and the percentage that is clearance by exception for violent offenses, sexual offenses, and each offense listed in Subsection (a)(5) (relating to defining "sexual offense") or (6) (relating to defining "violent offense"); the average duration between the date of the offense and the date of clearance for violent offenses, sexual offenses, and each offense listed in Subsection (a)(5) or (6); and the percentage of the grant amount used for each authorized use listed in Subsection (e).

(g) Requires the division to periodically evaluate the practices employed by grant recipients to identify policies and procedures that have successfully improved clearance rates for violent and sexual offenses. Authorizes the division to contract with a third party to conduct an evaluation under this subsection.

(h) Requires the division to include in the biennial report required by Section 772.006(a)(9) (relating to a biennial report submitted by the division to the legislature reporting the division's activities during the preceding biennium) a detailed reporting of the results and performance of the grant program administered under this section.

(i) Prohibits a governmental entity from reducing the amount of funds provided to a law enforcement agency because the agency received a grant under this section.

(j) Authorizes the division to use any revenue available for purposes of this section.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2025.