

AN ACT

relating to fiscal and other matters necessary for implementation of the judiciary budget as enacted by H.B. No. 1, Acts of the 82nd Legislature, Regular Session, 2011, and to the operation and administration of, and practice and procedures in courts in, the judicial branch of state government.

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

ARTICLE 1. FISCAL NECESSITY

SECTION 1.01. The legislature finds that this Act is necessary to the state to offset the effect of the approximately \$30 million budget reduction for the judiciary. The provisions of this Act are designed to allow the judiciary to operate with the least chance of harm to fulfilling the purpose of the judiciary and to allow the operation of the judiciary in the next state fiscal biennium in an efficient manner.

ARTICLE 2. APPELLATE COURT PROVISIONS

SECTION 2.01. Subsection (b), Section 22.002, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) The supreme court or, in vacation, a justice of the supreme court may issue a writ of mandamus to compel a statutory county court judge, a statutory probate court judge, or a district judge to proceed to trial and judgment in a case ~~[agreeable to the principles and usages of law, returnable to the supreme court on or before the first day of the term, or during the session of the term,~~

1 ~~or before any justice of the supreme court as the nature of the case~~
2 ~~requires~~].

3 SECTION 2.02. (a) Section 24.007, Property Code, is
4 amended to read as follows:

5 Sec. 24.007. APPEAL. (a) ~~[A final judgment of a county~~
6 ~~court in an eviction suit may not be appealed on the issue of~~
7 ~~possession unless the premises in question are being used for~~
8 ~~residential purposes only.]~~ A judgment of a county court in an
9 eviction suit may not under any circumstances be stayed pending
10 appeal unless, within 10 days of the signing of the judgment, the
11 appellant files a supersedeas bond in an amount set by the county
12 court. In setting the supersedeas bond the county court shall
13 provide protection for the appellee to the same extent as in any
14 other appeal, taking into consideration the value of rents likely
15 to accrue during appeal, damages which may occur as a result of the
16 stay during appeal, and other damages or amounts as the court may
17 deem appropriate.

18 (b) Notwithstanding any other law, an appeal may be taken
19 from a final judgment of a county court, statutory county court,
20 statutory probate court, or district court in an eviction suit.

21 (b) The change in law made by this section applies to an
22 appeal of a final judgment rendered on or after the effective date
23 of this section. An appeal of a final judgment rendered before the
24 effective date of this section is governed by the law in effect on
25 the date the judgment was rendered, and the former law is continued
26 in effect for that purpose.

ARTICLE 3. GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR DISTRICT COURTS

SECTION 3.01. Section 24.002, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 24.002. ASSIGNMENT OF JUDGE OR TRANSFER OF CASE ON RECUSAL ~~[SUBSTITUTE JUDGES]~~. If a district judge determines on the judge's own motion that the judge should not sit in a case pending in the judge's court because the judge is disqualified or otherwise should recuse himself or herself, the judge shall enter a recusal order, request the presiding judge of that administrative judicial region to assign another judge to sit, and take no further action in the case except for good cause stated in the order in which the action is taken. A change of venue is not necessary because of the disqualification of a district judge in a case or proceeding pending in the judge's ~~[his]~~ court~~[, but the judge shall immediately certify his disqualification to the governor. The governor shall designate a district judge of another district to exchange benches with the disqualified judge to try the case. The governor shall notify both judges of his designation, and the judges shall exchange benches. If the judges are prevented from exchanging benches, the parties or their counsels may agree on an attorney of the court for the trial of the case. The district judge or special judge shall certify to the governor the fact of a failure of the parties or their counsels to agree on an attorney, and the governor shall appoint a person legally qualified to act as judge in the trial of the case].~~

SECTION 3.02. Sections 24.003 and 24.007, Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

1 Sec. 24.003. TRANSFER OF CASES; EXCHANGE OF BENCHES
2 [~~SUBSTITUTE JUDGES IN CERTAIN COUNTIES~~]. (a) This section applies
3 only to [~~civil cases in~~] counties with two [~~five~~] or more district
4 courts.

5 (b) Unless provided otherwise by the local rules of
6 administration, a district judge in the county may:

7 (1) transfer any civil or criminal case or proceeding
8 on the court's docket to the docket of another district court in the
9 county;

10 (2) hear and determine any case or proceeding pending
11 in another district court in the county without having the case
12 transferred;

13 (3) sit for another district court in the county and
14 hear and determine any case or proceeding pending in that court;

15 (4) temporarily exchange benches with the judge of
16 another district court in the county;

17 (5) try different cases in the same court at the same
18 time; and

19 (6) occupy the judge's own courtroom or the courtroom
20 of another district court in the county.

21 (c) If a district judge in the county is sick or otherwise
22 absent, another district judge in the county may hold court for the
23 judge.

24 (d) A district judge in the county may hear and determine
25 any part or question of any case or proceeding pending in any of the
26 district courts, and any other district judge may complete the
27 hearing and render judgment in the case or proceeding. A district

1 judge may hear and determine motions, including motions for new
2 trial, petitions for injunction, applications for the appointment
3 of a receiver, interventions, pleas in abatement, dilatory pleas,
4 and all preliminary matters, questions, and proceedings, and may
5 enter judgment or order on them in the court in which the case or
6 proceeding is pending without transferring the case or proceeding.
7 The district judge in whose court the matter is pending may proceed
8 to hear, complete, and determine the matter, or all or any part of
9 another matter, and render a final judgment. A district judge may
10 issue a restraining order or injunction that is returnable to any
11 other district court.

12 (e) A judgment or order shall be entered in the minutes of
13 the court in which the case is pending.

14 (f) This section does not limit the powers of a district
15 judge when acting for another judge by exchange of benches or
16 otherwise ~~[If a district judge is disqualified in a case pending in~~
17 ~~his court and his disqualification is certified to the governor,~~
18 ~~the governor may require any other district judge in the county to~~
19 ~~exchange benches with the disqualified judge.~~

20 ~~[(c) If a district judge is absent, sick, or disqualified,~~
21 ~~any of the district judges in the county may hold court for him or~~
22 ~~may transfer a pending case to the court of any other district judge~~
23 ~~in the county].~~

24 Sec. 24.007. JURISDICTION. (a) The district court has the
25 jurisdiction provided by Article V, Section 8, of the Texas
26 Constitution.

27 (b) A district court has original jurisdiction of a civil

1 matter in which the amount in controversy is more than \$500,
2 exclusive of interest.

3 SECTION 3.03. Subsection (a), Section 24.012, Government
4 Code, is amended to read as follows:

5 (a) Notwithstanding any other law, each [Each] district
6 [and criminal district] court holds in each county in the judicial
7 district [at least two] terms that commence on the first Mondays in
8 January and July of [court] each year [in each county in the
9 district]. To the extent of a conflict between this subsection and
10 a specific provision relating to a particular judicial district,
11 this section controls.

12 SECTION 3.04. Subchapter A, Chapter 24, Government Code, is
13 amended by adding Sections 24.023, 24.024, 24.025, 24.026, 24.027,
14 24.028, 24.029, 24.030, and 24.031 to read as follows:

15 Sec. 24.023. OBLIGATIONS; BONDS. (a) When a case is
16 transferred from one court to another, all processes, writs, bonds,
17 recognizances, and other obligations issued by the transferring
18 court are returnable to the court to which the case is transferred
19 as if originally issued by that court.

20 (b) The obligees in all bonds and recognizances taken in and
21 for a court from which a case is transferred, and all witnesses
22 summoned to appear in a district court from which a case is
23 transferred, are required to appear before the court to which the
24 case is transferred as if the bond, recognizance, or summons was
25 taken in or for that court.

26 Sec. 24.024. FILING AND DOCKETING CASES. In a county with
27 two or more district courts, the district judges may adopt rules

1 governing the filing and numbering of cases, the assignment of
2 cases for trial, and the distribution of the work of the courts as
3 in their discretion they consider necessary or desirable for the
4 orderly dispatch of the business of the courts.

5 Sec. 24.025. SUPPLEMENTAL COMPENSATION. (a) Unless
6 otherwise provided by this subchapter, all district judges in a
7 county are entitled to equal amounts of supplemental compensation
8 from the county.

9 (b) A district judge is entitled to an amount of
10 supplemental compensation for serving on the juvenile board of a
11 county that is equal to the amount other judges serving on the
12 juvenile board receive.

13 Sec. 24.026. APPOINTMENT OF INITIAL JUDGE. On the creation
14 of a new judicial district, the initial vacancy in the office of
15 district judge is filled in accordance with Section 28, Article V,
16 Texas Constitution.

17 Sec. 24.027. GRAND AND PETIT JURORS. All grand and petit
18 jurors selected in a county before a new district court is created
19 or the composition of an existing district court is modified by an
20 amendment to this chapter are considered to be selected for the new
21 or modified district court, as applicable.

22 Sec. 24.028. CASES TRANSFERRED. If by an amendment to this
23 chapter a county is removed from the composition of an existing
24 judicial district and added to another existing or new judicial
25 district, all cases and proceedings from that county that are
26 pending in the district court of the judicial district from which
27 the county was removed are transferred to the district court of the

1 judicial district to which the county is added. The judge of each
2 affected district court shall sign the proper orders in connection
3 with the transfer.

4 Sec. 24.029. PROCESSES, WRITS, AND OTHER OBLIGATIONS REMAIN
5 VALID. (a) If by an amendment to this chapter a county is removed
6 from the composition of an existing judicial district and added to
7 another existing or new judicial district, or if an amendment to
8 this chapter changes the time or place at which the terms of court
9 are held, all processes, writs, bonds, recognizances, and other
10 obligations issued from and made returnable to that court before
11 the effective date of the transfer or other change are returnable as
12 provided by this subsection. An obligation issued from the
13 affected court is returnable to another district court in the
14 county on the date that court directs, but may not be made
15 returnable on a date that is earlier than the date on which the
16 obligation was originally returnable. The obligations are legal
17 and valid as if the obligations had been made returnable to the
18 issuing court.

19 (b) The obligees in all appearance bonds and recognizances
20 taken in and for a district court of a county before the effective
21 date of an amendment to this chapter, and all witnesses summoned to
22 appear before that district court under laws existing before the
23 effective date of an amendment to this chapter, are required to
24 appear at another district court in the county on the date that
25 court directs, but may not be required to appear on a date that is
26 earlier than the date on which the obligees or witnesses were
27 originally required to appear.

1 Sec. 24.030. LOCATION OF COURT. (a) A district court
2 shall sit in the county seat for a jury trial in a civil case. The
3 commissioners court of the county may authorize a district court to
4 sit in any municipality within the county to hear and determine
5 nonjury trials in civil cases and to hear and determine motions,
6 arguments, and other matters not heard before a jury in a civil case
7 that is within the court's jurisdiction.

8 (b) The district clerk or the clerk's deputy serves as clerk
9 of the court when a court sits in a municipality other than the
10 municipality that is the county seat and may transfer:

11 (1) all necessary books, minutes, records, and papers
12 to that municipality while the court is in session there; and

13 (2) the books, minutes, records, and papers back to
14 the clerk's office in the county seat at the end of each session.

15 (c) If the commissioners court authorizes a district court
16 to sit in a municipality other than the municipality that is the
17 county seat, the commissioners court shall provide suitable
18 facilities for the court in that municipality.

19 Sec. 24.031. COURT OFFICERS. The prosecuting attorney, the
20 sheriff, the district clerk, the bailiffs, and the other officers
21 serving the other district courts of the county shall serve in their
22 respective capacities for the courts listed in this chapter.

23 SECTION 3.05. Subsection (g), Section 25.0362, Government
24 Code, is amended to read as follows:

25 (g) In matters of concurrent jurisdiction, a judge of a
26 county court at law and a judge of a district court in Cass County
27 may transfer cases between the courts in the same manner that judges

1 of district courts may transfer cases under Section 24.003
2 [~~24.303~~].

3 SECTION 3.06. Subsection (w), Section 25.0732, Government
4 Code, is amended to read as follows:

5 (w) In matters of concurrent jurisdiction, a judge of a
6 statutory county court in El Paso County and a judge of a district
7 court or another statutory county court in El Paso County may
8 transfer cases between the courts in the same manner judges of
9 district courts transfer cases under Section 24.003 [~~24.303~~].

10 SECTION 3.07. Subsection (c), Section 25.1672, Government
11 Code, is amended to read as follows:

12 (c) In matters of concurrent jurisdiction, judges of the
13 county courts at law and district courts in the county may exchange
14 benches and courtrooms and may transfer cases between their dockets
15 in the same manner that district court judges exchange benches and
16 transfer cases under Section 24.003 [~~24.303~~].

17 SECTION 3.08. Subsection (v), Section 25.1862, Government
18 Code, is amended to read as follows:

19 (v) In matters of concurrent jurisdiction, a judge of a
20 county court at law and a judge of a district court or another
21 county court at law may transfer cases between the courts in the
22 same manner judges of district courts transfer cases under Section
23 24.003 [~~24.303~~].

24 SECTION 3.09. Subsection (k), Section 25.2512, Government
25 Code, as effective September 1, 2011, is amended to read as follows:

26 (k) A judge of a county court at law and a judge of a
27 district court or another county court at law with concurrent

1 jurisdiction may transfer cases between the courts in the same
2 manner judges of district courts transfer cases under Section
3 24.003 [~~24.303~~].

4 SECTION 3.10. Subsection (k), Section 25.1932, Government
5 Code, is amended to read as follows:

6 (k) Notwithstanding Section 74.121(b)(1), in matters of
7 concurrent jurisdiction, the judge of a county court at law and the
8 judges of the district courts in the county may exchange benches and
9 courtrooms and may transfer cases between their dockets in the same
10 manner that judges of district courts exchange benches and transfer
11 cases under Section 24.003 [~~24.303~~].

12 SECTION 3.11. Subdivision (2), Subsection (b), Section
13 74.121, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

14 (2) Notwithstanding Subdivision (1), in matters of
15 concurrent jurisdiction, a judge of a statutory county court in
16 Midland County and a judge of a district court in Midland County may
17 exchange benches and courtrooms with each other and may transfer
18 cases between their dockets in the same manner that judges of
19 district courts exchange benches and transfer cases under Section
20 24.003 [~~24.303~~].

21 SECTION 3.12. Subsection (d), Section 659.012, Government
22 Code, is amended to read as follows:

23 (d) Notwithstanding any other provision in this section or
24 other law, in [~~In~~] a county with more than five district courts, a
25 district judge who serves as a local administrative district judge
26 under Section 74.091 is entitled to an annual salary from the state
27 that is \$5,000 more than the salary from the state to which the

judge is otherwise entitled [~~under Subsection (a)(1)~~].

SECTION 3.13. The following provisions of the Government Code are repealed:

- (1) Section 24.013;
- (2) Section 24.302;
- (3) Section 24.303;
- (4) Section 24.304;
- (5) Section 24.305;
- (6) Section 24.307;
- (7) Section 24.308;
- (8) Section 24.309;
- (9) Section 24.311;
- (10) Section 24.312;
- (11) Section 24.313;
- (12) Section 24.314;
- (13) Section 24.525(b);
- (14) Section 24.526(b);
- (15) Section 24.527(b);
- (16) Sections 24.528(b) and (c); and
- (17) Sections 24.529(b) and (c).

ARTICLE 4. STATUTORY COUNTY COURTS

SECTION 4.01. Section 25.0002, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 25.0002. DEFINITIONS [~~DEFINITION~~]. In this chapter:

- (1) "Criminal law cases and proceedings" includes cases and proceedings for allegations of conduct punishable in part by confinement in the county jail not to exceed one year.

1 (2) "Family[, "family] law cases and proceedings"
2 includes cases and proceedings under Titles 1, 2, 4, and 5, Family
3 Code [~~involving adoptions, birth records, or removal of disability~~
4 ~~of minority or coverture, change of names of persons, child~~
5 ~~welfare, custody, support and reciprocal support, dependency,~~
6 ~~neglect, or delinquency, paternity, termination of parental~~
7 ~~rights, divorce and marriage annulment, including the adjustment of~~
8 ~~property rights, custody and support of minor children involved~~
9 ~~therein, temporary support pending final hearing, and every other~~
10 ~~matter incident to divorce or annulment proceedings, independent~~
11 ~~actions involving child support, custody of minors, and wife or~~
12 ~~child desertion, and independent actions involving controversies~~
13 ~~between parent and child, between parents, and between spouses]~~.

14 (3) "Juvenile law cases and proceedings" includes all
15 cases and proceedings brought under Title 3, Family Code.

16 (4) "Mental health cases and proceedings" includes all
17 cases and proceedings brought under Chapter 462, Health and Safety
18 Code, or Subtitle C or D, Title 7, Health and Safety Code.

19 SECTION 4.02. Subsection (c), Section 25.0003, Government
20 Code, is amended to read as follows:

21 (c) In addition to other jurisdiction provided by law, a
22 statutory county court exercising civil jurisdiction concurrent
23 with the constitutional jurisdiction of the county court has
24 concurrent jurisdiction with the district court in:

25 (1) civil cases in which the matter in controversy
26 exceeds \$500 but does not exceed \$200,000 [~~\$100,000~~], excluding
27 interest, statutory or punitive damages and penalties, and

1 attorney's fees and costs, as alleged on the face of the petition;
2 and

3 (2) appeals of final rulings and decisions of the
4 division of workers' compensation of the Texas Department of
5 Insurance regarding workers' compensation claims, regardless of
6 the amount in controversy.

7 SECTION 4.03. Section 25.0004, Government Code, is amended
8 by adding Subsections (f) and (g) to read as follows:

9 (f) The judge of a statutory county court does not have
10 general supervisory control or appellate review of the
11 commissioners court.

12 (g) A judge of a statutory county court has the judicial
13 immunity of a district judge.

14 SECTION 4.04. Section 25.0007, Government Code, is amended
15 to read as follows:

16 Sec. 25.0007. JURIES; PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE. (a) The
17 drawing of jury panels, selection of jurors, and practice in the
18 statutory county courts must conform to that prescribed by law for
19 county courts.

20 (b) Practice in a statutory county court is that prescribed
21 by law for county courts, except that practice, procedure, rules of
22 evidence, issuance of process and writs, and all other matters
23 pertaining to the conduct of trials and hearings in the statutory
24 county courts, other than the number of jurors, that involve those
25 matters of concurrent jurisdiction with district courts are
26 governed by the laws and rules pertaining to district courts. This
27 section does not affect local rules of administration adopted under

Section 74.093.

SECTION 4.05. Section 25.0010, Government Code, is amended by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsections (c), (d), (e), and (f) to read as follows:

(b) The county attorney or criminal district attorney [~~and sheriff~~] shall serve each statutory county court as required by law.

(c) A county sheriff shall in person or by deputy attend a statutory county court as required by the court.

(d) The county clerk shall serve as clerk of each statutory county court. The court officials shall perform the duties and responsibilities of their offices and are entitled to the compensation, fees, and allowances prescribed by law for those offices.

(e) The judge of a statutory county court may appoint the personnel necessary for the operation of the court, including a court coordinator or administrative assistant, if the commissioners court has approved the creation of the position.

(f) The commissioners court may authorize the employment of as many additional assistant district attorneys, assistant county attorneys, deputy sheriffs, and clerks as are necessary for a statutory county court.

SECTION 4.06. (a) Section 25.0014, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 25.0014. QUALIFICATIONS OF JUDGE. The judge of a statutory county court must:

- (1) be at least 25 years of age;

1 (2) be a United States citizen and have resided in the
2 county for at least two years before election or appointment; and

3 (3) be a licensed attorney in this state who has
4 practiced law or served as a judge of a court in this state, or both
5 combined, for the four years preceding election or appointment,
6 unless otherwise provided for by law.

7 (b) The change in law made by this Act to Section 25.0014,
8 Government Code, does not apply to a person serving as a statutory
9 county court judge immediately before the effective date of this
10 Act who met the qualifications of Section 25.0014, Government Code,
11 as it existed on that date, and the former law is continued in
12 effect for determining that person's qualifications to serve as a
13 statutory county court judge.

14 SECTION 4.07. (a) Subchapter A, Chapter 25, Government
15 Code, is amended by adding Sections 25.0016 and 25.00161 to read as
16 follows:

17 Sec. 25.0016. TERMS OF COURT. The commissioners court, by
18 order, shall set at least two terms a year for the statutory county
19 court.

20 Sec. 25.00161. PRIVATE PRACTICE OF LAW. The regular judge
21 of a statutory county court shall diligently discharge the duties
22 of the office on a full-time basis and may not engage in the private
23 practice of law.

24 (b) Section 25.00161, Government Code, as added by this Act,
25 applies only to a regular judge serving a term to which the judge is
26 elected on or after the effective date of this Act. A judge serving
27 a term to which the judge was elected before the effective date of

1 this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date the judge was
2 elected, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

3 SECTION 4.08. Subsection (t), Section 25.0022, Government
4 Code, is amended to read as follows:

5 (t) To be eligible for assignment under this section, a
6 former or retired judge of a statutory probate court must:

7 (1) not have been removed from office;

8 (2) certify under oath to the presiding judge, on a
9 form prescribed by the state board of regional judges, that:

10 (A) the judge has not been publicly reprimanded
11 or censured by the State Commission on Judicial Conduct; and

12 (B) the judge:

13 (i) did not resign or retire from office
14 after the State Commission on Judicial Conduct notified the judge
15 of the commencement of a full investigation into an allegation or
16 appearance of misconduct or disability of the judge as provided in
17 Section 33.022 and before the final disposition of that
18 investigation; or

19 (ii) if the judge did resign from office
20 under circumstances described by Subparagraph (i), was not publicly
21 reprimanded or censured as a result of the investigation;

22 (3) annually demonstrate that the judge has completed
23 in the past state fiscal year the educational requirements for an
24 active statutory probate court judge;

25 (4) have served as an active judge for at least 72 [~~96~~]
26 months in a district, statutory probate, statutory county, or
27 appellate court; and

(5) have developed substantial experience in the judge's area of specialty.

SECTION 4.09. Section 25.00231, Government Code, is amended by amending Subsection (c) and adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

(c) In lieu of the bond required by Subsection (b), a county may elect to obtain insurance or to self-insure in the amount required by Subsection (b) against losses caused by the statutory probate court judge's gross negligence in performing the duties of office.

(e) This section does not apply to an assigned or visiting judge sitting by assignment in a statutory probate court.

SECTION 4.10. (a) Subchapter B, Chapter 25, Government Code, is amended by adding Sections 25.0033, 25.0034, and 25.0035 to read as follows:

Sec. 25.0033. QUALIFICATIONS OF JUDGE. The judge of a statutory probate court must:

- (1) be at least 25 years of age;
- (2) be a United States citizen and have resided in the county for at least two years before election or appointment; and
- (3) be a licensed attorney in this state who has practiced law or served as a judge of a court in this state, or both combined, for the five years preceding election or appointment, unless otherwise provided for by law.

Sec. 25.0034. PRIVATE PRACTICE OF LAW. The regular judge of a statutory probate court shall diligently discharge the duties of the office on a full-time basis and may not engage in the private

1 practice of law.

2 Sec. 25.0035. TERMS OF COURT. The commissioners court, by
3 order, shall set at least two terms a year for the statutory probate
4 court.

5 (b) Section 25.0033, Government Code, as added by this Act,
6 does not apply to a person serving as a statutory probate court
7 judge immediately before the effective date of this Act. The
8 qualifications of a person serving as a statutory probate court
9 judge on the effective date of this Act are governed by the law in
10 effect immediately before the effective date of this Act, and the
11 former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

12 SECTION 4.11. Subsections (g) and (i), Section 25.0042,
13 Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

14 (g) The district clerk serves as clerk of a county court at
15 law in all cases arising under the Family Code and Section 23.001
16 and shall establish a separate docket for a county court at law; the
17 county clerk serves as clerk of the court in all other cases. [~~The~~
18 ~~commissioners court may employ as many deputy sheriffs and bailiffs~~
19 ~~as are necessary to serve the court.~~]

20 (i) [~~Practice in a county court at law is that prescribed by~~
21 ~~law for county courts, except that practice and procedure, rules of~~
22 ~~evidence, issuance of process and writs, and all other matters~~
23 ~~pertaining to the conduct of trials and hearings in a county court~~
24 ~~at law involving cases under the Family Code and Section 23.001 are~~
25 ~~governed by this section and the laws and rules pertaining to~~
26 ~~district courts and county courts.~~] If a case under the Family Code
27 or Section 23.001 is tried before a jury, the jury shall be composed

of 12 members.

SECTION 4.12. Subsection (h), Section 25.0102, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(h) ~~[Practice in a county court at law is that prescribed by law for county courts, except that practice and procedure, rules of evidence, issuance of process and writs, and all other matters pertaining to the conduct of trials and hearings in the county court at law involving family law cases and proceedings shall be governed by this section and the laws and rules pertaining to district courts.]~~ If a family law case or proceeding is tried before a jury, the jury shall be composed of 12 members; in all other cases the jury shall be composed of six members.

SECTION 4.13. Subsections (e) and (f), Section 25.0132, Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

(e) The district clerk serves as clerk of a county court at law in family law cases and proceedings, and the county clerk serves as clerk of the court in all other cases. The district clerk shall establish a separate docket for a county court at law. ~~[The commissioners court may employ as many deputy sheriffs and bailiffs as are necessary to serve a county court at law.]~~

(f) ~~[Practice in a county court at law is that prescribed by law for county courts, except that practice and procedure, rules of evidence, issuance of process and writs, and all other matters pertaining to the conduct of trials and hearings in a county court at law involving family law cases and proceedings is that prescribed by law for district courts and county courts.]~~ If a family law case or proceeding is tried before a jury, the jury shall

1 be composed of 12 members.

2 SECTION 4.14. Subsection (a), Section 25.0202, Government
3 Code, is amended to read as follows:

4 (a) In addition to the jurisdiction provided by Section
5 25.0003 and other law, a county court at law in Bosque County has
6 concurrent jurisdiction with the district court in:

7 (1) family law cases and proceedings;

8 (2) civil cases in which the matter in controversy
9 exceeds \$500 but does not exceed \$200,000 [~~\$100,000~~], excluding
10 interest, court costs, and attorney's fees; and

11 (3) contested probate matters under Section 4D [~~5(b)~~],
12 Texas Probate Code.

13 SECTION 4.15. Subsection (b), Section 25.0212, Government
14 Code, is amended to read as follows:

15 (b) A county court at law does not have [~~general supervisory~~
16 ~~control or appellate review of the commissioners court or~~]
17 jurisdiction of:

18 (1) felony criminal matters;

19 (2) suits on behalf of the state to recover penalties
20 or escheated property;

21 (3) misdemeanors involving official misconduct;

22 (4) contested elections; or

23 (5) civil cases in which the matter in controversy
24 exceeds \$200,000 [~~\$100,000~~], excluding interest, statutory or
25 punitive damages and penalties, and attorney's fees and costs, as
26 alleged on the face of the petition.

27 SECTION 4.16. Subsections (a) and (k), Section 25.0222,

Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a) In addition to the jurisdiction provided by Section 25.0003 and other law, a statutory county court in Brazoria County has concurrent jurisdiction with the district court in:

(1) civil cases in which the matter in controversy exceeds \$500 but does not exceed \$200,000 [~~\$100,000~~], excluding interest, statutory damages and penalties, and attorney's fees and costs, as alleged on the face of the petition;

(2) appeals of final rulings and decisions of the division of workers' compensation of the Texas Department of Insurance regarding workers' compensation claims, regardless of the amount in controversy; and

(3) family law cases and proceedings and juvenile jurisdiction under Section 23.001.

(k) The district clerk serves as clerk of the statutory county courts in cases instituted in the district courts in which the district courts and statutory county courts have concurrent jurisdiction, and the county clerk serves as clerk for all other cases. ~~[The commissioners court may employ as many additional assistant criminal district attorneys, deputy sheriffs, and deputy clerks as are necessary to serve the statutory county courts.]~~

SECTION 4.17. Subsections (e) and (f), Section 25.0302, Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

(e) The district clerk serves as clerk of a county court at law in family law cases and proceedings, and the county clerk serves as clerk of the court in all other cases and proceedings. The district clerk shall establish a separate docket for a county court

1 at law. [~~The commissioners court may employ the assistant district~~
2 ~~attorneys, deputy sheriffs, and bailiffs necessary to serve each~~
3 ~~county court at law.~~]

4 (f) [~~Practice in a county court at law is that prescribed by~~
5 ~~law for county courts, except that practice and procedure, rules of~~
6 ~~evidence, issuance of process and writs, and all other matters~~
7 ~~pertaining to the conduct of trials and hearings in a county court~~
8 ~~at law involving family law cases and proceedings shall be governed~~
9 ~~by this section and the laws and rules pertaining to district~~
10 ~~courts.~~] If a family law case or proceeding is tried before a jury,
11 the jury shall be composed of 12 members.

12 SECTION 4.18. Subsection (b), Section 25.0312, Government
13 Code, is amended to read as follows:

14 (b) A county court at law does not have [~~general supervisory~~
15 ~~control or appellate review of the commissioners court or~~]
16 jurisdiction of:

- 17 (1) felony cases other than writs of habeas corpus;
- 18 (2) misdemeanors involving official misconduct;
- 19 (3) contested elections; or
- 20 (4) appeals from county court.

21 SECTION 4.19. Subsection (b), Section 25.0362, Government
22 Code, is amended to read as follows:

23 (b) A county court at law does not have [~~general supervisory~~
24 ~~control or appellate review of the commissioners court or~~]
25 jurisdiction of:

- 26 (1) misdemeanors involving official misconduct;
- 27 (2) suits on behalf of the state to recover penalties

1 or escheated property;

2 (3) contested elections;

3 (4) suits in which the county is a party; or

4 (5) felony cases involving capital murder.

5 SECTION 4.20. Subsection (f), Section 25.0482, Government
6 Code, is amended to read as follows:

7 (f) The district clerk serves as clerk of a county court at
8 law for family law cases and proceedings, and the county clerk
9 serves as clerk for all other cases and proceedings. ~~[The district
10 clerk shall establish a separate docket for a county court at law.
11 The commissioners court may employ as many assistant county
12 attorneys, deputy sheriffs, and bailiffs as are necessary to serve
13 the county courts at law.]~~

14 SECTION 4.21. Subsection (g), Section 25.0632, Government
15 Code, is amended to read as follows:

16 (g) ~~[Jurors regularly impaneled for the week by the district
17 courts of Denton County must include sufficient numbers to serve in
18 the statutory county courts and statutory probate courts as well as
19 the district courts. The jurors shall be made available by the
20 district judge as necessary.]~~ The jury in a statutory county court
21 or statutory probate court in all civil or criminal matters is
22 composed of 12 members, except that in misdemeanor criminal cases
23 and any other case in which the court has jurisdiction that under
24 general law would be concurrent with the county court, the jury is
25 composed of six members.

26 SECTION 4.22. Subsection (r), Section 25.0732, Government
27 Code, is amended to read as follows:

1 (r) Section [~~Sections~~] 25.0006(b) does [~~and 25.0007 do~~] not
2 apply to County Court at Law No. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 of El Paso
3 County, Texas.

4 SECTION 4.23. Subsection (a), Section 25.0733, Government
5 Code, is amended to read as follows:

6 (a) Sections 25.0732(g) and [~~25.0732(d), (h), (i), (j),~~
7 ~~(m), (n), (o), (p), (q),~~] (r) [~~, and (v)~~], relating to county courts
8 at law in El Paso County, apply to a statutory probate court in El
9 Paso County.

10 SECTION 4.24. Subsections (i) and (l), Section 25.0862,
11 Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

12 (i) [~~The clerk of the statutory county courts and statutory~~
13 ~~probate court shall keep a separate docket for each court.~~] The
14 clerk shall tax the official court reporter's fees as costs in civil
15 actions in the same manner as the fee is taxed in civil cases in the
16 district courts. [~~The district clerk serves as clerk of the county~~
17 ~~courts in a cause of action arising under the Family Code and an~~
18 ~~appeal of a final ruling or decision of the division of workers'~~
19 ~~compensation of the Texas Department of Insurance regarding~~
20 ~~workers' compensation claims, and the county clerk serves as clerk~~
21 ~~of the court in all other cases.~~]

22 (l) Each reporter may be made available when not engaged in
23 proceedings in their court to report proceedings in all other
24 courts. [~~Practice, appeals, and writs of error in a statutory~~
25 ~~county court are as prescribed by law for county courts and county~~
26 ~~courts at law.~~] Appeals and writs of error may be taken from
27 judgments and orders of the County Courts Nos. 1, 2, and 3 of

Galveston County and the judges, in civil and criminal cases, in the manner prescribed by law for appeals and writs of error. Appeals from interlocutory orders of the County Courts Nos. 1, 2, and 3 appointing a receiver or overruling a motion to vacate or appoint a receiver may be taken and are governed by the laws relating to appeals from similar orders of district courts.

SECTION 4.25. Subsection (f), Section 25.0962, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(f) ~~[Practice in a county court at law is that prescribed by law for county courts, except that practice and procedure, rules of evidence, issuance of process and writs, and all other matters pertaining to the conduct of trials and hearings in a county court at law involving cases in the court's concurrent jurisdiction with the district court shall be governed by this section and the laws and rules pertaining to district courts as well as county courts.]~~

If a case in the court's concurrent jurisdiction with the district court is tried before a jury, the jury shall be composed of 12 members.

SECTION 4.26. Subsection (a), Section 25.1033, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) A county criminal court at law in Harris County has the criminal jurisdiction provided by law for county courts, concurrent jurisdiction with civil statutory county courts for Harris County to hear appeals of the suspension of a driver's license and original proceedings regarding occupational driver's licenses, and appellate jurisdiction in appeals of criminal cases from justice courts and municipal courts in the county.

1 SECTION 4.27. Subsection (g), Section 25.1042, Government
2 Code, is amended to read as follows:

3 (g) The criminal district attorney is entitled to the same
4 fees prescribed by law for prosecutions in the county court. ~~[The~~
5 ~~commissioners court may employ as many additional deputy sheriffs~~
6 ~~and clerks as are necessary to serve a county court at law.]~~

7 SECTION 4.28. Subsections (e) and (f), Section 25.1072,
8 Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

9 (e) The county clerk serves as clerk of a county court at
10 law, except that the district clerk serves as clerk of the court in
11 family law cases and proceedings. The district clerk shall
12 establish a separate docket for a county court at law. ~~[The~~
13 ~~commissioners court may employ as many assistant district~~
14 ~~attorneys, deputy sheriffs, and bailiffs as are necessary to serve~~
15 ~~the court.]~~

16 (f) ~~[Practice in a county court at law is that prescribed by~~
17 ~~law for county courts, except that practice and procedure, rules of~~
18 ~~evidence, issuance of process and writs, and other matters~~
19 ~~pertaining to the conduct of trials and hearings in a county court~~
20 ~~at law involving family law cases and proceedings are governed by~~
21 ~~this section and the laws and rules pertaining to district courts,~~
22 ~~as well as county courts.]~~ If a family law case or proceeding is
23 tried before a jury, the jury shall be composed of 12 members.

24 SECTION 4.29. Subsection (b), Section 25.1142, Government
25 Code, is amended to read as follows:

26 (b) A county court at law does not have ~~[general supervisory~~
27 ~~control or appellate review of the commissioners court or]~~

1 jurisdiction of:

- 2 (1) civil cases in which the amount in controversy
3 exceeds \$200,000 [~~\$100,000~~], excluding interest;
4 (2) felony jury trials;
5 (3) suits on behalf of the state to recover penalties
6 or escheated property;
7 (4) misdemeanors involving official misconduct; or
8 (5) contested elections.

9 SECTION 4.30. Subsection (b), Section 25.1182, Government
10 Code, is amended to read as follows:

11 (b) A county court at law's civil jurisdiction concurrent
12 with the district court in civil cases is limited to cases in which
13 the matter in controversy does not exceed \$200,000. A county court
14 at law does not have [~~general supervisory control or appellate~~
15 ~~review of the commissioners court or~~] jurisdiction of:

- 16 (1) suits on behalf of this state to recover penalties
17 or escheated property;
18 (2) felony cases involving capital murder;
19 (3) misdemeanors involving official misconduct; or
20 (4) contested elections.

21 SECTION 4.31. Subsection (b), Section 25.1312, Government
22 Code, is amended to read as follows:

23 (b) A statutory county court in Kaufman County does not have
24 [~~general supervisory control or appellate review of the~~
25 ~~commissioners court or~~] jurisdiction of:

- 26 (1) felony cases involving capital murder;
27 (2) suits on behalf of the state to recover penalties

1 or escheated property;

2 (3) misdemeanors involving official misconduct; or

3 (4) contested elections.

4 SECTION 4.32. Subsection (m), Section 25.1542, Government
5 Code, is amended to read as follows:

6 (m) ~~[Practice and procedure and rules of evidence governing~~
7 ~~trials in and appeals from a county court apply to a county court at~~
8 ~~law, except that practice and procedure, rules of evidence,~~
9 ~~issuance of process and writs, and all other matters pertaining to~~
10 ~~the conduct of trials and hearings involving family law cases and~~
11 ~~proceedings shall be governed by this section and the laws and rules~~
12 ~~pertaining to district courts as well as county courts.]~~ In family
13 law cases, juries shall be composed of 12 members.

14 SECTION 4.33. Subsection (g), Section 25.1652, Government
15 Code, is amended to read as follows:

16 (g) ~~[Practice in a county court at law is that prescribed by~~
17 ~~law for county courts, except that practice and procedure, rules of~~
18 ~~evidence, issuance of process and writs, and all other matters~~
19 ~~pertaining to the conduct of trials and hearings involving family~~
20 ~~law matters and proceedings shall be governed by this section and~~
21 ~~the laws and rules pertaining to district courts.]~~ If a family law
22 case is tried before a jury, the jury shall be composed of 12
23 members.

24 SECTION 4.34. Subsection (i), Section 25.1762, Government
25 Code, is amended to read as follows:

26 (i) ~~[The laws governing the drawing, selection, service,~~
27 ~~and pay of jurors for county courts apply to a county court at law.~~

1 ~~Jurors regularly impaneled for a week by a district court may, at~~
2 ~~the request of the judge of a county court at law, be made available~~
3 ~~by the district judge in the numbers requested and shall serve for~~
4 ~~the week in the county court at law.]~~ In matters of concurrent
5 jurisdiction with the district court, if a party to a suit files a
6 written request for a 12-member jury with the clerk of the county
7 court at law at a reasonable time that is not later than 30 days
8 before the date the suit is set for trial, the jury shall be
9 composed of 12 members.

10 SECTION 4.35. Subsection (b), Section 25.1772, Government
11 Code, is amended to read as follows:

12 (b) A county court at law does not have ~~[general supervisory~~
13 ~~control or appellate review of the commissioners court or]~~
14 jurisdiction of:

- 15 (1) suits on behalf of this state to recover penalties
16 or escheated property;
17 (2) felony cases involving capital murder;
18 (3) misdemeanors involving official misconduct; or
19 (4) contested elections.

20 SECTION 4.36. Subsection (e), Section 25.1892, Government
21 Code, is amended to read as follows:

22 (e) ~~[The county attorney or district attorney serves a~~
23 ~~county court at law as required by the judge.]~~ The district clerk
24 serves as clerk of a county court at law in cases enumerated in
25 Subsection (a)(2), and the county clerk serves as clerk in all other
26 cases. The district clerk shall establish a separate docket for a
27 county court at law. ~~[The commissioners court may employ as many~~

1 ~~additional assistant county attorneys, deputy sheriffs, and clerks~~
2 ~~as are necessary to serve a county court at law.]~~

3 SECTION 4.37. Subsection (i), Section 25.1932, Government
4 Code, is amended to read as follows:

5 (i) ~~[Practice in a county court at law is that prescribed by~~
6 ~~law for county courts, except that practice and procedure, rules of~~
7 ~~evidence, issuance of process and writs, and all other matters~~
8 ~~pertaining to the conduct of trials and hearings in a county court~~
9 ~~at law involving cases in the court's concurrent jurisdiction with~~
10 ~~the district court shall be governed by this section and the laws~~
11 ~~and rules pertaining to district courts as well as county courts.]~~

12 If a case in the court's concurrent jurisdiction with the district
13 court is tried before a jury, the jury shall be composed of 12
14 members.

15 SECTION 4.38. Subsection (b), Section 25.2012, Government
16 Code, is amended to read as follows:

17 (b) A county court at law does not have ~~[general supervisory~~
18 ~~control or appellate review of the commissioners court or]~~
19 jurisdiction of:

20 (1) felony cases involving capital murder;

21 (2) suits on behalf of the state to recover penalties
22 or escheated property;

23 (3) misdemeanors involving official misconduct; or

24 (4) contested elections.

25 SECTION 4.39. Subsection (n), Section 25.2142, Government
26 Code, is amended to read as follows:

27 (n) ~~[A special judge of a county court at law is entitled to~~

1 ~~receive for services actually performed the same amount of~~
2 ~~compensation as the regular judge.]~~ A former judge sitting as a
3 visiting judge of a county court at law is entitled to receive for
4 services performed the same amount of compensation that the regular
5 judge receives, less an amount equal to the pro rata annuity
6 received from any state, district, or county retirement fund. An
7 active judge sitting as a visiting judge of a county court at law is
8 entitled to receive for services performed the same amount of
9 compensation that the regular judge receives, less an amount equal
10 to the pro rata compensation received from state or county funds as
11 salary, including supplements.

12 SECTION 4.40. (a) Subsection (b), Section 25.2222,
13 Government Code, as amended by Chapter 22 (S.B. 124), Acts of the
14 72nd Legislature, Regular Session, 1991, and Chapter 265 (H.B. 7),
15 Acts of the 79th Legislature, Regular Session, 2005, is reenacted
16 and amended to read as follows:

17 (b) A county court at law has concurrent jurisdiction with
18 the district court in:

19 (1) civil cases in which the matter in controversy
20 exceeds \$500 and does not exceed \$200,000 [~~\$100,000~~], excluding
21 mandatory damages and penalties, attorney's fees, interest, and
22 costs;

23 (2) nonjury family law cases and proceedings;

24 (3) final rulings and decisions of the division of
25 workers' compensation of the Texas Department of Insurance
26 regarding workers' compensation claims, regardless of the amount in
27 controversy;

1 (4) eminent domain proceedings, both statutory and
2 inverse, regardless of the amount in controversy;

3 (5) suits to decide the issue of title to real or
4 personal property;

5 (6) suits to recover damages for slander or defamation
6 of character;

7 (7) suits for the enforcement of a lien on real
8 property;

9 (8) suits for the forfeiture of a corporate charter;

10 (9) suits for the trial of the right to property valued
11 at \$200 or more that has been levied on under a writ of execution,
12 sequestration, or attachment; and

13 (10) suits for the recovery of real property.

14 (b) Subsection (b), Section 25.2222, Government Code, as
15 amended by Chapter 746 (H.B. 66), Acts of the 72nd Legislature,
16 Regular Session, 1991, is repealed as duplicative of Subsection
17 (b), Section 25.2222, Government Code, as amended by Subsection (a)
18 of this section.

19 SECTION 4.41. Subsection (a), Section 25.2232, Government
20 Code, is amended to read as follows:

21 (a) In addition to the jurisdiction provided by Section
22 25.0003 and other law, a county court at law in Taylor County has:

23 (1) concurrent jurisdiction with the county court in
24 the trial of cases involving insanity and approval of applications
25 for admission to state hospitals and special schools if admission
26 is by application; and

27 (2) concurrent jurisdiction with the district court in

1 civil cases in which the matter in controversy exceeds \$500 but does
2 not exceed \$200,000 [~~\$100,000~~], excluding interest.

3 SECTION 4.42. Subsection (i), Section 25.2352, Government
4 Code, is amended to read as follows:

5 (i) [~~Practice in a county court at law is that prescribed by~~
6 ~~law for county courts, except that practice and procedure, rules of~~
7 ~~evidence, issuance of process and writs, and all other matters~~
8 ~~pertaining to the conduct of trials and hearings involving family~~
9 ~~law cases and proceedings shall be governed by this section and the~~
10 ~~laws and rules pertaining to district courts.~~] If a family law case
11 is tried before a jury, the jury shall be composed of 12 members.

12 SECTION 4.43. Subsection (i), Section 25.2382, Government
13 Code, is amended to read as follows:

14 (i) [~~Practice in a county court at law is that prescribed by~~
15 ~~law for county courts, except that practice and procedure, rules of~~
16 ~~evidence, issuance of process and writs, and all other matters~~
17 ~~pertaining to the conduct of trials and hearings in a county court~~
18 ~~at law involving matters enumerated in Subsection (a)(2)(B) or (C)~~
19 ~~shall be governed by this section and the laws and rules pertaining~~
20 ~~to district courts.~~] If a family law case [~~in Subsection (a)(2)(B)~~
21 ~~or (C)~~] is tried before a jury, the jury shall be composed of 12
22 members.

23 SECTION 4.44. (a) Subsection (a), Section 25.2421,
24 Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

25 (a) Webb County has the following statutory county courts:

26 (1) the County Court at Law No. 1 of Webb County; [~~and~~]

27 (2) the County Court at Law No. 2 of Webb County; and

1 (3) the County Court at Law No. 3 of Webb County.

2 (b) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), Section 25.2421,
3 Government Code, as amended by this Act, the County Court at Law No.
4 3 of Webb County is created January 1, 2031, or on an earlier date
5 determined by the Commissioners Court of Webb County by an order
6 entered in its minutes.

7 SECTION 4.45. Subsections (g) and (h), Section 25.2422,
8 Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

9 (g) The district attorney of the 49th Judicial District
10 serves as district attorney of a county court at law, except that
11 the county attorney of Webb County prosecutes all juvenile, child
12 welfare, mental health, and other civil cases in which the state is
13 a party. The district clerk serves as clerk of a county court at law
14 in the cases enumerated in Subsection (a)(2), and the county clerk
15 serves as clerk of a county court at law in all other cases. [~~The~~
16 ~~commissioners court may employ as many deputy sheriffs and bailiffs~~
17 ~~as are necessary to serve the court.~~]

18 (h) [~~Practice and procedure, rules of evidence, issuance of~~
19 ~~process and writs, and all other matters pertaining to the conduct~~
20 ~~of trials and hearings in a county court at law involving those~~
21 ~~matters of concurrent jurisdiction enumerated in Subsection~~
22 ~~(a)(2)(B) or (C) are governed by this section and the laws and rules~~
23 ~~pertaining to district courts, as well as county courts.~~] If a
24 family law case [~~enumerated in Subsection (a)(2)(B) or (C)~~] is
25 tried before a jury, the jury shall be composed of 12 members.

26 SECTION 4.46. Subsections (d) and (k), Section 25.2452,
27 Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

(d) A county court at law does not have jurisdiction of:

(1) a case under:

(A) the Alcoholic Beverage Code;

(B) the Election Code; or

(C) the Tax Code;

(2) a matter over which the district court has exclusive jurisdiction; or

(3) a civil case, other than a case under the Family Code or the Texas Probate Code, in which the amount in controversy is:

(A) less than the maximum amount in controversy allowed the justice court in Wichita County; or

(B) more than \$200,000 [~~\$100,000~~], exclusive of punitive or exemplary damages, penalties, interest, costs, and attorney's fees.

(k) Except as otherwise required by law, if a case is tried before a jury, the jury shall be composed of six members and may render verdicts by a five to one margin in civil cases and a unanimous verdict in criminal cases. ~~[The laws governing the drawing, selection, service, and pay of jurors for county courts apply to the county courts at law. Jurors regularly impaneled for a week by a district court may, on request of the county judge exercising the jurisdiction provided by this section or a county court at law judge, be made available and shall serve for the week in the county court or county court at law.]~~

SECTION 4.47. Subsection (h), Section 25.2462, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

1 (h) ~~[The county attorney and the county sheriff shall attend~~
2 ~~a county court at law as required by the judge.]~~ The district clerk
3 serves as clerk of a county court at law in family law cases and
4 proceedings, and the county clerk serves as clerk of the court in
5 all other cases and proceedings.

6 SECTION 4.48. Subsection (i), Section 25.2482, Government
7 Code, is amended to read as follows:

8 (i) ~~[The county attorney and the county sheriff shall attend~~
9 ~~a county court at law as required by the judge.]~~ The district clerk
10 serves as clerk of a county court at law in family law cases and
11 proceedings, and the county clerk serves as clerk of the court in
12 all other cases and proceedings.

13 SECTION 4.49. Subsection (e), Section 25.2512, Government
14 Code, as effective September 1, 2011, is amended to read as follows:

15 (e) In addition to the qualifications required by Section
16 25.0014, a regular judge of a county court at law must have the
17 qualifications of a district judge as required by Section 7,
18 Article V, Texas Constitution. ~~[A special judge of a county court~~
19 ~~at law with the same qualifications as the regular judge may be~~
20 ~~appointed in the manner provided by law for the appointment of a~~
21 ~~special county judge. A special judge is entitled to the same rate~~
22 ~~of compensation as the regular judge.]~~

23 SECTION 4.50. (a) The following provisions of the
24 Government Code are repealed:

25 (1) Subsections (b), (d), (f), and (j), Section
26 25.0042;

27 (2) Subsections (b), (f), (g), and (h), Section

1 25.0052;
2 (3) Subsections (b), (d), (f), and (i), Section
3 25.0102;
4 (4) Subsections (d), (g), and (h), Section 25.0132;
5 (5) Subsections (c) and (e), Section 25.0152;
6 (6) Subsections (b), (f), (g), (h), and (i), Section
7 25.0162;
8 (7) Subsections (d), (k), (l), (m), (n), (o), (q),
9 (s), and (t), Section 25.0172;
10 (8) Subsections (c), (d), (h), (i), and (k), Section
11 25.0173;
12 (9) Subsections (c), (d), and (g), Section 25.0202;
13 (10) Subsections (c), (e), and (g), Section 25.0212;
14 (11) Subsections (d), (e), (i), (j), and (n), Section
15 25.0222;
16 (12) Subsections (b), (d), (f), (h), and (i), Section
17 25.0232;
18 (13) Subsections (b), (c), and (e), Section 25.0272;
19 (14) Subsections (b), (c), (g), (h), and (i), Section
20 25.0292;
21 (15) Subsections (b), (d), and (g), Section 25.0302;
22 (16) Subsections (c), (e), and (j), Section 25.0312;
23 (17) Subsections (e), (g), (i), (k), (l), and (m),
24 Section 25.0332;
25 (18) Subsection (c), Section 25.0362;
26 (19) Subsections (b), (d), (f), (i), (j), and (k),
27 Section 25.0392;

- 1 (20) Subsections (b), (c), and (d), Section 25.0452;
2 (21) Subsections (a), (c), (d), and (e), Section
3 25.0453;
4 (22) Subsections (b), (d), (e), (g), and (h), Section
5 25.0482;
6 (23) Subsections (a), (b), (d), (g), and (h), Section
7 25.0512;
8 (24) Subsections (b), (d), (f), and (g), Section
9 25.0522;
10 (25) Subsections (b), (h), (i), (j), and (k), Section
11 25.0592;
12 (26) Subsections (d), (f), (g), (h), (i), and (j),
13 Section 25.0593;
14 (27) Subsections (d), (e), (g), (h), (i), (j), and
15 (k), Section 25.0594;
16 (28) Subsections (c), (d), (f), and (g), Section
17 25.0595;
18 (29) Section 25.0596;
19 (30) Subsections (a), (b), and (d), Section 25.0632;
20 (31) Subsections (b), (g), (h), (j), (k), and (l),
21 Section 25.0702;
22 (32) Subsections (b), (d), (f), (j), and (k), Section
23 25.0722;
24 (33) Subsections (d), (g), (h), (i), (j), (m), (n),
25 (o), (p), (s), and (v), Section 25.0732;
26 (34) Subsections (c), (d), and (f), Section 25.0733;
27 (35) Subsection (b), Section 25.0742;

- 1 (36) Subsections (d), (f), (h), (j), and (l), Section
2 25.0812;
- 3 (37) Subsections (f) and (j), Section 25.0862;
- 4 (38) Subsections (e), (f), and (i), Section 25.0932;
- 5 (39) Subsections (c), (f), (g), (j), and (k), Section
6 25.0942;
- 7 (40) Subsections (d), (e), and (g), Section 25.0962;
- 8 (41) Subsections (d), (e), (g), (h), and (k), Section
9 25.1032;
- 10 (42) Subsections (d), (e), (f), (m), and (o), Section
11 25.1033;
- 12 (43) Subsections (c), (h), (k), and (l), Section
13 25.1034;
- 14 (44) Subsections (b), (d), (f), (h), and (i), Section
15 25.1042;
- 16 (45) Subsections (b), (d), (g), and (h), Section
17 25.1072;
- 18 (46) Subsections (e), (f), (l), and (o), Section
19 25.1092;
- 20 (47) Subsections (d), (e), (h), (i), (j), and (l),
21 Section 25.1102;
- 22 (48) Section 25.1103;
- 23 (49) Subsections (b), (c), (f), and (k), Section
24 25.1112;
- 25 (50) Subsections (f), (g), (h), (j), (l), (m), and
26 (p), Section 25.1132;
- 27 (51) Subsections (c), (e), and (g), Section 25.1142;

- 1 (52) Subsections (b), (e), (f), (h), and (i), Section
2 25.1152;
- 3 (53) Subsections (c), (e), and (h), Section 25.1182;
- 4 (54) Subsections (c), (g), and (i), Section 25.1252;
- 5 (55) Subsections (b), (d), (f), (h), and (i), Section
6 25.1282;
- 7 (56) Subsections (d), (e), (i), (k), (l), and (n),
8 Section 25.1312;
- 9 (57) Subsections (d), (e), (f), (i), and (j), Section
10 25.1322;
- 11 (58) Subsections (d) and (h), Section 25.1352;
- 12 (59) Subsections (e), (g), and (i), Section 25.1392;
- 13 (60) Subsections (b), (c), (e), (h), (i), and (k),
14 Section 25.1412;
- 15 (61) Subsections (d), (g), (h), (l), and (m), Section
16 25.1482;
- 17 (62) Subsections (f), (i), (k), and (n), Section
18 25.1542;
- 19 (63) Subsections (e), (f), and (g), Section 25.1572;
- 20 (64) Subsections (d), (f), and (h), Section 25.1652;
- 21 (65) Subsections (b) and (f), Section 25.1672;
- 22 (66) Subsections (b), (c), and (g), Section 25.1722;
- 23 (67) Subsections (d), (e), (f), (h), and (i), Section
24 25.1732;
- 25 (68) Subsections (b), (e), (f), and (h), Section
26 25.1762;
- 27 (69) Subsections (c), (e), and (h), Section 25.1772;

1 (70) Subsections (e), (f), (h), (i), and (j), Section
2 25.1792;
3 (71) Subsections (c), (h), (i), (j), (k), (l), and
4 (q), Section 25.1802;
5 (72) Subsections (b), (d), and (j), Section 25.1832;
6 (73) Subsections (e), (f), and (i), Section 25.1852;
7 (74) Subsections (c), (f), (h), (i), (j), (m), (n),
8 (p), (q), and (u), Section 25.1862;
9 (75) Subsection (d), Section 25.1892;
10 (76) Subsections (e), (g), (i), (j), and (k), Section
11 25.1902;
12 (77) Subsections (b), (c), (f), (h), and (j), Section
13 25.1932;
14 (78) Subsections (b), (d), (f), (h), and (j), Section
15 25.1972;
16 (79) Subsections (d), (e), (i), (k), (l), and (n),
17 Section 25.2012;
18 (80) Subsections (c), (e), and (h), Section 25.2032;
19 (81) Subsections (c), (e), (f), (h), and (i), Section
20 25.2072;
21 (82) Subsections (c), (e), (i), (r), (t), and (u),
22 Section 25.2142;
23 (83) Subsections (d), (f), (h), (j), and (k), Section
24 25.2162;
25 (84) Subsections (c), (g), (h), (i), (k), and (n),
26 Section 25.2222;
27 (85) Subsections (c), (e), (g), and (h), Section

1 25.2223;
2 (86) Subsections (b), (c), (f), (g), (i), and (j),
3 Section 25.2224;
4 (87) Subsections (b), (e), (f), and (g), Section
5 25.2232;
6 (88) Subsections (b), (d), (f), (g), (i), and (j),
7 Section 25.2282;
8 (89) Subsections (b), (e), (i), (k), and (l), Section
9 25.2292;
10 (90) Subsections (e), (f), (g), (k), and (l), Section
11 25.2293;
12 (91) Subsections (b), (d), (f), (g), and (j), Section
13 25.2352;
14 (92) Subsections (c), (e), and (h), Section 25.2362;
15 (93) Subsections (c), (f), (g), (h), and (i), Section
16 25.2372;
17 (94) Subsections (b), (d), (f), and (j), Section
18 25.2382;
19 (95) Subsections (b), (d), (f), and (j), Section
20 25.2392;
21 (96) Subsections (b), (d), (f), (i), and (k), Section
22 25.2412;
23 (97) Subsections (b), (d), (f), (i), and (j), Section
24 25.2422;
25 (98) Subsections (f), (h), and (j), Section 25.2452;
26 (99) Subsections (c), (d), (e), (g), (i), and (j),
27 Section 25.2462;

(100) Subsections (d), (e), (f), (h), (j), and (k),
Section 25.2482; and

(101) Subsections (b) and (i), Section 25.2512.

(b) The repeal of Subsection (d), Section 25.1042, and
Subsection (d), Section 25.2162, Government Code, apply only to a
regular judge serving a term for which the judge is elected on or
after the effective date of this Act. A judge serving a term for
which the judge was elected before the effective date of this Act is
governed by the law in effect on the date the judge was elected, and
that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

ARTICLE 5. PROVISIONS RELATING TO JUSTICE AND SMALL CLAIMS COURTS

SECTION 5.01. (a) Subsection (a), Section 27.005,
Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) For purposes of removal under Chapter 87, Local
Government Code, "incompetency" in the case of a justice of the
peace includes the failure of the justice to successfully complete:

(1) within one year after the date the justice is first
elected, an 80-hour course in the performance of the justice's
duties; and

(2) each following year, a 20-hour course in the
performance of the justice's duties, including not less than 10
hours of instruction regarding substantive, procedural, and
evidentiary law in civil matters.

(b) Subsection (a), Section 27.005, Government Code, as
amended by this section, applies to a justice of the peace serving
on or after the effective date of this article, regardless of the
date the justice was elected or appointed.

SECTION 5.02. Subchapter C, Chapter 27, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 27.060 to read as follows:

Sec. 27.060. SMALL CLAIMS. (a) A justice court shall conduct proceedings in a small claims case, as that term is defined by the supreme court, in accordance with rules of civil procedure promulgated by the supreme court to ensure the fair, expeditious, and inexpensive resolution of small claims cases.

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), rules of the supreme court must provide that:

(1) if both parties appear, the judge shall proceed to hear the case;

(2) formal pleadings other than the statement are not required;

(3) the judge shall hear the testimony of the parties and the witnesses that the parties produce and shall consider the other evidence offered;

(4) the hearing is informal, with the sole objective being to dispense speedy justice between the parties;

(5) discovery is limited to that considered appropriate and permitted by the judge; and

(6) the judge shall develop the facts of the case, and for that purpose may question a witness or party and may summon any party to appear as a witness as the judge considers necessary to a correct judgment and speedy disposition of the case.

(c) The rules of the supreme court must provide specific procedures for an action by:

(1) an assignee of a claim or other person seeking to

1 bring an action on an assigned claim;

2 (2) a person primarily engaged in the business of
3 lending money at interest; or

4 (3) a collection agency or collection agent.

5 (d) The rules adopted by the supreme court may not:

6 (1) require that a party in a case be represented by an
7 attorney;

8 (2) be so complex that a reasonable person without
9 legal training would have difficulty understanding or applying the
10 rules; or

11 (3) require that discovery rules adopted under the
12 Texas Rules of Civil Procedure or the Texas Rules of Evidence be
13 applied except to the extent the justice of the peace hearing the
14 case determines that the rules must be followed to ensure that the
15 proceeding is fair to all parties.

16 (e) A committee established by the supreme court to
17 recommend rules to be adopted under this section must include
18 justices of the peace.

19 SECTION 5.03. Subchapter C, Chapter 27, Government Code, is
20 amended by adding Section 27.061 to read as follows:

21 Sec. 27.061. RULES OF ADMINISTRATION. The justices of the
22 peace in each county shall, by majority vote, adopt local rules of
23 administration.

24 SECTION 5.04. Subchapter E, Chapter 15, Civil Practice and
25 Remedies Code, is amended by adding Section 15.0821 to read as
26 follows:

27 Sec. 15.0821. ADMINISTRATIVE RULES FOR TRANSFER. The

1 justices of the peace in each county shall, by majority vote, adopt
2 local rules of administration regarding the transfer of a pending
3 case from one precinct to a different precinct.

4 SECTION 5.05. Article 4.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, is
5 amended by adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

6 (e) The justices of the peace in each county shall, by
7 majority vote, adopt local rules of administration regarding the
8 transfer of a pending misdemeanor case from one precinct to a
9 different precinct.

10 SECTION 5.06. (a) Chapter 28, Government Code, is
11 repealed.

12 (b) On the effective date of this section, each small claims
13 court under Chapter 28, Government Code, is abolished.

14 SECTION 5.07. Not later than May 1, 2013, the Texas Supreme
15 Court shall promulgate:

16 (1) rules to define cases that constitute small claims
17 cases;

18 (2) rules of civil procedure applicable to small
19 claims cases as required by Section 27.060, Government Code, as
20 added by this article; and

21 (3) rules for eviction proceedings.

22 SECTION 5.08. (a) Immediately before the date the small
23 claims court in a county is abolished in accordance with this
24 article, the justice of the peace sitting as judge of that court
25 shall transfer all cases pending in the court to a justice court in
26 the county.

27 (b) When a case is transferred as provided by Subsection (a)

1 of this section, all processes, writs, bonds, recognizances, or
2 other obligations issued from the transferring court are returnable
3 to the court to which the case is transferred as if originally
4 issued by that court. The obligees on all bonds and recognizances
5 taken in and for the transferring court and all witnesses summoned
6 to appear in the transferring court are required to appear before
7 the court to which the case is transferred as if originally required
8 to appear before that court.

9 SECTION 5.09. Sections 5.02 and 5.06 of this article take
10 effect May 1, 2013.

11 ARTICLE 6. ASSOCIATE JUDGES

12 SECTION 6.01. Subtitle D, Title 2, Government Code, is
13 amended by adding Chapter 54A to read as follows:

14 CHAPTER 54A. ASSOCIATE JUDGES

15 SUBCHAPTER A. CRIMINAL ASSOCIATE JUDGES

16 Sec. 54A.001. APPLICABILITY. This subchapter applies to a
17 district court or a statutory county court that hears criminal
18 cases.

19 Sec. 54A.002. APPOINTMENT. (a) A judge of a court subject
20 to this subchapter may appoint a full-time or part-time associate
21 judge to perform the duties authorized by this subchapter if the
22 commissioners court of the county in which the court has
23 jurisdiction has authorized the creation of an associate judge
24 position.

25 (b) If a court has jurisdiction in more than one county, an
26 associate judge appointed by that court may serve only in a county
27 in which the commissioners court has authorized the appointment.

1 (c) If more than one court in a county is subject to this
2 subchapter, the commissioners court may authorize the appointment
3 of an associate judge for each court or may authorize one or more
4 associate judges to share service with two or more courts.

5 (d) If an associate judge serves more than one court, the
6 associate judge's appointment must be made as established by local
7 rule, but in no event by less than a vote of two-thirds of the judges
8 under whom the associate judge serves.

9 Sec. 54A.003. QUALIFICATIONS. To qualify for appointment
10 as an associate judge under this subchapter, a person must:

11 (1) be a resident of this state and one of the counties
12 the person will serve;

13 (2) have been licensed to practice law in this state
14 for at least four years;

15 (3) not have been removed from office by impeachment,
16 by the supreme court, by the governor on address to the legislature,
17 by a tribunal reviewing a recommendation of the State Commission on
18 Judicial Conduct, or by the legislature's abolition of the judge's
19 court; and

20 (4) not have resigned from office after having
21 received notice that formal proceedings by the State Commission on
22 Judicial Conduct had been instituted as provided by Section 33.022
23 and before final disposition of the proceedings.

24 Sec. 54A.004. COMPENSATION. (a) An associate judge shall
25 be paid a salary determined by the commissioners court of the county
26 in which the associate judge serves.

27 (b) If an associate judge serves in more than one county,

1 the associate judge shall be paid a salary as determined by
2 agreement of the commissioners courts of the counties in which the
3 associate judge serves.

4 (c) The associate judge's salary is paid from the county
5 fund available for payment of officers' salaries.

6 Sec. 54A.005. TERMINATION. (a) An associate judge who
7 serves a single court serves at the will of the judge of that court.

8 (b) The employment of an associate judge who serves more
9 than two courts may only be terminated by a majority vote of all the
10 judges of the courts the associate judge serves.

11 (c) The employment of an associate judge who serves two
12 courts may be terminated by either of the judges of the courts the
13 associate judge serves.

14 (d) To terminate an associate judge's employment, the
15 appropriate judges must sign a written order of termination. The
16 order must state:

17 (1) the associate judge's name and state bar
18 identification number;

19 (2) each court ordering termination; and

20 (3) the date the associate judge's employment ends.

21 Sec. 54A.006. PROCEEDINGS THAT MAY BE REFERRED. (a) A
22 judge may refer to an associate judge any matter arising out of a
23 criminal case involving:

24 (1) a negotiated plea of guilty or no contest before
25 the court;

26 (2) a bond forfeiture;

27 (3) a pretrial motion;

1 (4) a writ of habeas corpus;
2 (5) an examining trial;
3 (6) an occupational driver's license;
4 (7) an appeal of an administrative driver's license
5 revocation hearing;
6 (8) a civil commitment matter under Subtitle C, Title
7 7, Health and Safety Code;
8 (9) setting, adjusting, or revoking bond;
9 (10) the issuance of search warrants, including a
10 search warrant under Article 18.02(10), Code of Criminal Procedure,
11 notwithstanding Article 18.01(c), Code of Criminal Procedure; and
12 (11) any other matter the judge considers necessary
13 and proper.

14 (b) An associate judge may accept an agreed plea of guilty
15 or no contest from a defendant charged with misdemeanor, felony, or
16 both misdemeanor and felony offenses and may assess punishment if a
17 plea agreement is announced on the record between the defendant and
18 the state.

19 (c) An associate judge has all of the powers of a magistrate
20 under the laws of this state and may administer an oath for any
21 purpose.

22 (d) An associate judge may select a jury. Except as
23 provided in Subsection (b), an associate judge may not preside over
24 a trial on the merits, whether or not the trial is before a jury.

25 Sec. 54A.007. ORDER OF REFERRAL. (a) To refer one or more
26 cases to an associate judge, a judge must issue a written order of
27 referral that specifies the associate judge's duties.

1 (b) An order of referral may:

2 (1) limit the powers of the associate judge and direct
3 the associate judge to report only on specific issues, do
4 particular acts, or receive and report on evidence only;

5 (2) set the time and place for the hearing;

6 (3) prescribe a closing date for the hearing;

7 (4) provide a date for filing the associate judge's
8 findings;

9 (5) designate proceedings for more than one case over
10 which the associate judge shall preside;

11 (6) direct the associate judge to call the court's
12 docket; and

13 (7) set forth general powers and limitations or
14 authority of the associate judge applicable to any case referred.

15 Sec. 54A.008. POWERS. (a) Except as limited by an order of
16 referral, an associate judge to whom a case is referred may:

17 (1) conduct hearings;

18 (2) hear evidence;

19 (3) compel production of relevant evidence;

20 (4) rule on the admissibility of evidence;

21 (5) issue summons for the appearance of witnesses;

22 (6) examine a witness;

23 (7) swear a witness for a hearing;

24 (8) make findings of fact on evidence;

25 (9) formulate conclusions of law;

26 (10) rule on pretrial motions;

27 (11) recommend the rulings, orders, or judgment to be

1 made in a case;

2 (12) regulate proceedings in a hearing;

3 (13) order the attachment of a witness or party who
4 fails to obey a subpoena;

5 (14) accept a plea of guilty from a defendant charged
6 with misdemeanor, felony, or both misdemeanor and felony offenses;

7 (15) select a jury;

8 (16) notwithstanding Article 18.01(c), Code of
9 Criminal Procedure, issue a search warrant, including a search
10 warrant under Article 18.02(10), Code of Criminal Procedure; and

11 (17) take action as necessary and proper for the
12 efficient performance of the duties required by the order of
13 referral.

14 (b) An associate judge may not enter a ruling on any issue of
15 law or fact if that ruling could result in dismissal or require
16 dismissal of a pending criminal prosecution, but the associate
17 judge may make findings, conclusions, and recommendations on those
18 issues.

19 (c) Except as limited by an order of referral, an associate
20 judge who is appointed by a district or statutory county court judge
21 and to whom a case is referred may accept a plea of guilty or nolo
22 contendere in a misdemeanor case for a county criminal court. The
23 associate judge shall forward any fee or fine collected for the
24 misdemeanor offense to the county clerk.

25 (d) An associate judge may, in the interest of justice,
26 refer a case back to the referring court regardless of whether a
27 timely objection to the associate judge hearing the trial on the

1 merits or presiding at a jury trial has been made by any party.

2 Sec. 54A.009. ATTENDANCE OF BAILIFF. A bailiff shall
3 attend a hearing by an associate judge if directed by the referring
4 court.

5 Sec. 54A.010. COURT REPORTER. At the request of a party,
6 the court shall provide a court reporter to record the proceedings
7 before the associate judge.

8 Sec. 54A.011. WITNESS. (a) A witness appearing before an
9 associate judge is subject to the penalties for perjury provided by
10 law.

11 (b) A referring court may issue attachment against and may
12 fine or imprison a witness whose failure to appear after being
13 summoned or whose refusal to answer questions has been certified to
14 the court.

15 Sec. 54A.012. PAPERS TRANSMITTED TO JUDGE. At the
16 conclusion of the proceedings, an associate judge shall transmit to
17 the referring court any papers relating to the case, including the
18 associate judge's findings, conclusions, orders, recommendations,
19 or other action taken.

20 Sec. 54A.013. JUDICIAL ACTION. (a) Not later than the
21 30th day after the date an action is taken by an associate judge, a
22 referring court may modify, correct, reject, reverse, or recommit
23 for further information the action taken by the associate judge.

24 (b) If the court does not modify, correct, reject, reverse,
25 or recommit an action to the associate judge, the action becomes the
26 decree of the court.

27 Sec. 54A.014. JUDICIAL IMMUNITY. An associate judge has

1 the same judicial immunity as a district judge.

2 [Sections 54A.015-54A.100 reserved for expansion]

3 SUBCHAPTER B. CIVIL ASSOCIATE JUDGES

4 Sec. 54A.101. APPLICABILITY. This subchapter applies to a
5 district court or a statutory county court that is assigned civil
6 cases.

7 Sec. 54A.102. APPOINTMENT. (a) A judge of a court subject
8 to this subchapter may appoint a full-time or part-time associate
9 judge to perform the duties authorized by this subchapter if the
10 commissioners court of the county in which the court has
11 jurisdiction has authorized the creation of an associate judge
12 position.

13 (b) If a district court has jurisdiction in more than one
14 county, an associate judge appointed by that court may serve only in
15 a county in which the commissioners court has authorized the
16 appointment.

17 (c) If more than one court in a county is subject to this
18 subchapter, the commissioners court may authorize the appointment
19 of an associate judge for each court or may authorize one or more
20 associate judges to share service with two or more courts.

21 (d) If an associate judge serves more than one court, the
22 associate judge's appointment must be made as established by local
23 rule, but in no event by less than a vote of two-thirds of the judges
24 under whom the associate judge serves.

25 Sec. 54A.103. QUALIFICATIONS. To qualify for appointment
26 as an associate judge under this subchapter, a person must:

27 (1) be a resident of this state and one of the counties

1 the person will serve;

2 (2) have been licensed to practice law in this state
3 for at least four years;

4 (3) not have been removed from office by impeachment,
5 by the supreme court, by the governor on address to the legislature,
6 by a tribunal reviewing a recommendation of the State Commission on
7 Judicial Conduct, or by the legislature's abolition of the judge's
8 court; and

9 (4) not have resigned from office after having
10 received notice that formal proceedings by the State Commission on
11 Judicial Conduct had been instituted as provided in Section 33.022
12 and before final disposition of the proceedings.

13 Sec. 54A.104. COMPENSATION. (a) An associate judge shall
14 be paid a salary determined by the commissioners court of the county
15 in which the associate judge serves.

16 (b) If an associate judge serves in more than one county,
17 the associate judge shall be paid a salary as determined by
18 agreement of the commissioners courts of the counties in which the
19 associate judge serves.

20 (c) The associate judge's salary is paid from the county
21 fund available for payment of officers' salaries.

22 Sec. 54A.105. TERMINATION. (a) An associate judge who
23 serves a single court serves at the will of the judge of that court.

24 (b) The employment of an associate judge who serves more
25 than two courts may only be terminated by a majority vote of all the
26 judges of the courts the associate judge serves.

27 (c) The employment of an associate judge who serves two

1 courts may be terminated by either of the judges of the courts the
2 associate judge serves.

3 (d) To terminate an associate judge's employment, the
4 appropriate judges must sign a written order of termination. The
5 order must state:

6 (1) the associate judge's name and state bar
7 identification number;

8 (2) each court ordering termination; and

9 (3) the date the associate judge's employment ends.

10 Sec. 54A.106. CASES THAT MAY BE REFERRED. (a) Except as
11 provided by this section, a judge of a court may refer any civil
12 case or portion of a civil case to an associate judge for
13 resolution.

14 (b) Unless a party files a written objection to the
15 associate judge hearing a trial on the merits, the judge may refer
16 the trial to the associate judge. A trial on the merits is any final
17 adjudication from which an appeal may be taken to a court of
18 appeals.

19 (c) A party must file an objection to an associate judge
20 hearing a trial on the merits or presiding at a jury trial not later
21 than the 10th day after the date the party receives notice that the
22 associate judge will hear the trial. If an objection is filed, the
23 referring court shall hear the trial on the merits or preside at a
24 jury trial.

25 Sec. 54A.107. METHODS OF REFERRAL. (a) A case may be
26 referred to an associate judge by an order of referral in a specific
27 case or by an omnibus order.

1 (b) The order of referral may limit the powers or duties of
2 an associate judge.

3 Sec. 54A.108. POWERS. (a) Except as limited by an order of
4 referral, an associate judge may:

- 5 (1) conduct hearings;
- 6 (2) hear evidence;
- 7 (3) compel production of relevant evidence;
- 8 (4) rule on the admissibility of evidence;
- 9 (5) issue summons for the appearance of witnesses;
- 10 (6) examine a witness;
- 11 (7) swear a witness for a hearing;
- 12 (8) make findings of fact on evidence;
- 13 (9) formulate conclusions of law;
- 14 (10) rule on pretrial motions;
- 15 (11) recommend the rulings, orders, or judgment to be
16 made in a case;
- 17 (12) regulate proceedings in a hearing;
- 18 (13) order the attachment of a witness or party who
19 fails to obey a subpoena; and
- 20 (14) take action as necessary and proper for the
21 efficient performance of the duties required by the order of
22 referral.

23 (b) An associate judge may, in the interest of justice,
24 refer a case back to the referring court regardless of whether a
25 timely objection to the associate judge hearing the trial on the
26 merits or presiding at a jury trial has been made by any party.

27 Sec. 54A.109. WITNESS. (a) A witness appearing before an

1 associate judge is subject to the penalties for perjury provided by
2 law.

3 (b) A referring court may fine or imprison a witness who:

4 (1) failed to appear before an associate judge after
5 being summoned; or

6 (2) improperly refused to answer questions if the
7 refusal has been certified to the court by the associate judge.

8 Sec. 54A.110. COURT REPORTER; RECORD. (a) A court
9 reporter may be provided during a hearing held by an associate judge
10 appointed under this subchapter. A court reporter is required to be
11 provided when the associate judge presides over a jury trial.

12 (b) A party, the associate judge, or the referring court may
13 provide for a reporter during the hearing if one is not otherwise
14 provided.

15 (c) Except as provided by Subsection (a), in the absence of
16 a court reporter or on agreement of the parties, the record may be
17 preserved by any means approved by the associate judge.

18 (d) The referring court or associate judge may assess the
19 expense of preserving the record under Subsection (c) as costs.

20 (e) On appeal of the associate judge's report or proposed
21 order, the referring court may consider testimony or other evidence
22 in the record if the record is taken by a court reporter.

23 Sec. 54A.111. NOTICE OF DECISION; APPEAL. (a) After
24 hearing a matter, an associate judge shall notify each attorney
25 participating in the hearing of the associate judge's decision. An
26 associate judge's decision has the same force and effect as an order
27 of the referring court unless a party appeals the decision as

1 provided by Subsection (b).

2 (b) To appeal an associate judge's decision, other than the
3 issuance of a temporary restraining order or temporary injunction,
4 a party must file an appeal in the referring court not later than
5 the seventh day after the date the party receives notice of the
6 decision under Subsection (a).

7 (c) A temporary restraining order issued by an associate
8 judge is effective immediately and expires on the 15th day after the
9 date of issuance unless, after a hearing, the order is modified or
10 extended by the associate judge or referring judge.

11 (d) A temporary injunction issued by an associate judge is
12 effective immediately and continues during the pendency of a trial
13 unless, after a hearing, the order is modified by a referring judge.

14 (e) A matter appealed to the referring court shall be tried
15 de novo and is limited to only those matters specified in the
16 appeal. Except on leave of court, a party may not submit on appeal
17 any additional evidence or pleadings.

18 Sec. 54A.112. NOTICE OF RIGHT TO DE NOVO HEARING; WAIVER.

19 (a) Notice of the right to a de novo hearing before the referring
20 court shall be given to all parties.

21 (b) The notice may be given:

22 (1) by oral statement in open court;
23 (2) by posting inside or outside the courtroom of the
24 referring court; or

25 (3) as otherwise directed by the referring court.

26 (c) Before the start of a hearing by an associate judge, a
27 party may waive the right of a de novo hearing before the referring

1 court in writing or on the record.

2 Sec. 54A.113. ORDER OF COURT. (a) Pending a de novo
3 hearing before the referring court, a proposed order or judgment of
4 the associate judge is in full force and effect and is enforceable
5 as an order or judgment of the referring court, except for an order
6 providing for the appointment of a receiver.

7 (b) If a request for a de novo hearing before the referring
8 court is not timely filed or the right to a de novo hearing before
9 the referring court is waived, the proposed order or judgment of the
10 associate judge becomes the order or judgment of the referring
11 court only on the referring court's signing the proposed order or
12 judgment.

13 (c) An order by an associate judge for the temporary
14 detention or incarceration of a witness or party shall be presented
15 to the referring court on the day the witness or party is detained
16 or incarcerated. The referring court, without prejudice to the
17 right to a de novo hearing provided by Section 54A.115, may approve
18 the temporary detention or incarceration or may order the release
19 of the party or witness, with or without bond, pending a de novo
20 hearing. If the referring court is not immediately available, the
21 associate judge may order the release of the party or witness, with
22 or without bond, pending a de novo hearing or may continue the
23 person's detention or incarceration for not more than 72 hours.

24 Sec. 54A.114. JUDICIAL ACTION ON ASSOCIATE JUDGE'S PROPOSED
25 ORDER OR JUDGMENT. Unless a party files a written request for a de
26 novo hearing before the referring court, the referring court may:

27 (1) adopt, modify, or reject the associate judge's

1 proposed order or judgment;

2 (2) hear additional evidence; or

3 (3) recommit the matter to the associate judge for
4 further proceedings.

5 Sec. 54A.115. DE NOVO HEARING. (a) A party may request a
6 de novo hearing before the referring court by filing with the clerk
7 of the referring court a written request not later than the seventh
8 working day after the date the party receives notice of the
9 substance of the associate judge's decision as provided by Section
10 54A.111.

11 (b) A request for a de novo hearing under this section must
12 specify the issues that will be presented to the referring court.
13 The de novo hearing is limited to the specified issues.

14 (c) Notice of a request for a de novo hearing before the
15 referring court shall be given to the opposing attorney in the
16 manner provided by Rule 21a, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

17 (d) If a request for a de novo hearing before the referring
18 court is filed by a party, any other party may file a request for a
19 de novo hearing before the referring court not later than the
20 seventh working day after the date the initial request was filed.

21 (e) The referring court, after notice to the parties, shall
22 hold a de novo hearing not later than the 30th day after the date the
23 initial request for a de novo hearing was filed with the clerk of
24 the referring court.

25 (f) In the de novo hearing before the referring court, the
26 parties may present witnesses on the issues specified in the
27 request for hearing. The referring court may also consider the

1 record from the hearing before the associate judge, including the
2 charge to and verdict returned by a jury, if the record was taken by
3 a court reporter.

4 (g) The denial of relief to a party after a de novo hearing
5 under this section or a party's waiver of the right to a de novo
6 hearing before the referring court does not affect the right of a
7 party to file a motion for new trial, a motion for judgment
8 notwithstanding the verdict, or other posttrial motions.

9 (h) A party may not demand a second jury in a de novo hearing
10 before the referring court if the associate judge's proposed order
11 or judgment resulted from a jury trial.

12 Sec. 54A.116. APPELLATE REVIEW. (a) A party's failure to
13 request a de novo hearing before the referring court or a party's
14 waiver of the right to request a de novo hearing before the
15 referring court does not deprive the party of the right to appeal to
16 or request other relief from a court of appeals or the supreme
17 court.

18 (b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), the date an order
19 or judgment by the referring court is signed is the controlling date
20 for the purposes of appeal to or request for other relief from a
21 court of appeals or the supreme court.

22 (c) The date an agreed order or a default order is signed by
23 an associate judge is the controlling date for the purpose of an
24 appeal to, or a request for other relief relating to the order from,
25 a court of appeals or the supreme court.

26 Sec. 54A.117. JUDICIAL ACTION. (a) Not later than the
27 30th day after the date an action is taken by an associate judge, a

1 referring court may modify, correct, reject, reverse, or recommit
2 for further information the action taken by the associate judge.

3 (b) If the court does not modify, correct, reject, reverse,
4 or recommit an action to the associate judge, the action becomes the
5 decree of the court.

6 Sec. 54A.118. JUDICIAL IMMUNITY. An associate judge
7 appointed under this subchapter has the judicial immunity of a
8 district judge.

9 SECTION 6.02. Subchapter G, Chapter 54, Government Code, is
10 transferred to Chapter 54A, Government Code, as added by this Act,
11 redesignated as Subchapter C, Chapter 54A, Government Code, and
12 amended to read as follows:

13 SUBCHAPTER C [~~C~~]. STATUTORY PROBATE COURT ASSOCIATE JUDGES

14 Sec. 54A.201 [~~54.601~~]. DEFINITION. In this subchapter,
15 "statutory probate court" has the meaning assigned by Section 3,
16 Texas Probate Code.

17 Sec. 54A.202. APPLICABILITY. This subchapter applies to a
18 statutory probate court.

19 Sec. 54A.203 [~~54.603~~]. APPOINTMENT. (a) After obtaining
20 the approval of the commissioners court to create an associate
21 judge position, the judge of a statutory probate court by order may
22 appoint one or more full-time or part-time [~~a person to act as~~]
23 associate judges to perform the duties authorized by this
24 subchapter [~~judge for the statutory probate court~~].

25 (b) If a statutory probate court has jurisdiction in more
26 than one county, an associate judge appointed by that court may
27 serve only in a county in which the commissioners court has

1 authorized the appointment.

2 (c) The commissioners court may authorize the appointment
3 of an associate judge for each court or may authorize one or more
4 associate judges to share service with two or more courts, if more
5 than one statutory probate court exists in a county.

6 (d) ~~[(c)]~~ If an associate judge serves more than one court,
7 the associate judge's appointment must be made with the unanimous
8 approval of all the judges under whom the associate judge serves.

9 ~~[(d) An associate judge must meet the qualifications to
10 serve as a judge of the court to which the associate judge is
11 appointed.]~~

12 (e) An associate judge appointed under this subchapter may
13 serve as an associate judge appointed under Section 574.0085,
14 Health and Safety Code.

15 Sec. 54A.204. QUALIFICATIONS. To qualify for appointment
16 as an associate judge under this subchapter, a person must:

17 (1) be a resident of this state and one of the counties
18 the person will serve;

19 (2) have been licensed to practice law in this state
20 for at least five years;

21 (3) not have been removed from office by impeachment,
22 by the supreme court, by the governor on address to the legislature,
23 by a tribunal reviewing a recommendation of the State Commission on
24 Judicial Conduct, or by the legislature's abolition of the judge's
25 court; and

26 (4) not have resigned from office after having
27 received notice that formal proceedings by the State Commission on

1 Judicial Conduct had been instituted as provided in Section 33.022
2 and before final disposition of the proceedings.

3 Sec. 54A.205 [~~54.605~~]. COMPENSATION. (a) An associate
4 judge is entitled to the compensation set by the appointing judge
5 and approved by the commissioners court or commissioners courts of
6 the counties in which the associate judge serves. [~~The salary of~~
7 ~~the associate judge may not exceed the salary of the appointing~~
8 ~~judge.~~]

9 (b) If an associate judge serves in more than one county,
10 the associate judge shall be paid a salary as determined by
11 agreement of the commissioners courts of the counties in which the
12 associate judge serves.

13 (c) Except as provided by Subsection (d) [~~(c)~~], the
14 compensation of the associate judge shall be paid by the county from
15 the county general fund. The compensation must be paid in the same
16 manner that the appointing judge's salary is paid.

17 (d) [~~(c)~~] On the recommendation of the statutory probate
18 court judges in the county and subject to the approval of the county
19 commissioners court, the county may pay all or part of the
20 compensation of the associate judge from the excess contributions
21 remitted to the county under Section 25.00212 and deposited in the
22 contributions fund created under Section 25.00213.

23 Sec. 54A.206 [~~54.604~~]. TERMINATION OF ASSOCIATE JUDGE.

24 (a) An associate judge who serves a single court serves at the will
25 of the judge of that court.

26 (b) The employment of an associate judge who serves more
27 than two courts may only be terminated by a majority vote of all the

1 judges of the courts that the associate judge serves.

2 (c) The employment of an associate judge who serves two
3 courts may be terminated by either of the judges of the courts that
4 the associate judge serves.

5 (d) The appointment of the associate judge terminates if:

6 (1) the associate judge becomes a candidate for
7 election to public office; or

8 (2) the commissioners court does not appropriate funds
9 in the county's budget to pay the salary of the associate judge.

10 (e) If an associate judge serves a single court and the
11 appointing judge vacates the judge's office, the associate judge's
12 employment continues, subject to Subsections (d) and (h), unless
13 the successor appointed or elected judge terminates that
14 employment.

15 (f) If an associate judge serves two courts and one of the
16 appointing judges vacates the judge's office, the associate judge's
17 employment continues, subject to Subsections (d) and (h), unless
18 the successor appointed or elected judge terminates that employment
19 or the judge of the other court served by the associate judge
20 terminates that employment as provided by Subsection (c).

21 (g) If an associate judge serves more than two courts and an
22 appointing judge vacates the judge's office, the associate judge's
23 employment continues, subject to Subsections (d) and (h), unless:

24 (1) if no successor judge has been elected or
25 appointed, the majority of the judges of the other courts the
26 associate judge serves vote to terminate that employment; or

27 (2) if a successor judge has been elected or

1 appointed, the majority of the judges of the courts the associate
2 judge serves, including the successor judge, vote to terminate that
3 employment as provided by Subsection (b).

4 (h) Notwithstanding the powers of an associate judge
5 provided by Section 54A.209 [~~54.610~~], an associate judge whose
6 employment continues as provided by Subsection (e), (f), or (g)
7 after the judge of a court served by the associate judge vacates the
8 judge's office may perform administrative functions with respect to
9 that court, but may not perform any judicial function, including
10 any power prescribed by Section 54A.209 [~~54.610~~], with respect to
11 that court until a successor judge is appointed or elected.

12 Sec. 54A.207 [~~54.608~~]. CASES THAT MAY BE REFERRED.

13 (a) Except as provided by this section, a judge of a court may
14 refer to an associate judge any aspect of a suit over which the
15 probate court has jurisdiction, including any matter ancillary to
16 the suit.

17 (b) Unless a party files a written objection to the
18 associate judge hearing a trial on the merits, the judge may refer
19 the trial to the associate judge. A trial on the merits is any final
20 adjudication from which an appeal may be taken to a court of
21 appeals.

22 (c) A party must file an objection to an associate judge
23 hearing a trial on the merits or presiding at a jury trial not later
24 than the 10th day after the date the party receives notice that the
25 associate judge will hear the trial. If an objection is filed, the
26 referring court shall hear the trial on the merits or preside at a
27 jury trial.

1 Sec. 54A.2071 [~~54.606~~]. OATH. An associate judge must take
2 the constitutional oath of office required of appointed officers of
3 this state.

4 ~~[Sec. 54.607. MAGISTRATE. An associate judge appointed~~
5 ~~under this subchapter is a magistrate.]~~

6 Sec. 54A.208 [~~54.609~~]. METHODS [~~ORDER~~] OF REFERRAL. (a) A
7 case may be referred to an associate judge by an order of referral
8 in a specific case or by an omnibus order [~~In referring a case to an~~
9 ~~associate judge, the judge of the referring court shall render:~~

10 ~~[(1) an individual order of referral; or~~
11 ~~[(2) a general order of referral]~~ specifying the class
12 and type of cases to be referred [~~heard by the associate judge~~].

13 (b) The order of referral may limit the power or duties of an
14 associate judge.

15 Sec. 54A.209 [~~54.610~~]. POWERS OF ASSOCIATE JUDGE. (a)
16 Except as limited by an order of referral, an associate judge may:

- 17 (1) conduct a hearing;
- 18 (2) hear evidence;
- 19 (3) compel production of relevant evidence;
- 20 (4) rule on the admissibility of evidence;
- 21 (5) issue a summons for the appearance of witnesses;
- 22 (6) examine a witness;
- 23 (7) swear a witness for a hearing;
- 24 (8) make findings of fact on evidence;
- 25 (9) formulate conclusions of law;
- 26 (10) rule on pretrial motions;
- 27 (11) recommend the rulings, orders, or judgment [~~an~~

1 ~~order~~] to be made [~~rendered~~] in a case;

2 (12) [~~(11)~~] regulate all proceedings in a hearing
3 before the associate judge;

4 (13) [~~(12)~~] take action as necessary and proper for
5 the efficient performance of the [~~associate judge's~~] duties
6 required by the order of referral;

7 (14) [~~(13)~~] order the attachment of a witness or party
8 who fails to obey a subpoena;

9 (15) [~~(14)~~] order the detention of a witness or party
10 found guilty of contempt, pending approval by the referring court
11 as provided by Section 54A.214 [~~54.616~~];

12 (16) [~~(15)~~] without prejudice to the right to a de novo
13 hearing under Section 54A.216 [~~54.618~~], render and sign:

14 (A) a final order agreed to in writing as to both
15 form and substance by all parties;

16 (B) a final default order;

17 (C) a temporary order;

18 (D) a final order in a case in which a party files
19 an unrevoked waiver made in accordance with Rule 119, Texas Rules of
20 Civil Procedure, that waives notice to the party of the final
21 hearing or waives the party's appearance at the final hearing;

22 (E) an order specifying that the court clerk
23 shall issue:

24 (i) letters testamentary or of
25 administration; or

26 (ii) letters of guardianship; or

27 (F) an order for inpatient or outpatient mental

1 health, mental retardation, or chemical dependency services or an
2 order authorizing psychoactive medications; and

3 (17) ~~[(16)]~~ sign a final order that includes a waiver
4 of the right to a de novo hearing in accordance with Section 54A.216
5 ~~[54.618]~~.

6 (b) An associate judge may, in the interest of justice,
7 refer a case back to the referring court regardless of whether a
8 timely objection to the associate judge hearing the trial on the
9 merits or presiding at a jury trial has been made by any party.

10 (c) An order described by Subsection (a)(16) ~~[(a)(15)]~~ that
11 is rendered and signed by an associate judge constitutes an order of
12 the referring court. The judge of the referring court shall sign
13 the order not later than the 30th day after the date the associate
14 judge signs the order.

15 (d) An answer filed by or on behalf of a party who previously
16 filed a waiver described in Subsection (a)(16)(D) ~~[(a)(15)(D)]~~
17 revokes that waiver.

18 Sec. 54A.2091 ~~[54.611]~~. ATTENDANCE OF BAILIFF. A bailiff
19 shall attend a hearing conducted by an associate judge if directed
20 to attend by the referring court.

21 ~~[Sec. 54.612. COURT REPORTER. (a) A court reporter may be~~
22 ~~provided during a hearing held by an associate judge appointed~~
23 ~~under this subchapter unless required by other law. A court~~
24 ~~reporter is required to be provided when the associate judge~~
25 ~~presides over a jury trial.~~

26 ~~[(b) A party, the associate judge, or the referring court~~
27 ~~may provide for a reporter during the hearing, if one is not~~

1 ~~otherwise provided.~~

2 ~~[(c) Except as provided by Subsection (a), in the absence of~~
3 ~~a court reporter or on agreement of the parties, the record may be~~
4 ~~preserved by any means approved by the referring court.~~

5 ~~[(d) The referring court or associate judge may impose on a~~
6 ~~party the expense of preserving the record as a court cost.~~

7 ~~[(e) On a request for a de novo hearing, the referring court~~
8 ~~may consider testimony or other evidence in the record, if the~~
9 ~~record is taken by a court reporter, in addition to witnesses or~~
10 ~~other matters presented under Section 54.618.]~~

11 Sec. 54A.210 ~~[54.613]~~. WITNESS. (a) A witness appearing
12 before an associate judge is subject to the penalties for perjury
13 provided by law.

14 (b) A referring court may issue attachment against and may
15 fine or imprison a witness whose failure ~~[who~~

16 ~~[(1) fails]~~ to appear ~~[before an associate judge]~~
17 after being summoned or whose refusal to answer questions has been
18 certified to the court ~~[, or~~

19 ~~[(2) improperly refuses to answer a question if the~~
20 ~~refusal has been certified to the court by the associate judge].~~

21 Sec. 54A.211. COURT REPORTER; RECORD. (a) A court
22 reporter may be provided during a hearing held by an associate judge
23 appointed under this subchapter. A court reporter is required to be
24 provided when the associate judge presides over a jury trial.

25 (b) A party, the associate judge, or the referring court may
26 provide for a reporter during the hearing if one is not otherwise
27 provided.

1 (c) Except as provided by Subsection (a), in the absence of
2 a court reporter or on agreement of the parties, the record may be
3 preserved by any means approved by the associate judge.

4 (d) The referring court or associate judge may assess the
5 expense of preserving the record as court costs.

6 (e) On appeal of the associate judge's report or proposed
7 order, the referring court may consider testimony or other evidence
8 in the record if the record is taken by a court reporter.

9 Sec. 54A.212 [~~54.614~~]. REPORT. (a) The associate judge's
10 report may contain the associate judge's findings, conclusions, or
11 recommendations and may be in the form of a proposed order.

12 (b) The associate judge shall prepare a [~~written~~] report in
13 the form directed by the referring court, including in the form of:

14 (1) a notation on the referring court's docket sheet or
15 in the court's jacket; or

16 (2) a proposed order.

17 (c) [~~(b)~~] After a hearing, the associate judge shall provide
18 the parties participating in the hearing notice of the substance of
19 the associate judge's report, including any proposed order.

20 (d) [~~(c)~~] Notice may be given to the parties:

21 (1) in open court, by an oral statement, or by
22 providing a copy of the associate judge's written report, including
23 any proposed order;

24 (2) by certified mail, return receipt requested;

25 (3) by facsimile transmission; or

26 (4) by electronic mail.

27 (e) [~~(d)~~] There is a rebuttable presumption that notice is

received on the date stated on:

(1) the signed return receipt, if notice was provided by certified mail;

(2) the confirmation page produced by the facsimile machine, if notice was provided by facsimile transmission; or

(3) a printout evidencing submission of the electronic mail message, if notice was provided by electronic mail.

(f) ~~[(e)]~~ After a hearing conducted by an associate judge, the associate judge shall send the associate judge's signed and dated report, including any proposed order, and all other papers relating to the case to the referring court.

Sec. 54A.213 ~~[54.615]~~. NOTICE OF RIGHT TO DE NOVO HEARING BEFORE REFERRING COURT. (a) An associate judge shall give all parties notice of the right to a de novo hearing before the referring court.

(b) The notice may be given:

(1) by oral statement in open court;

(2) by posting inside or outside the courtroom of the referring court; or

(3) as otherwise directed by the referring court.

(c) Before the start of a hearing by an associate judge, a party may waive the right to a de novo hearing before the referring court in writing or on the record.

Sec. 54A.214 ~~[54.616]~~. ORDER OF COURT. (a) Pending a de novo hearing before the referring court, the decisions and recommendations of the associate judge or a proposed order or judgment of the associate judge has the full force and effect, and

1 is enforceable as, an order or judgment of the referring court,
2 except for an order providing for the appointment of a receiver.

3 (b) Except as provided by Section 54A.209(c) [~~54.610(c)~~],
4 if a request for a de novo hearing before the referring court is not
5 timely filed or the right to a de novo hearing before the referring
6 court is waived, the decisions and recommendations of the associate
7 judge or the proposed order or judgment of the associate judge
8 becomes the order or judgment of the referring court at the time the
9 judge of the referring court signs the proposed order or judgment.

10 (c) An order by an associate judge for the temporary
11 detention or incarceration of a witness or party shall be presented
12 to the referring court on the day the witness or party is detained
13 or incarcerated. The referring court, without prejudice to the
14 right to a de novo hearing provided by Section 54A.216, may approve
15 the temporary detention or incarceration or may order the release
16 of the party or witness, with or without bond, pending a de novo
17 hearing. If the referring court is not immediately available, the
18 associate judge may order the release of the party or witness, with
19 or without bond, pending a de novo hearing or may continue the
20 person's detention or incarceration for not more than 72 hours.

21 Sec. 54A.215 [~~54.617~~]. JUDICIAL ACTION ON ASSOCIATE JUDGE'S
22 PROPOSED ORDER OR JUDGMENT. (a) Unless a party files a written
23 request for a de novo hearing before the referring court, the
24 referring court may:

25 (1) adopt, modify, or reject the associate judge's
26 proposed order or judgment;

27 (2) hear further evidence; or

1 (3) recommit the matter to the associate judge for
2 further proceedings.

3 (b) The judge of the referring court shall sign a proposed
4 order or judgment the court adopts as provided by Subsection (a)(1)
5 not later than the 30th day after the date the associate judge
6 signed the order or judgment.

7 Sec. 54A.216 [~~54.618~~]. DE NOVO HEARING BEFORE REFERRING
8 COURT. (a) A party may request a de novo hearing before the
9 referring court by filing with the clerk of the referring court a
10 written request not later than the seventh working day after the
11 date the party receives notice of the substance of the associate
12 judge's report as provided by Section 54A.212 [~~54.614~~].

13 (b) A request for a de novo hearing under this section must
14 specify the issues that will be presented to the referring court.
15 The de novo hearing is limited to the specified issues.

16 (c) In the de novo hearing before the referring court,
17 the parties may present witnesses on the issues specified in the
18 request for hearing. The referring court may also consider the
19 record from the hearing before the associate judge, including the
20 charge to and verdict returned by a jury, if the record was taken by
21 a court reporter.

22 (d) Notice of a request for a de novo hearing before the
23 referring court must be given to the opposing attorney in the manner
24 provided by Rule 21a, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

25 (e) If a request for a de novo hearing before the referring
26 court is filed by a party, any other party may file a request for a
27 de novo hearing before the referring court not later than the

1 seventh working day after the date of filing of the initial request.

2 (f) The referring court, after notice to the parties, shall
3 hold a de novo hearing not later than the 30th day after the date on
4 which the initial request for a de novo hearing was filed with the
5 clerk of the referring court [~~, unless all of the parties agree to a~~
6 ~~later date~~].

7 (g) Before the start of a hearing conducted by an associate
8 judge, the parties may waive the right of a de novo hearing before
9 the referring court. The waiver may be in writing or on the record.

10 (h) The denial of relief to a party after a de novo hearing
11 under this section or a party's waiver of the right to a de novo
12 hearing before the referring court does not affect the right of a
13 party to file a motion for new trial, motion for judgment
14 notwithstanding the verdict, or other post-trial motion.

15 (i) A party may not demand a second jury in a de novo hearing
16 before the referring court if the associate judge's proposed order
17 or judgment resulted from a jury trial.

18 Sec. 54A.217 [~~54.619~~]. APPELLATE REVIEW. (a) A party's
19 failure to request a de novo hearing before the referring court or a
20 party's waiver of the right to request a de novo hearing before the
21 referring court does not deprive the party of the right to appeal to
22 or request other relief from a court of appeals or the supreme
23 court.

24 (b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), the date the judge
25 of a referring court signs an order or judgment is the controlling
26 date for the purposes of appeal to or request for other relief from
27 a court of appeals or the supreme court.

1 (c) The date an order described by Section 54A.209(a)(16)
2 [~~54.610(a)(15)~~] is signed by an associate judge is the controlling
3 date for the purpose of an appeal to, or a request for other relief
4 relating to the order from, a court of appeals or the supreme court.

5 Sec. 54A.218 [~~54.620~~]. IMMUNITY. An associate judge
6 appointed under this subchapter has the judicial immunity of a
7 probate judge. All existing immunity granted an associate judge by
8 law, express or implied, continues in full force and effect.

9 SECTION 6.03. Chapter 201, Family Code, is amended by
10 adding Subchapter D to read as follows:

11 SUBCHAPTER D. ASSOCIATE JUDGE FOR JUVENILE MATTERS

12 Sec. 201.301. APPLICABILITY. This subchapter applies only
13 to an associate judge appointed under this subchapter and does not
14 apply to a juvenile court master appointed under Subchapter K,
15 Chapter 54, Government Code.

16 Sec. 201.302. APPOINTMENT. (a) A judge of a court that is
17 designated as a juvenile court may appoint a full-time or part-time
18 associate judge to perform the duties authorized by this chapter if
19 the commissioners court of a county in which the court has
20 jurisdiction has authorized creation of an associate judge
21 position.

22 (b) If a court has jurisdiction in more than one county, an
23 associate judge appointed by that court may serve only in a county
24 in which the commissioners court has authorized the appointment.

25 (c) If more than one court in a county has been designated as
26 a juvenile court, the commissioners court may authorize the
27 appointment of an associate judge for each court or may authorize

1 one or more associate judges to share service with two or more
2 courts.

3 (d) If an associate judge serves more than one court, the
4 associate judge's appointment must be made as established by local
5 rule, but in no event by less than a vote of two-thirds of the judges
6 under whom the associate judge serves.

7 Sec. 201.303. QUALIFICATIONS. To qualify for appointment
8 as an associate judge under this subchapter, a person must:

9 (1) be a resident of this state and one of the counties
10 the person will serve;

11 (2) have been licensed to practice law in this state
12 for at least four years;

13 (3) not have been removed from office by impeachment,
14 by the supreme court, by the governor on address to the legislature,
15 by a tribunal reviewing a recommendation of the State Commission on
16 Judicial Conduct, or by the legislature's abolition of the judge's
17 court; and

18 (4) not have resigned from office after having
19 received notice that formal proceedings by the State Commission on
20 Judicial Conduct had been instituted as provided in Section 33.022,
21 Government Code, and before final disposition of the proceedings.

22 Sec. 201.304. COMPENSATION. (a) An associate judge shall
23 be paid a salary determined by the commissioners court of the county
24 in which the associate judge serves.

25 (b) If an associate judge serves in more than one county,
26 the associate judge shall be paid a salary as determined by
27 agreement of the commissioners courts of the counties in which the

1 associate judge serves.

2 (c) The associate judge's salary is paid from the county
3 fund available for payment of officers' salaries.

4 Sec. 201.305. TERMINATION. (a) An associate judge who
5 serves a single court serves at the will of the judge of that court.

6 (b) The employment of an associate judge who serves more
7 than two courts may only be terminated by a majority vote of all the
8 judges of the courts which the associate judge serves.

9 (c) The employment of an associate judge who serves two
10 courts may be terminated by either of the judges of the courts which
11 the associate judge serves.

12 (d) To terminate an associate judge's employment, the
13 appropriate judges must sign a written order of termination. The
14 order must state:

15 (1) the associate judge's name and state bar
16 identification number;

17 (2) each court ordering termination; and

18 (3) the date the associate judge's employment ends.

19 Sec. 201.306. CASES THAT MAY BE REFERRED. (a) Except as
20 provided by this section, a judge of a juvenile court may refer to
21 an associate judge any aspect of a juvenile matter brought:

22 (1) under this title or Title 3; or

23 (2) in connection with Rule 308a, Texas Rules of Civil
24 Procedure.

25 (b) Unless a party files a written objection to the
26 associate judge hearing a trial on the merits, the judge may refer
27 the trial to the associate judge. A trial on the merits is any final

adjudication from which an appeal may be taken to a court of appeals.

(c) A party must file an objection to an associate judge hearing a trial on the merits or presiding at a jury trial not later than the 10th day after the date the party receives notice that the associate judge will hear the trial. If an objection is filed, the referring court shall hear the trial on the merits or preside at a jury trial.

(d) The requirements of Subsections (b) and (c) apply when a judge has authority to refer the trial of a suit under this title, Title 1, or Title 4 to an associate judge, master, or other assistant judge regardless of whether the assistant judge is appointed under this subchapter.

Sec. 201.307. METHODS OF REFERRAL. (a) A case may be referred to an associate judge by an order of referral in a specific case or by an omnibus order.

(b) The order of referral may limit the power or duties of an associate judge.

Sec. 201.308. POWERS OF ASSOCIATE JUDGE. (a) Except as limited by an order of referral, an associate judge may:

(1) conduct a hearing;

(2) hear evidence;

(3) compel production of relevant evidence;

(4) rule on the admissibility of evidence;

(5) issue a summons for:

(A) the appearance of witnesses; and

(B) the appearance of a parent who has failed to

1 appear before an agency authorized to conduct an investigation of
2 an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child after receiving proper
3 notice;

- 4 (6) examine a witness;
5 (7) swear a witness for a hearing;
6 (8) make findings of fact on evidence;
7 (9) formulate conclusions of law;
8 (10) recommend an order to be rendered in a case;
9 (11) regulate proceedings in a hearing;
10 (12) order the attachment of a witness or party who
11 fails to obey a subpoena;
12 (13) order the detention of a witness or party found
13 guilty of contempt, pending approval by the referring court; and
14 (14) take action as necessary and proper for the
15 efficient performance of the associate judge's duties.

16 (b) An associate judge may, in the interest of justice,
17 refer a case back to the referring court regardless of whether a
18 timely objection to the associate judge hearing the trial on the
19 merits or presiding at a jury trial has been made by any party.

20 Sec. 201.309. REFEREES. (a) An associate judge appointed
21 under this subchapter may serve as a referee as provided by Sections
22 51.04(g) and 54.10.

23 (b) A referee appointed under Section 51.04(g) may be
24 appointed to serve as an associate judge under this subchapter.

25 Sec. 201.310. ATTENDANCE OF BAILIFF. A bailiff may attend a
26 hearing by an associate judge if directed by the referring court.

27 Sec. 201.311. WITNESS. (a) A witness appearing before an

1 associate judge is subject to the penalties for perjury provided by
2 law.

3 (b) A referring court may fine or imprison a witness who:

4 (1) failed to appear before an associate judge after
5 being summoned; or

6 (2) improperly refused to answer questions if the
7 refusal has been certified to the court by the associate judge.

8 Sec. 201.312. COURT REPORTER; RECORD. (a) A court
9 reporter may be provided during a hearing held by an associate judge
10 appointed under this subchapter. A court reporter is required to be
11 provided when the associate judge presides over a jury trial or a
12 contested final termination hearing.

13 (b) A party, the associate judge, or the referring court may
14 provide for a reporter during the hearing if one is not otherwise
15 provided.

16 (c) Except as provided by Subsection (a), in the absence of
17 a court reporter or on agreement of the parties, the record may be
18 preserved by any means approved by the associate judge.

19 (d) The referring court or associate judge may assess the
20 expense of preserving the record as costs.

21 (e) On a request for a de novo hearing, the referring court
22 may consider testimony or other evidence in the record, if the
23 record is taken by a court reporter, in addition to witnesses or
24 other matters presented under Section 201.317.

25 Sec. 201.313. REPORT. (a) The associate judge's report may
26 contain the associate judge's findings, conclusions, or
27 recommendations and may be in the form of a proposed order. The

1 associate judge's report must be in writing and in the form directed
2 by the referring court.

3 (b) After a hearing, the associate judge shall provide the
4 parties participating in the hearing notice of the substance of the
5 associate judge's report, including any proposed order.

6 (c) Notice may be given to the parties:

7 (1) in open court, by an oral statement or by providing
8 a copy of the associate judge's written report, including any
9 proposed order;

10 (2) by certified mail, return receipt requested; or

11 (3) by facsimile.

12 (d) A rebuttable presumption exists that notice is received
13 on the date stated on:

14 (1) the signed return receipt, if notice was provided
15 by certified mail; or

16 (2) the confirmation page produced by the facsimile
17 machine, if notice was provided by facsimile.

18 (e) After a hearing conducted by an associate judge, the
19 associate judge shall send the associate judge's signed and dated
20 report, including any proposed order, and all other papers relating
21 to the case to the referring court.

22 Sec. 201.314. NOTICE OF RIGHT TO DE NOVO HEARING; WAIVER.

23 (a) An associate judge shall give all parties notice of the right
24 to a de novo hearing to the judge of the referring court.

25 (b) The notice may be given:

26 (1) by oral statement in open court;

27 (2) by posting inside or outside the courtroom of the

1 referring court; or

2 (3) as otherwise directed by the referring court.

3 (c) Before the start of a hearing by an associate judge, a
4 party may waive the right of a de novo hearing before the referring
5 court in writing or on the record.

6 Sec. 201.315. ORDER OF COURT. (a) Pending a de novo
7 hearing before the referring court, a proposed order or judgment of
8 the associate judge is in full force and effect and is enforceable
9 as an order or judgment of the referring court, except for an order
10 providing for the appointment of a receiver.

11 (b) If a request for a de novo hearing before the referring
12 court is not timely filed or the right to a de novo hearing before
13 the referring court is waived, the proposed order or judgment of the
14 associate judge becomes the order or judgment of the referring
15 court only on the referring court's signing the proposed order or
16 judgment.

17 (c) An order by an associate judge for the temporary
18 detention or incarceration of a witness or party shall be presented
19 to the referring court on the day the witness or party is detained
20 or incarcerated. The referring court, without prejudice to the
21 right to a de novo hearing provided by Section 201.317, may approve
22 the temporary detention or incarceration or may order the release
23 of the party or witness, with or without bond, pending a de novo
24 hearing. If the referring court is not immediately available, the
25 associate judge may order the release of the party or witness, with
26 or without bond, pending a de novo hearing or may continue the
27 person's detention or incarceration for not more than 72 hours.

1 Sec. 201.316. JUDICIAL ACTION ON ASSOCIATE JUDGE'S PROPOSED
2 ORDER OR JUDGMENT. Unless a party files a written request for a de
3 novo hearing before the referring court, the referring court may:

4 (1) adopt, modify, or reject the associate judge's
5 proposed order or judgment;

6 (2) hear additional evidence; or

7 (3) recommit the matter to the associate judge for
8 further proceedings.

9 Sec. 201.317. DE NOVO HEARING. (a) A party may request a de
10 novo hearing before the referring court by filing with the clerk of
11 the referring court a written request not later than the seventh
12 working day after the date the party receives notice of the
13 substance of the associate judge's report as provided by Section
14 201.313.

15 (b) A request for a de novo hearing under this section must
16 specify the issues that will be presented to the referring court.
17 The de novo hearing is limited to the specified issues.

18 (c) Notice of a request for a de novo hearing before the
19 referring court shall be given to the opposing attorney in the
20 manner provided by Rule 21a, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

21 (d) If a request for a de novo hearing before the referring
22 court is filed by a party, any other party may file a request for a
23 de novo hearing before the referring court not later than the
24 seventh working day after the date the initial request was filed.

25 (e) The referring court, after notice to the parties, shall
26 hold a de novo hearing not later than the 30th day after the date the
27 initial request for a de novo hearing was filed with the clerk of

1 the referring court.

2 (f) In the de novo hearing before the referring court, the
3 parties may present witnesses on the issues specified in the
4 request for hearing. The referring court may also consider the
5 record from the hearing before the associate judge, including the
6 charge to and verdict returned by a jury, if the record was taken by
7 a court reporter.

8 (g) The denial of relief to a party after a de novo hearing
9 under this section or a party's waiver of the right to a de novo
10 hearing before the referring court does not affect the right of a
11 party to file a motion for new trial, a motion for judgment
12 notwithstanding the verdict, or other posttrial motions.

13 (h) A party may not demand a second jury in a de novo hearing
14 before the referring court if the associate judge's proposed order
15 or judgment resulted from a jury trial.

16 Sec. 201.318. APPELLATE REVIEW. (a) A party's failure to
17 request a de novo hearing before the referring court or a party's
18 waiver of the right to request a de novo hearing before the
19 referring court does not deprive the party of the right to appeal to
20 or request other relief from a court of appeals or the supreme
21 court.

22 (b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), the date an order
23 or judgment by the referring court is signed is the controlling date
24 for the purposes of appeal to or request for other relief from a
25 court of appeals or the supreme court.

26 (c) The date an agreed order or a default order is signed by
27 an associate judge is the controlling date for the purpose of an

appeal to, or a request for other relief relating to the order from,
a court of appeals or the supreme court.

Sec. 201.319. JUDICIAL IMMUNITY. An associate judge
appointed under this subchapter has the judicial immunity of a
district judge.

Sec. 201.320. VISITING ASSOCIATE JUDGE. (a) If an
associate judge appointed under this subchapter is temporarily
unable to perform the judge's official duties because of absence or
illness, injury, or other disability, a judge of a court having
jurisdiction of a suit under this title or Title 1 or 4 may appoint a
visiting associate judge to perform the duties of the associate
judge during the period of the associate judge's absence or
disability if the commissioners court of a county in which the court
has jurisdiction authorizes the employment of a visiting associate
judge.

(b) To be eligible for appointment under this section, a
person must have served as an associate judge for at least two
years.

(c) Sections 201.001 through 201.017 apply to a visiting
associate judge appointed under this section.

SECTION 6.04. Subsection (b), Section 22.110, Government
Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) The court of criminal appeals shall adopt the rules
necessary to accomplish the purposes of this section. The rules
must require each district judge, judge of a statutory county
court, associate judge appointed under Chapter 54A [~~54~~] of this
code or Chapter 201, Family Code, master, referee, and magistrate

1 to complete at least 12 hours of the training within the judge's
2 first term of office or the judicial officer's first four years of
3 service and provide a method for certification of completion of
4 that training. At least four hours of the training must be
5 dedicated to issues related to child abuse and neglect and must
6 cover at least two of the topics described in Subsections
7 (d)(8)-(12). At least six hours of the training must be dedicated
8 to the training described by Subsections (d)(5), (6), and (7). The
9 rules must require each judge and judicial officer to complete an
10 additional five hours of training during each additional term in
11 office or four years of service. At least two hours of the
12 additional training must be dedicated to issues related to child
13 abuse and neglect. The rules must exempt from the training
14 requirement of this subsection each judge or judicial officer who
15 files an affidavit stating that the judge or judicial officer does
16 not hear any cases involving family violence, sexual assault, or
17 child abuse and neglect.

18 SECTION 6.05. Section 602.002, Government Code, is amended
19 to read as follows:

20 Sec. 602.002. OATH MADE IN TEXAS. An oath made in this
21 state may be administered and a certificate of the fact given by:

22 (1) a judge, retired judge, or clerk of a municipal
23 court;

24 (2) a judge, retired judge, senior judge, clerk, or
25 commissioner of a court of record;

26 (3) a justice of the peace or a clerk of a justice
27 court;

1 (4) an associate judge, magistrate, master, referee,
2 or criminal law hearing officer;

3 (5) a notary public;

4 (6) [~~(5)~~] a member of a board or commission created by
5 a law of this state, in a matter pertaining to a duty of the board or
6 commission;

7 (7) [~~(6)~~] a person employed by the Texas Ethics
8 Commission who has a duty related to a report required by Title 15,
9 Election Code, in a matter pertaining to that duty;

10 (8) [~~(7)~~] a county tax assessor-collector or an
11 employee of the county tax assessor-collector if the oath relates
12 to a document that is required or authorized to be filed in the
13 office of the county tax assessor-collector;

14 (9) [~~(8)~~] the secretary of state or a former secretary
15 of state;

16 (10) [~~(9)~~] an employee of a personal bond office, or
17 an employee of a county, who is employed to obtain information
18 required to be obtained under oath if the oath is required or
19 authorized by Article 17.04 or by Article 26.04(n) or (o), Code of
20 Criminal Procedure;

21 (11) [~~(10)~~] the lieutenant governor or a former
22 lieutenant governor;

23 (12) [~~(11)~~] the speaker of the house of
24 representatives or a former speaker of the house of
25 representatives;

26 (13) [~~(12)~~] the governor or a former governor;

27 (14) [~~(13)~~] a legislator or retired legislator;

1 (15) [~~(14)~~] the attorney general or a former attorney
2 general;

3 (16) [~~(15)~~] the secretary or clerk of a municipality
4 in a matter pertaining to the official business of the
5 municipality; or

6 (17) [~~(16)~~] a peace officer described by Article 2.12,
7 Code of Criminal Procedure, if:

8 (A) the oath is administered when the officer is
9 engaged in the performance of the officer's duties; and

10 (B) the administration of the oath relates to the
11 officer's duties.

12 SECTION 6.06. Article 2.09, Code of Criminal Procedure, is
13 amended to read as follows:

14 Art. 2.09. WHO ARE MAGISTRATES. Each of the following
15 officers is a magistrate within the meaning of this Code: The
16 justices of the Supreme Court, the judges of the Court of Criminal
17 Appeals, the justices of the Courts of Appeals, the judges of the
18 District Court, the magistrates appointed by the judges of the
19 district courts of Bexar County, Dallas County, or Tarrant County
20 that give preference to criminal cases, the criminal law hearing
21 officers for Harris County appointed under Subchapter L, Chapter
22 54, Government Code, the criminal law hearing officers for Cameron
23 County appointed under Subchapter BB, Chapter 54, Government Code,
24 the magistrates or associate judges appointed by the judges of the
25 district courts of Lubbock County, Nolan County, or Webb County,
26 the magistrates appointed by the judges of the criminal district
27 courts of Dallas County or Tarrant County, the associate judges

1 ~~[masters]~~ appointed by the judges of the district courts and the
 2 county courts at law that give preference to criminal cases in
 3 Jefferson County, the associate judges ~~[magistrates]~~ appointed by
 4 the judges of the district courts and the statutory county courts of
 5 Brazos County, Nueces County, or Williamson County, the magistrates
 6 appointed by the judges of the district courts and statutory county
 7 courts that give preference to criminal cases in Travis County, the
 8 criminal magistrates appointed by the Brazoria County
 9 Commissioners Court, the criminal magistrates appointed by the
 10 Burnet County Commissioners Court, the county judges, the judges of
 11 the county courts at law, judges of the county criminal courts, the
 12 judges of statutory probate courts, the associate judges appointed
 13 by the judges of the statutory probate courts under ~~[Subchapter C,~~
 14 Chapter 54A ~~[54]~~, Government Code, the associate judges appointed
 15 by the judge of a district court under Chapter 54A ~~[Subchapter II,~~
 16 ~~Chapter 54]~~, Government Code, the magistrates appointed under
 17 Subchapter JJ, Chapter 54, Government Code, as added by H.B. No.
 18 2132, Acts of the 82nd Legislature, Regular Session, 2011, the
 19 justices of the peace, and the mayors and recorders and the judges
 20 of the municipal courts of incorporated cities or towns.

21 SECTION 6.07. Subsection (d), Article 102.017, Code of
 22 Criminal Procedure, is amended to read as follows:

23 (d) Except as provided by Subsection (d-2), the clerks of
 24 the respective courts shall collect the costs and pay them to the
 25 county or municipal treasurer, as appropriate, or to any other
 26 official who discharges the duties commonly delegated to the county
 27 or municipal treasurer, as appropriate, for deposit in a fund to be

1 known as the courthouse security fund or a fund to be known as the
2 municipal court building security fund, as appropriate. Money
3 deposited in a courthouse security fund may be used only for
4 security personnel, services, and items related to buildings that
5 house the operations of district, county, or justice courts, and
6 money deposited in a municipal court building security fund may be
7 used only for security personnel, services, and items related to
8 buildings that house the operations of municipal courts. For
9 purposes of this subsection, operations of a district, county, or
10 justice court include the activities of associate judges, masters,
11 magistrates, referees, hearing officers, criminal law magistrate
12 court judges, and masters in chancery appointed under:

- 13 (1) Section 61.311, Alcoholic Beverage Code;
- 14 (2) Section 51.04(g) or Chapter 201, Family Code;
- 15 (3) Section 574.0085, Health and Safety Code;
- 16 (4) Section 33.71, Tax Code;
- 17 (5) Chapter 54A [~~Chapter 54~~], Government Code; or
- 18 (6) Rule 171, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

19 SECTION 6.08. Subsection (a), Section 54.10, Family Code,
20 is amended to read as follows:

21 (a) Except as provided by Subsection (e), a hearing under
22 Section 54.03, 54.04, or 54.05, including a jury trial, a hearing
23 under Chapter 55, including a jury trial, or a hearing under the
24 Interstate Compact for Juveniles (Chapter 60) may be held by a
25 referee appointed in accordance with Section 51.04(g) or an
26 associate judge [~~a master~~] appointed under Chapter 54A [~~54~~],
27 Government Code, provided:

1 (1) the parties have been informed by the referee or
2 associate judge [~~master~~] that they are entitled to have the hearing
3 before the juvenile court judge; and

4 (2) after each party is given an opportunity to
5 object, no party objects to holding the hearing before the referee
6 or associate judge [~~master~~].

7 SECTION 6.09. A magistrate, master, referee, associate
8 judge, or hearing officer appointed as provided by Subchapters A,
9 B, C, E, F, I, O, P, S, T, U, V, X, CC, FF, and II, Chapter 54,
10 Government Code, before the effective date of this Act, continues
11 to serve as an associate judge under Chapter 54A, Government Code,
12 as added by this article, with the powers and duties provided by
13 that chapter, provided the court for which the magistrate, master,
14 referee, associate judge, or hearing officer serves has authority
15 to appoint an associate judge under Chapter 54A, Government Code.

16 SECTION 6.10. The changes in law made by this article apply
17 to a matter referred to an associate judge on or after the effective
18 date of this article. A matter referred to an associate judge
19 before the effective date of this article is governed by the law in
20 effect on the date the matter was referred to the associate judge,
21 and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

22 SECTION 6.11. The following subchapters of Chapter 54,
23 Government Code, are repealed:

- 24 (1) Subchapter A;
25 (2) Subchapter B;
26 (3) Subchapter C;
27 (4) Subchapter E;

- 1 (5) Subchapter F;
- 2 (6) Subchapter I;
- 3 (7) Subchapter O;
- 4 (8) Subchapter P;
- 5 (9) Subchapter S;
- 6 (10) Subchapter T;
- 7 (11) Subchapter U;
- 8 (12) Subchapter V;
- 9 (13) Subchapter X;
- 10 (14) Subchapter CC;
- 11 (15) Subchapter FF; and
- 12 (16) Subchapter II.

13 ARTICLE 7. COURT ADMINISTRATION

14 SECTION 7.01. Section 74.005, Government Code, is amended
15 to read as follows:

16 Sec. 74.005. APPOINTMENT OF [~~REGIONAL~~] PRESIDING JUDGES OF
17 ADMINISTRATIVE JUDICIAL REGIONS. (a) The governor, with the
18 advice and consent of the senate, shall appoint one judge in each
19 administrative judicial region as presiding judge of the region.

20 (b) On the death, resignation, removal, or expiration of the
21 term of office of a presiding judge, the governor immediately shall
22 appoint or reappoint a presiding judge.

23 SECTION 7.02. Section 74.050, Government Code, is amended
24 to read as follows:

25 Sec. 74.050. SUPPORT STAFF [~~ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT~~]. (a)
26 The presiding judge may employ, directly or through a contract with
27 another governmental entity, a full-time or part-time

1 administrative assistant.

2 (b) An administrative assistant ~~[must have the~~
3 ~~qualifications established by rule of the supreme court.~~

4 ~~[(c) An administrative assistant]~~ shall aid the presiding
5 judge in carrying out the judge's duties under this chapter. The
6 administrative assistant shall:

7 (1) perform the duties that are required by the
8 presiding judge and by the rules of administration;

9 (2) conduct correspondence for the presiding judge;

10 (3) under the direction of the presiding judge, make
11 an annual report of the activities of the administrative region and
12 special reports as provided by the rules of administration to the
13 supreme court, which shall be made in the manner directed by the
14 supreme court; and

15 (4) attend to other matters that are prescribed by the
16 council of judges.

17 (c) ~~[(d)]~~ An administrative assistant, with the approval of
18 the presiding judge, may purchase the necessary office equipment,
19 stamps, stationery, and supplies and employ additional personnel as
20 authorized by the presiding judge.

21 (d) ~~[(e)]~~ An administrative assistant is entitled to
22 receive the compensation from the state provided by the General
23 Appropriations Act, from county funds, or from any public or
24 private grant.

25 SECTION 7.03. Subsection (c), Section 74.093, Government
26 Code, is amended to read as follows:

27 (c) The rules may provide for:

(1) the selection and authority of a presiding judge of the courts giving preference to a specified class of cases, such as civil, criminal, juvenile, or family law cases;

(2) other strategies for managing cases that require special judicial attention;

(3) [~~(2)~~] a coordinated response for the transaction of essential judicial functions in the event of a disaster; and

(4) [~~(3)~~] any other matter necessary to carry out this chapter or to improve the administration and management of the court system and its auxiliary services.

SECTION 7.04. Chapter 74, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter J to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER J. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR CERTAIN CASES

Sec. 74.251. APPLICABILITY OF SUBCHAPTER. This subchapter does not apply to:

(1) a criminal matter;

(2) a case in which judicial review is sought under Subchapter G, Chapter 2001; or

(3) a case that has been transferred by the judicial panel on multidistrict litigation to a district court for consolidated or coordinated pretrial proceedings under Subchapter H.

Sec. 74.252. RULES TO GUIDE DETERMINATION OF WHETHER CASE REQUIRES ADDITIONAL RESOURCES. (a) The supreme court shall adopt rules under which courts, presiding judges of the administrative judicial regions, and the judicial committee for additional resources may determine whether a case requires additional

1 resources to ensure efficient judicial management of the case.

2 (b) In developing the rules, the supreme court shall include
3 considerations regarding whether a case involves or is likely to
4 involve:

5 (1) a large number of parties who are separately
6 represented by counsel;

7 (2) coordination with related actions pending in one
8 or more courts in other counties of this state or in one or more
9 United States district courts;

10 (3) numerous pretrial motions that present difficult
11 or novel legal issues that will be time-consuming to resolve;

12 (4) a large number of witnesses or substantial
13 documentary evidence;

14 (5) substantial postjudgment supervision;

15 (6) a trial that will last more than four weeks; and

16 (7) a substantial additional burden on the trial
17 court's docket and the resources available to the trial court to
18 hear the case.

19 Sec. 74.253. JUDICIAL DETERMINATION. (a) On the motion of
20 a party in a case, or on the court's own motion, the judge of the
21 court in which the case is pending shall review the case and
22 determine whether, under rules adopted by the supreme court under
23 Section 74.252, the case will require additional resources to
24 ensure efficient judicial management. The judge is not required to
25 conduct an evidentiary hearing for purposes of making the
26 determination but may, in the judge's discretion, direct the
27 attorneys for the parties to the case and the parties to appear

1 before the judge for a conference to provide information to assist
2 the judge in making the determination.

3 (b) On determining that a case will require additional
4 resources as provided by Subsection (a), the judge shall:

5 (1) notify the presiding judge of the administrative
6 judicial region in which the court is located about the case; and

7 (2) request any specific additional resources that are
8 needed, including the assignment of a judge under this chapter.

9 (c) If the presiding judge of the administrative judicial
10 region agrees that, in accordance with the rules adopted by the
11 supreme court under Section 74.252, the case will require
12 additional resources to ensure efficient judicial management, the
13 presiding judge shall:

14 (1) use resources previously allotted to the presiding
15 judge; or

16 (2) submit a request for specific additional resources
17 to the judicial committee for additional resources.

18 Sec. 74.254. JUDICIAL COMMITTEE FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.

19 (a) The judicial committee for additional resources is composed
20 of:

21 (1) the chief justice of the supreme court; and

22 (2) the nine presiding judges of the administrative
23 judicial regions.

24 (b) The chief justice of the supreme court serves as
25 presiding officer. The office of court administration shall
26 provide staff support to the committee.

27 (c) On receipt of a request for additional resources from a

presiding judge of an administrative judicial region under Section 74.253, the committee shall determine whether the case that is the subject of the request requires additional resources in accordance with the rules adopted under Section 74.252. If the committee determines that the case does require additional resources, the committee shall make available the resources requested by the trial judge to the extent funds are available for those resources under the General Appropriations Act and to the extent the committee determines the requested resources are appropriate to the circumstances of the case.

(d) Subject to Subsections (c) and (f), additional resources the committee may make available under this section include:

(1) the assignment of an active or retired judge under this chapter, subject to the consent of the judge of the court in which the case for which the resources are provided is pending;

(2) additional legal, administrative, or clerical personnel;

(3) information and communication technology, including case management software, video teleconferencing, and specially designed courtroom presentation hardware or software to facilitate presentation of the evidence to the trier of fact;

(4) specialized continuing legal education;

(5) an associate judge;

(6) special accommodations or furnishings for the parties;

(7) other services or items determined necessary to

1 try the case; and

2 (8) any other resources the committee considers
3 appropriate.

4 (e) Notwithstanding any provision of Subchapter C, a
5 justice or judge to whom Section 74.053(d) applies may not be
6 assigned under Subsection (d).

7 (f) The judicial committee for additional resources may not
8 provide additional resources under this subchapter in an amount
9 that is more than the amount appropriated for this purpose.

10 Sec. 74.255. COST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES. The cost of
11 additional resources provided for a case under this subchapter
12 shall be paid by the state and may not be taxed against any party in
13 the case for which the resources are provided or against the county
14 in which the case is pending.

15 Sec. 74.256. NO STAY OR CONTINUANCE PENDING DETERMINATION.
16 The filing of a motion under Section 74.253 in a case is not grounds
17 for a stay or continuance of the proceedings in the case in the
18 court in which the case is pending during the period the motion or
19 request is being considered by:

- 20 (1) the judge of that court;
21 (2) the presiding judge of the administrative judicial
22 region; or
23 (3) the judicial committee for additional resources.

24 Sec. 74.257. APPELLATE REVIEW. A determination made by a
25 trial court judge, the presiding judge of an administrative
26 judicial region, or the judicial committee for additional resources
27 under this subchapter is not appealable or subject to review by

1 mandamus.

2 SECTION 7.05. (a) The Texas Supreme Court shall request
3 the president of the State Bar of Texas to appoint a task force to
4 consider and make recommendations regarding the rules for
5 determining whether civil cases pending in trial courts require
6 additional resources for efficient judicial management required by
7 Section 74.252, Government Code, as added by this article. The
8 president of the State Bar of Texas shall ensure that the task force
9 has diverse representation and includes judges of trial courts and
10 attorneys licensed to practice law in this state who regularly
11 appear in civil cases before courts in this state. The task force
12 shall provide recommendations on the rules to the Texas Supreme
13 Court not later than March 1, 2012.

14 (b) The Texas Supreme Court shall:

15 (1) consider the recommendations of the task force
16 provided as required by Subsection (a) of this section; and

17 (2) adopt the rules required by Section 74.252,
18 Government Code, as added by this article, not later than May 1,
19 2012.

20 SECTION 7.06. The changes in law made by this article apply
21 to cases pending on or after May 1, 2012.

22 ARTICLE 8. GRANT PROGRAMS

23 SECTION 8.01. Subchapter C, Chapter 72, Government Code, is
24 amended by adding Section 72.029 to read as follows:

25 Sec. 72.029. GRANTS FOR COURT SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS. (a) The
26 office shall develop and administer, except as provided by
27 Subsection (c), a program to provide grants from available funds to

counties for initiatives that will enhance their court systems or otherwise carry out the purposes of this chapter.

(b) To be eligible for a grant under this section, a county must:

(1) use the grant money to implement initiatives that will enhance the county's court system, including initiatives to develop programs to more efficiently manage cases that require special judicial attention, or otherwise carry out the purposes of this chapter; and

(2) apply for the grant in accordance with procedures developed by the office and comply with any other requirements of the office.

(c) The judicial committee for additional resources shall determine whether to award a grant to a county that meets the eligibility requirements prescribed by Subsection (b).

(d) If the judicial committee for additional resources awards a grant to a county, the office shall:

(1) direct the comptroller to distribute the grant money to the county; and

(2) monitor the county's use of the grant money.

(e) The office may accept gifts, grants, and donations for purposes of this section. The office may not use state funds to provide a grant under this section or to administer the grant program.

SECTION 8.02. Subchapter A, Chapter 22, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 22.017 to read as follows:

Sec. 22.017. GRANTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION. (a) In this

1 section, "commission" means the Permanent Judicial Commission for
2 Children, Youth and Families established by the supreme court.

3 (b) The commission shall develop and administer a program to
4 provide grants from available funds for initiatives that will
5 improve safety and permanency outcomes, enhance due process, or
6 increase the timeliness of resolution in child protection cases.

7 (c) To be eligible for a grant under this section, a
8 prospective recipient must:

9 (1) use the grant money to improve safety or
10 permanency outcomes, enhance due process, or increase timeliness of
11 resolution in child protection cases; and

12 (2) apply for the grant in accordance with procedures
13 developed by the commission and comply with any other requirements
14 of the supreme court.

15 (d) If the commission awards a grant, the commission shall:

16 (1) direct the comptroller to distribute the grant
17 money; and

18 (2) monitor the use of the grant money.

19 (e) The commission may accept gifts, grants, and donations
20 for purposes of this section. The commission may not use state
21 funds to provide a grant under this section or to administer the
22 grant program.

23 ARTICLE 9. VEXATIOUS LITIGANTS

24 SECTION 9.01. Subdivision (3), Section 11.001, Civil
25 Practice and Remedies Code, is amended to read as follows:

26 (3) "Local administrative judge" means a local
27 administrative district judge, a local administrative statutory

1 probate court judge, or a local administrative statutory county
2 court judge.

3 SECTION 9.02. Section 11.101, Civil Practice and Remedies
4 Code, is amended by adding Subsection (c) to read as follows:

5 (c) A litigant may appeal from a prefiling order entered
6 under Subsection (a) designating the person a vexatious litigant.

7 SECTION 9.03. Section 11.102, Civil Practice and Remedies
8 Code, is amended by adding Subsection (c) to read as follows:

9 (c) A decision of a local administrative judge denying a
10 litigant permission to file a litigation under Subsection (a), or
11 conditioning permission to file a litigation on the furnishing of
12 security under Subsection (b), is not grounds for appeal, except
13 that the litigant may apply for a writ of mandamus with the court of
14 appeals not later than the 30th day after the date of the decision.
15 The denial of a writ of mandamus by the court of appeals is not
16 grounds for appeal to the supreme court or court of criminal
17 appeals.

18 SECTION 9.04. Section 11.103, Civil Practice and Remedies
19 Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection
20 (d) to read as follows:

21 (a) Except as provided by Subsection (d), a [A] clerk of a
22 court may not file a litigation, original proceeding, appeal, or
23 other claim presented by a vexatious litigant subject to a
24 prefiling order under Section 11.101 unless the litigant obtains an
25 order from the local administrative judge permitting the filing.

26 (d) A clerk of a court of appeals may file an appeal from a
27 prefiling order entered under Section 11.101 designating a person a

1 vexatious litigant or a timely filed writ of mandamus under Section
2 11.102(c).

3 SECTION 9.05. Section 11.104, Civil Practice and Remedies
4 Code, is amended to read as follows:

5 Sec. 11.104. NOTICE TO OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION;
6 DISSEMINATION OF LIST. (a) A clerk of a court shall provide the
7 Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System a copy
8 of any prefiling order issued under Section 11.101 not later than
9 the 30th day after the date the prefiling order is signed.

10 (b) The Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial
11 System shall post on the agency's Internet website ~~[maintain]~~ a
12 list of vexatious litigants subject to prefiling orders under
13 Section 11.101 ~~[and shall annually send the list to the clerks of~~
14 ~~the courts of this state]~~. On request of a person designated a
15 vexatious litigant, the list shall indicate whether the person
16 designated a vexatious litigant has filed an appeal of that
17 designation.

18 SECTION 9.06. The posting, before the effective date of
19 this article, of the name of a person designated a vexatious
20 litigant under Chapter 11, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, on a
21 list of vexatious litigants on the Internet website of the Office of
22 Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System is not:

23 (1) grounds for a cause of action;

24 (2) a defense against a finding that a plaintiff is a
25 vexatious litigant under Chapter 11, Civil Practice and Remedies
26 Code; or

27 (3) grounds for relief or appeal from a stay, order, or

1 dismissal or any other action taken by a court or a clerk of a court
2 under Chapter 11, Civil Practice and Remedies Code.

3 ARTICLE 10. STUDY BY OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION OF TEXAS
4 JUDICIAL SYSTEM

5 SECTION 10.01. In this article, "office of court
6 administration" means the Office of Court Administration of the
7 Texas Judicial System.

8 SECTION 10.02. (a) The office of court administration
9 shall study the district courts and statutory county courts of this
10 state to determine overlapping jurisdiction in civil cases in which
11 the amount in controversy is more than \$200,000. The study must
12 determine the feasibility, efficiency, and potential cost of
13 converting to district courts those statutory county courts with
14 jurisdiction in civil cases in which the amount in controversy is
15 more than \$200,000.

16 (b) Not later than January 1, 2013, the office of court
17 administration shall submit a report regarding the determinations
18 made by the office relating to statutory county courts to the
19 governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of
20 representatives, the chairs of the standing committees of the
21 senate and house of representatives with primary jurisdiction over
22 the judicial system, and the commissioners court of any county with
23 a statutory county court with jurisdiction in civil cases in which
24 the amount in controversy is more than \$200,000.

25 (c) The office of court administration may accept gifts,
26 grants, and donations to conduct the study under this section. The
27 office of court administration may not use state funds to conduct

the study and, notwithstanding Subsection (a) of this section, is required to conduct the study only to the extent gifts, grants, and donations are available for that purpose.

ARTICLE 11. SUITS AFFECTING THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

SECTION 11.01. Section 263.601, Family Code, is amended by amending Subdivision (1) and adding Subdivision (3-a) to read as follows:

(1) "Foster care" means a voluntary residential living arrangement with a foster parent or other residential child-care provider that is:

(A) licensed or approved by the department or verified by a licensed child-placing agency; and

(B) paid under a contract with the department.

(3-a) "Trial independence period" means a period of not less than six months, or a longer period as a court may order not to exceed 12 months, during which a young adult exits foster care with the option to return to foster care under the continuing extended jurisdiction of the court.

SECTION 11.02. Section 263.602, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 263.602. EXTENDED JURISDICTION. (a) A court that had continuing, exclusive jurisdiction over a young adult on the day before ~~may, at~~ the young adult's 18th birthday continues to have extended ~~[request, render an order that extends the court's]~~ jurisdiction over the young adult and shall retain the case on the court's docket while the young adult remains in extended foster care and during a trial independence period described ~~[as provided]~~

1 by this section [~~subchapter~~].

2 (b) A court with extended jurisdiction over a young adult
3 who remains in extended foster care shall conduct extended foster
4 care review hearings every six months for the purpose of reviewing
5 and making findings regarding:

6 (1) whether the young adult's living arrangement is
7 safe and appropriate and whether the department has made reasonable
8 efforts to place the young adult in the least restrictive
9 environment necessary to meet the young adult's needs;

10 (2) whether the department is making reasonable
11 efforts to finalize the permanency plan that is in effect for the
12 young adult, including a permanency plan for independent living;

13 (3) whether, for a young adult whose permanency plan
14 is independent living:

15 (A) the young adult participated in the
16 development of the plan of service;

17 (B) the young adult's plan of service reflects
18 the independent living skills and appropriate services needed to
19 achieve independence by the projected date; and

20 (C) the young adult continues to make reasonable
21 progress in developing the skills needed to achieve independence by
22 the projected date; and

23 (4) whether additional services that the department is
24 authorized to provide are needed to meet the needs of the young
25 adult [~~The extended jurisdiction of the court terminates on the~~
26 ~~earlier of:~~

27 [~~(1) the young adult's 21st birthday, or~~

1 ~~[(2) the date the young adult withdraws consent to the~~
2 ~~extension of the court's jurisdiction in writing or in court].~~

3 (c) Not later than the 10th day before the date set for a
4 hearing under this section, the department shall file with the
5 court a copy of the young adult's plan of service and a report that
6 addresses the issues described by Subsection (b).

7 (d) Notice of an extended foster care review hearing shall
8 be given as provided by Rule 21a, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, to
9 the following persons, each of whom has a right to present evidence
10 and be heard at the hearing:

11 (1) the young adult who is the subject of the suit;

12 (2) the department;

13 (3) the foster parent with whom the young adult is
14 placed and the administrator of a child-placing agency responsible
15 for placing the young adult, if applicable;

16 (4) the director of the residential child-care
17 facility or other approved provider with whom the young adult is
18 placed, if applicable;

19 (5) each parent of the young adult whose parental
20 rights have not been terminated and who is still actively involved
21 in the life of the young adult;

22 (6) a legal guardian of the young adult, if
23 applicable; and

24 (7) the young adult's attorney ad litem, guardian ad
25 litem, and volunteer advocate, the appointment of which has not
26 been previously dismissed by the court.

27 (e) If, after reviewing the young adult's plan of service

1 and the report filed under Subsection (c), and any additional
2 testimony and evidence presented at the review hearing, the court
3 determines that the young adult is entitled to additional services,
4 the court may order the department to take appropriate action to
5 ensure that the young adult receives those services.

6 (f) A court with extended jurisdiction over a young adult as
7 described in Subsection (a) shall continue to have jurisdiction
8 over the young adult and shall retain the case on the court's docket
9 until the earlier of:

10 (1) the last day of the:

11 (A) sixth month after the date the young adult
12 leaves foster care; or

13 (B) 12th month after the date the young adult
14 leaves foster care if specified in a court order, for the purpose of
15 allowing the young adult to pursue a trial independence period; or

16 (2) the young adult's 21st birthday.

17 (g) A court with extended jurisdiction described by this
18 section is not required to conduct periodic hearings for a young
19 adult during a trial independence period and may not compel a young
20 adult who has exited foster care to attend a court hearing.

21 SECTION 11.03. Subchapter G, Chapter 263, Family Code, is
22 amended by adding Section 263.6021 to read as follows:

23 Sec. 263.6021. VOLUNTARY EXTENDED JURISDICTION FOR YOUNG
24 ADULT RECEIVING TRANSITIONAL LIVING SERVICES.

25 (a) Notwithstanding Section 263.602, a court that had continuing,
26 exclusive jurisdiction over a young adult on the day before the
27 young adult's 18th birthday may, at the young adult's request,

1 render an order that extends the court's jurisdiction beyond the
2 end of a trial independence period if the young adult receives
3 transitional living services from the department.

4 (b) The extended jurisdiction of the court under this
5 section terminates on the earlier of:

6 (1) the young adult's 21st birthday; or

7 (2) the date the young adult withdraws consent to the
8 extension of the court's jurisdiction in writing or in court.

9 (c) At the request of a young adult who is receiving
10 transitional living services from the department and who consents
11 to voluntary extension of the court's jurisdiction under this
12 section, the court may hold a hearing to review the services the
13 young adult is receiving.

14 (d) Before a review hearing scheduled under this section,
15 the department must file with the court a report summarizing the
16 young adult's transitional living services plan, services being
17 provided to the young adult under that plan, and the young adult's
18 progress in achieving independence.

19 (e) If, after reviewing the report and any additional
20 testimony and evidence presented at the hearing, the court
21 determines that the young adult is entitled to additional services,
22 the court may order the department to take appropriate action to
23 ensure that the young adult receives those services.

24 SECTION 11.04. Subsections (a) and (c), Section 263.603,
25 Family Code, are amended to read as follows:

26 (a) Notwithstanding Section 263.6021 [~~263.602~~], if the
27 court believes that a young adult may be incapacitated as defined by

1 Section 601(14)(B), Texas Probate Code, the court may extend its
2 jurisdiction on its own motion without the young adult's consent to
3 allow the department to refer the young adult to the Department of
4 Aging and Disability Services for guardianship services as required
5 by Section 48.209, Human Resources Code.

6 (c) If the Department of Aging and Disability Services
7 determines a guardianship is not appropriate, or the court with
8 probate jurisdiction denies the application to appoint a guardian,
9 the court under Subsection (a) may continue to extend its
10 jurisdiction over the young adult only as provided by Section
11 263.602 or 263.6021.

12 SECTION 11.05. Section 263.609, Family Code, is repealed.

13 SECTION 11.06. This article takes effect immediately if
14 this Act receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to
15 each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas
16 Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for
17 immediate effect, this article takes effect on the 91st day after
18 the last day of the legislative session.

19 ARTICLE 12. INMATE LITIGATION

20 SECTION 12.01. Subsection (a), Section 14.002, Civil
21 Practice and Remedies Code, is amended to read as follows:

22 (a) This chapter applies only to an action, including an
23 appeal or original proceeding, [a suit] brought by an inmate in a
24 district, county, justice of the peace, or small claims court or an
25 appellate court, including the supreme court or the court of
26 criminal appeals, in which an affidavit or unsworn declaration of
27 inability to pay costs is filed by the inmate.

SECTION 12.02. Subsections (a) and (b), Section 14.004, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a) An inmate who files an affidavit or unsworn declaration of inability to pay costs shall file a separate affidavit or declaration:

(1) identifying each action [~~suit~~], other than an action [~~a suit~~] under the Family Code, previously brought by the person and in which the person was not represented by an attorney, without regard to whether the person was an inmate at the time the action [~~suit~~] was brought; and

(2) describing each action [~~suit~~] that was previously brought by:

(A) stating the operative facts for which relief was sought;

(B) listing the case name, cause number, and the court in which the action [~~suit~~] was brought;

(C) identifying each party named in the action [~~suit~~]; and

(D) stating the result of the action [~~suit~~], including whether the action or a claim that was a basis for the action [~~suit~~] was dismissed as frivolous or malicious under Section 13.001 or Section 14.003 or otherwise.

(b) If the affidavit or unsworn declaration filed under this section states that a previous action or claim [~~suit~~] was dismissed as frivolous or malicious, the affidavit or unsworn declaration must state the date of the final order affirming the dismissal.

SECTION 12.03. Subsection (a), Section 14.007, Civil

Practice and Remedies Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) An order of a court under Section 14.006(a) shall include the costs described by Subsection (b) if the court finds that:

(1) the inmate has previously filed an action to which this chapter applies ~~[in a district, county, justice of the peace, or small claims court]~~; and

(2) a final order has been issued that affirms that the action was dismissed as frivolous or malicious under Section 13.001 or Section 14.003 or otherwise.

SECTION 12.04. The change in law made by this article applies only to an action brought on or after the effective date of this Act. An action brought before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect immediately before the effective date of this Act, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

ARTICLE 13. PROVISIONS RELATED TO EXEMPTING CERTAIN JUDICIAL OFFICERS FROM CERTAIN CONCEALED HANDGUN LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

SECTION 13.01. Subdivision (1), Subsection (a), Section 411.201, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(1) "Active judicial officer" means:

(A) a person serving as a judge or justice of the supreme court, the court of criminal appeals, a court of appeals, a district court, a criminal district court, a constitutional county court, a statutory county court, a justice court, or a municipal court; ~~[or]~~

(B) a federal judge who is a resident of this state; or

1 (C) a person appointed and serving as an
2 associate judge under Chapter 201, Family Code.

3 SECTION 13.02. Subsection (a), Section 46.15, Penal Code,
4 is amended to read as follows:

5 (a) Sections 46.02 and 46.03 do not apply to:

6 (1) peace officers or special investigators under
7 Article 2.122, Code of Criminal Procedure, and neither section
8 prohibits a peace officer or special investigator from carrying a
9 weapon in this state, including in an establishment in this state
10 serving the public, regardless of whether the peace officer or
11 special investigator is engaged in the actual discharge of the
12 officer's or investigator's duties while carrying the weapon;

13 (2) parole officers and neither section prohibits an
14 officer from carrying a weapon in this state if the officer is:

15 (A) engaged in the actual discharge of the
16 officer's duties while carrying the weapon; and

17 (B) in compliance with policies and procedures
18 adopted by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice regarding the
19 possession of a weapon by an officer while on duty;

20 (3) community supervision and corrections department
21 officers appointed or employed under Section 76.004, Government
22 Code, and neither section prohibits an officer from carrying a
23 weapon in this state if the officer is:

24 (A) engaged in the actual discharge of the
25 officer's duties while carrying the weapon; and

26 (B) authorized to carry a weapon under Section
27 76.0051, Government Code;

1 (4) an active judicial officer as defined by Section
2 411.201, Government Code, [a judge or justice of a federal court,
3 the supreme court, the court of criminal appeals, a court of
4 appeals, a district court, a criminal district court, a
5 constitutional county court, a statutory county court, a justice
6 court, or a municipal court] who is licensed to carry a concealed
7 handgun under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code;

8 (5) an honorably retired peace officer or federal
9 criminal investigator who holds a certificate of proficiency issued
10 under Section 1701.357, Occupations Code, and is carrying a photo
11 identification that:

12 (A) verifies that the officer honorably retired
13 after not less than 15 years of service as a commissioned officer;
14 and

15 (B) is issued by a state or local law enforcement
16 agency;

17 (6) a district attorney, criminal district attorney,
18 county attorney, or municipal attorney who is licensed to carry a
19 concealed handgun under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code;

20 (7) an assistant district attorney, assistant
21 criminal district attorney, or assistant county attorney who is
22 licensed to carry a concealed handgun under Subchapter H, Chapter
23 411, Government Code;

24 (8) a bailiff designated by an active judicial officer
25 as defined by Section 411.201, Government Code, who is:

26 (A) licensed to carry a concealed handgun under
27 Chapter 411, Government Code; and

1 (B) engaged in escorting the judicial officer; or
2 (9) a juvenile probation officer who is authorized to
3 carry a firearm under Section 142.006, Human Resources Code.

4 SECTION 13.03. The change in law made by this article to
5 Section 46.15, Penal Code, applies only to an offense committed on
6 or after the effective date of this article. An offense committed
7 before the effective date of this article is covered by the law in
8 effect when the offense was committed, and the former law is
9 continued in effect for that purpose. For purposes of this section,
10 an offense was committed before the effective date of this article
11 if any element of the offense occurred before that date.

12 SECTION 13.04. This article takes effect on the 91st day
13 after the last day of the legislative session.

14 ARTICLE 14. COURT COSTS

15 SECTION 14.01. Subsection (b), Section 51.005, Government
16 Code, is amended to read as follows:

- 17 (b) The fees are:
- 18 (1) application for petition for review [~~writ of~~
19 ~~error~~] \$ 50
- 20 (2) additional fee if application for petition for
21 review [~~writ of error~~] is granted \$ 75
- 22 (3) motion for leave to file petition for writ of
23 mandamus, prohibition, injunction, and other similar proceedings
24 originating in the supreme court \$ 50
- 25 (4) additional fee if a motion under Subdivision (3)
26 is granted \$ 75
- 27 (5) certified question from a federal court of appeals

to the supreme court \$ 75

(6) case appealed to the supreme court from the district court by direct appeal \$100

(7) any other proceeding filed in the supreme court \$ 75.

SECTION 14.02. Subsection (a), Section 51.207, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The clerk of a court of appeals shall collect the fees described in Subsection (b) in a civil case before the court for the following services:

- (1) filing records, applications, motions, briefs, and other necessary and proper papers;
- (2) docketing and making docket and minute book entries;
- (3) issuing notices, citations, processes, and mandates;
- (4) preparing transcripts on application for petition for review [~~writ of error~~] to the supreme court; and
- (5) performing other necessary clerical duties.

SECTION 14.03. Section 101.021, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 101.021. SUPREME COURT FEES AND COSTS: GOVERNMENT CODE. The clerk of the supreme court shall collect fees and costs as follows:

- (1) application for petition for review [~~writ of error~~] (Sec. 51.005, Government Code) . . . \$50;
- (2) additional fee if application for petition for

1 review [~~writ of error~~] is granted (Sec. 51.005, Government Code)

2 . . . \$75;

3 (3) motion for leave to file petition for writ of
4 mandamus, prohibition, injunction, and other similar proceedings
5 originating in the supreme court (Sec. 51.005, Government Code)

6 . . . \$50;

7 (4) additional fee if a motion under Subdivision (3)
8 is granted (Sec. 51.005, Government Code) . . . \$75;

9 (5) certified question from a federal court of appeals
10 to the supreme court (Sec. 51.005, Government Code) . . . \$75;

11 (6) case appealed to the supreme court from the
12 district court by direct appeal (Sec. 51.005, Government Code)
13 . . . \$100;

14 (7) any other proceeding filed in the supreme court
15 (Sec. 51.005, Government Code) . . . \$75;

16 (8) administering an oath and giving a sealed
17 certificate of the oath (Sec. 51.005, Government Code) . . . \$5;

18 (9) making certain copies, including certificate and
19 seal (Sec. 51.005, Government Code) . . . \$5, or \$0.50 per page if
20 more than 10 pages;

21 (10) any official service performed by the clerk for
22 which a fee is not otherwise provided (Sec. 51.005, Government
23 Code) . . . reasonable amount set by order or rule of supreme court;

24 (10-a) supreme court support account filing fee (Sec.
25 51.0051, Government Code) . . . amount set by the supreme court,
26 not to exceed \$50;

27 (11) issuance of attorney's license or certificate

(Sec. 51.006, Government Code) . . . \$10; and

(12) additional filing fee to fund civil legal services for the indigent (Sec. 51.941, Government Code) . . . \$25.

ARTICLE 15. COMPOSITION OF CERTAIN COUNTY JUVENILE BOARDS

SECTION 15.01. Subsection (a), Section 152.2051, Human Resources Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The Rockwall County Juvenile Board is composed of:

(1) the judge of the County Court at Law of Rockwall County;

(2) the district judges [~~judge~~] in Rockwall County;

(3) one county commissioner appointed by the commissioners court;

(4) one member of the board of trustees of the Rockwall Independent School District selected by the board of trustees of the Rockwall Independent School District; and

(5) one member of the board of trustees of the Royse City Independent School District selected by the board of trustees of the Royse City Independent School District.

ARTICLE 16. NO APPROPRIATION; EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 16.01. This Act does not make an appropriation. A provision in this Act that creates a new governmental program, creates a new entitlement, or imposes a new duty on a governmental entity is not mandatory during a fiscal period for which the legislature has not made a specific appropriation to implement the provision.

SECTION 16.02. Except as otherwise provided by this Act, this Act takes effect January 1, 2012.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 79 was passed by the House on June 22, 2011, by the following vote: Yeas 117, Nays 18, 1 present, not voting; and that the House concurred in Senate amendments to H.B. No. 79 on June 29, 2011, by the following vote: Yeas 94, Nays 44, 1 present, not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 79 was passed by the Senate, with amendments, on June 27, 2011, by the following vote: Yeas 28, Nays 3.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: _____

Date

Governor