

By: Guillen, Morales of Maverick, et al.

H.B. No. 318

Substitute the following for H.B. No. 318:

By: Bell of Montgomery

C.S.H.B. No. 318

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of grant programs to provide financial assistance to qualified sheriff's departments in certain rural counties.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter [Z](#), Chapter [130](#), Local Government Code, is amended by adding Sections 130.9115 and 130.9116 to read as follows:

Sec. 130.9115. RURAL SHERIFF'S DEPUTY SHORTAGE RELIEF GRANT PROGRAM. (a) In this section:

(1) "Deputy-to-resident ratio" means the ratio of the number of deputy sheriffs to the number of residents of the unincorporated areas of the county, as determined by the population estimates provided by the state demographer under Section [468.004](#), Government Code.

(2) "Grant" means a grant authorized to be awarded by the comptroller under the rural sheriff's deputy shortage relief grant program established by this section.

(3) "Qualified county" means a county:  
(A) with a population of 300,000 or less; and  
(B) for which on January 1, 2025, the deputy-to-resident ratio is less than 15 to 10,000.

(4) "Qualified deputy position" means a deputy sheriff position in a qualified county that:

1                   (A) is held or will be held by a deputy sheriff  
2 who makes motor vehicle stops in the routine performance of the  
3 deputy's duties;

4                   (B) is in addition to a deputy sheriff position  
5 held in the county on January 1, 2025; and

6                   (C) when aggregated with each other qualified  
7 deputy position would result in a deputy-to-resident ratio of 15 to  
8 10,000, determined as of January 1, 2025.

9                   (5) "Qualified emergency dispatcher" means a person  
10 who provides communication support services for a sheriff's office  
11 by responding to requests for assistance in emergencies.

12                   (6) "Qualified investigator position" has the meaning  
13 assigned by Section 130.9116.

14                   (b) The comptroller shall establish and administer the  
15 rural sheriff's deputy shortage relief grant program to support the  
16 state purpose of ensuring professional law enforcement throughout  
17 the state by providing financial assistance to sheriff's  
18 departments in qualified counties.

19                   (c) Not later than the 30th day after the first day of a  
20 qualified county's fiscal year, the county may submit an  
21 application for a grant to the comptroller. The county must  
22 indicate in the application the number of qualified deputy  
23 positions the county is requesting for inclusion in the  
24 determination of the amount of the grant for that fiscal year and  
25 the number for which the county is requesting additional funds  
26 described by Subsection (d)(2). A county may submit only one  
27 application each fiscal year.

1        (d) Subject to Subsections (e), (f), and (j), the  
2 comptroller shall award a grant to a qualified county that applies  
3 for the grant using money appropriated to the comptroller for that  
4 purpose. The grant must be in the following amount:

5            (1) \$50,000 for each qualified deputy position  
6 indicated by the county in the application for that fiscal year;

7            (2) an additional \$50,000 for each qualified deputy  
8 position indicated in the application for that fiscal year, unless  
9 the county has received a grant under this subdivision for that  
10 position in a preceding fiscal year;

11           (3) \$50,000 for each qualified investigator position  
12 indicated by the county in the application for that fiscal year  
13 necessary for an investigator-to-patrol ratio, as defined by  
14 Section 130.9116, of one to five after filling the qualified deputy  
15 positions under the grant; and

16           (4) \$35,000 for each qualified emergency dispatcher  
17 indicated by the county in the application for that fiscal year.

18        (e) This subsection applies only to a fiscal year of a  
19 qualified county that meets the deputy-to-resident ratio described  
20 by Subsection (a)(4)(C) during a calendar year that begins on or  
21 after January 1, 2025, but before the calendar year in which the  
22 fiscal year begins. A qualified county is not eligible to receive a  
23 grant under this section for a fiscal year unless the county adopts  
24 a budget for the fiscal year that provides for the employment of a  
25 number of deputy sheriffs necessary to meet the deputy-to-resident  
26 ratio of at least 15 to 10,000, determined as of January 1 of the  
27 calendar year in which the fiscal year begins.

1       (f) This subsection applies only to a fiscal year of a  
2 qualified county for which the number of qualified deputy positions  
3 the county is otherwise entitled to receive a grant for under this  
4 section is greater than the number of qualified deputy positions  
5 the county would be entitled to receive a grant for under this  
6 section if the deputy-to-resident ratio described by Subsection  
7 (a)(4)(C) is determined as of January 1 of the calendar year in  
8 which the fiscal year begins instead of January 1, 2025. A  
9 qualified county is entitled to receive a grant under this section  
10 only for the number of qualified deputy positions the county would  
11 be entitled to receive a grant for if the deputy-to-resident ratio  
12 described by Subsection (a)(4)(C) is determined as of January 1 of  
13 the calendar year in which the fiscal year begins instead of January  
14 1, 2025.

15       (g) A county that is awarded a grant shall use or authorize  
16 the use of the grant money only:

17               (1) to provide to each deputy sheriff who fills a  
18 qualified deputy position a minimum annual salary of at least  
19 \$45,000;

20               (2) to provide to each deputy sheriff who fills a  
21 qualified investigator position a minimum annual salary of at least  
22 \$45,000;

23               (3) to provide to each dispatcher who fills a  
24 qualified emergency dispatcher position a minimum annual salary of  
25 at least \$30,000; and

26               (4) to purchase vehicles, firearms, and safety  
27 equipment for the use of a deputy sheriff who fills a qualified

1 deputy position.

2 (h) A county that is awarded a grant may not use or authorize  
3 the use of the grant money for a purpose other than prescribed by  
4 Subsection (g)(1) until that requirement is satisfied.

5 (i) A county that is awarded a grant may not reduce the  
6 sheriff's department budget for the county's fiscal year following  
7 the fiscal year in which the comptroller awards the grant.

8 (j) The total dollar amount awarded under this section may  
9 not exceed \$100 million in a state fiscal year. If the total dollar  
10 amount of grants to which counties are entitled under this section  
11 exceeds the limitation under this subsection in a state fiscal  
12 year, the comptroller shall proportionally reduce the amount of  
13 each grant awarded so the limitation is not exceeded.

14 (k) The comptroller shall adopt rules necessary to  
15 implement this section, including rules that establish:

16 (1) a standardized application process, including the  
17 form to be used to apply for a grant and the manner of submitting the  
18 form;

19 (2) deadlines for:

20 (A) applying for the grant;

21 (B) disbursement of grant money; and

22 (C) spending grant money;

23 (3) procedures for:

24 (A) monitoring the disbursement of grant money to  
25 ensure compliance with this section; and

26 (B) the return of grant money that was not used by  
27 a county for a purpose authorized by this section; and

1           (4) standards to determine if an emergency dispatcher  
2 is a qualified emergency dispatcher.

3           Sec. 130.9116. RURAL SHERIFF'S INVESTIGATOR SHORTAGE  
4 RELIEF GRANT PROGRAM. (a) In this section:

5           (1) "Grant" means a grant authorized to be awarded by  
6 the comptroller under the rural sheriff's investigator shortage  
7 relief grant program established by this section.

8           (2) "Investigator-to-patrol ratio" means the ratio of  
9 the number of deputy sheriffs who conduct case investigations in  
10 the routine performance of deputy duties to the number of deputy  
11 sheriffs who make motor vehicle stops in the routine performance of  
12 deputy duties.

13           (3) "Qualified county" means a county:

14                   (A) with a population of 300,000 or less; and

15                   (B) for which on January 1, 2025, the  
16 investigator-to-patrol ratio is less than one to five.

17           (4) "Qualified investigative support staff member"  
18 means a person who provides technical support services for a  
19 qualified investigator in the investigation of an offense,  
20 including a person who provides evidence testing or analysis  
21 services.

22           (5) "Qualified investigator position" means a deputy  
23 sheriff position in a qualified county that:

24                   (A) is held or will be held by a deputy sheriff  
25 who conducts case investigations in the routine performance of the  
26 deputy's duties;

27                   (B) is in addition to a deputy sheriff position

1 held in the county on January 1, 2025; and

2 (C) when aggregated with each other qualified  
3 investigator position would result in an investigator-to-patrol  
4 ratio of one to five, determined as of January 1, 2025.

5 (b) The comptroller shall establish and administer the  
6 rural sheriff's investigator shortage relief grant program to  
7 support the state purpose of ensuring professional law enforcement  
8 throughout the state by providing financial assistance to sheriff's  
9 departments in qualified counties.

10 (c) Not later than the 30th day after the first day of a  
11 qualified county's fiscal year, the county may submit an  
12 application for a grant to the comptroller. The county must  
13 indicate in the application the number of qualified investigator  
14 positions the county is requesting for inclusion in the  
15 determination of the amount of the grant for that fiscal year and  
16 the number for which the county is requesting additional funds  
17 described by Subsection (d)(2). A county may submit only one  
18 application each fiscal year.

19 (d) Subject to Subsections (e), (f), and (j), the  
20 comptroller shall award a grant to a qualified county that applies  
21 for the grant using money appropriated to the comptroller for that  
22 purpose. The grant must be in the following amount:

23 (1) \$50,000 for each qualified investigator position  
24 indicated by the county in the application for that fiscal year;

25 (2) an additional \$50,000 for each qualified  
26 investigator position indicated in the application for that fiscal  
27 year, unless the county has received a grant under this subdivision

1 for that position in a preceding fiscal year; and

2 (3) \$35,000 for each qualified investigative support  
3 staff member indicated by the county in the application for that  
4 fiscal year.

5 (e) This subsection applies only to a fiscal year of a  
6 qualified county that meets the investigator-to-patrol ratio  
7 described by Subsection (a)(5)(C) during a calendar year that  
8 begins on or after January 1, 2025, but before the calendar year in  
9 which the fiscal year begins. A qualified county is not eligible to  
10 receive a grant under this section for a fiscal year unless the  
11 county adopts a budget for the fiscal year that provides for the  
12 employment of a number of deputy sheriffs necessary to meet the  
13 investigator-to-patrol ratio of at least one to five, determined as  
14 of January 1 of the calendar year in which the fiscal year begins.

15 (f) This subsection applies only to a fiscal year of a  
16 qualified county for which the number of qualified investigator  
17 positions the county is otherwise entitled to receive a grant for  
18 under this section is greater than the number of qualified  
19 investigator positions the county would be entitled to receive a  
20 grant for under this section if the investigator-to-patrol ratio  
21 described by Subsection (a)(5)(C) is determined as of January 1 of  
22 the calendar year in which the fiscal year begins instead of January  
23 1, 2025. A qualified county is entitled to receive a grant under  
24 this section only for the number of qualified investigator  
25 positions the county would be entitled to receive a grant for if the  
26 investigator-to-patrol ratio described by Subsection (a)(5)(C) is  
27 determined as of January 1 of the calendar year in which the fiscal



year begins instead of January 1, 2025.

(g) A county that is awarded a grant shall use or authorize the use of the grant money only:

(1) to provide to each deputy sheriff who fills a qualified investigator position a minimum annual salary of at least \$45,000;

(2) to provide to each investigative support staff member who fills a qualified investigative support staff position a minimum annual salary of at least \$30,000; and

(3) to purchase vehicles, firearms, investigative tools, and safety equipment for the use of a deputy sheriff who fills a qualified investigator position.

(h) A county that is awarded a grant may not use or authorize the use of the grant money for a purpose other than prescribed by Subsection (g)(1) until that requirement is satisfied.

(i) A county that is awarded a grant may not reduce the sheriff's department budget for the county's fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the comptroller awards the grant.

(j) The total dollar amount awarded under this section may not exceed \$50 million in a state fiscal year. If the total dollar amount of grants to which counties are entitled under this section exceeds the limitation under this subsection in a state fiscal year, the comptroller shall proportionally reduce the amount of each grant awarded so the limitation is not exceeded.

(k) The comptroller shall adopt rules necessary to implement this section, including rules that establish:

(1) a standardized application process, including the

1 form to be used to apply for a grant and the manner of submitting the  
2 form;

3 (2) deadlines for:

4 (A) applying for the grant;

5 (B) disbursement of grant money; and

6 (C) spending grant money;

7 (3) procedures for:

8 (A) monitoring the disbursement of grant money to  
9 ensure compliance with this section; and

10 (B) the return of grant money that was not used by  
11 a county for a purpose authorized by this section; and

12 (4) standards to determine if an investigative support  
13 staff member is a qualified investigative support staff member.

14 SECTION 2. A qualified county, as defined by Section  
15 130.9115, Local Government Code, as added by this Act, may not apply  
16 for a grant under that section before January 1, 2026.

17 SECTION 3. A qualified county, as defined by Section  
18 130.9116, Local Government Code, as added by this Act, may not apply  
19 for a grant under that section before January 1, 2026.

20 SECTION 4. Not later than January 1, 2026, the comptroller  
21 of public accounts shall comply with the requirements of Sections  
22 130.9115 and 130.9116, Local Government Code, as added by this Act.

23 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.