



Representative

Desk

**LSG Floor Report For General Calendar- Wednesday, March 22, 2017**

Bill	Caption	Committee	Analysis & Evaluation	Recommendation
<b>HB 651</b> By: Clardy	Relating to the election date of the board of directors of the Rusk County Groundwater Conservation District.	Natural Resources	HB 651 seeks to change the election date of the Board of Directors for the Rusk County Groundwater Conservation District. Currently, the election date is the first Saturday in May of each even-numbered year. The requested change hopes to take advantage of potential higher voter turnout on the uniform election date in November.	<b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Erin Eriksen 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Erin@Texaslsg.org">Erin@Texaslsg.org</a>
<b>HB 886</b> By: Ken King	Relating to the powers and election dates of the Hemphill County Underground Water Conservation District.	Natural Resources	<p>HB 886 is a cleanup bill for the Hemphill County Underground Water Conservation District (UWCD). Since the bill that first created the District was passed during the 74<sup>th</sup> legislature the language needed clarification and updating. This bill will move The District's categorization to Chapter 36 of the Water Code from Chapters 50 and 52.</p> <p>The following changes were necessary to clarify and update the Districts original language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This legislation codifies language regarding the election date, agency oversight, and election of directors.</li> <li>• The election date will fall on a uniform election date in May of each even-numbered year.</li> <li>• The language clarifies that agency oversight is under the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.</li> <li>• Elected directors must qualify to serve in a manner provided by the Texas Water Code under Chapter 36 requiring a sworn statement, bond, and oath of office.</li> </ul> <p>HB 886 repeals Sections 6(b) and (c), and 7, 8, 10, which are related to election of board members and procedural requirements which are laid out within the bill. No authority will be removed or added with the passage of this bill. This legislation updates the role of the water district for the citizens of Hemphill County and within statute.</p>	<b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Erin Eriksen 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Erin@Texaslsg.org">Erin@Texaslsg.org</a>

<p><b>HB 268</b> By: Lozano</p>	<p>Relating to venue in the prosecution of certain criminal conduct involving obstruction or retaliation.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p>	<p>HB 268 allows judges to prosecute criminal offenses in any county in which an act of retaliation occurs or where the threat to cause harm originated or was received. This bill would expand the venue for prosecuting offenses of retaliation against a public servant, witness, prospective witness, or informant in a prospective case, as well as retaliation against someone who has reported or the offender knows intends to report a crime.</p> <p>HB 268 would protect judges, law enforcement officers, and individuals and families involved in cases by creating an efficient avenue for the prosecution of these criminal offenses.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Katherine@Texaslsg.org">Katherine@Texaslsg.org</a></p>
<p><b>HB 351</b> By: Canales, White, &amp; Lucio III</p>	<p>Relating to the discharge or waiver of fines and costs imposed on indigent defendants.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p>	<p>HB 351 would grant judges the discretion to discharge all or part of an indigent defendant or child defendant's fines or costs at the time of sentencing or any time thereafter through completion of community service.</p> <p>Rather than waiting for a defendant to default in payment before the court can waive fines under current law, this bill would remove that condition to allow judges to determine a defendant's financial limitations and potential strain of alternative methods of discharging fines in an expedited manner.</p> <p>HB 351 addresses a public safety issue for assigning law enforcement and court resources to defendants who tend to get trapped in a cycle of debt and jail sentences for non-payment. This is one way the current criminal justice system profits from the most financially vulnerable populations, and disproportionately affects people of color within Texas communities. HB 351 supports judicial discretion and flexibility to determine limits on waivers of fees, and empowers judges to promote the option of community service as a relief for indigent defendants and child defendants.</p> <p><b>Items of interest for HB 351</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2014, only 2,800 defendants were given the option of discharging fines through community service, and six cases had their fees fully waived out of 169,000 convictions in Houston.</li> <li>• The current practice of jailing indigent defendants ends up costing taxpayers even more money at an average of \$59 per night in jail. As a practice that is unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment, there is a common misuse of the law in some jurisdictions because of failure to find alternatives for indigent defendants.</li> <li>• These court costs are not meant to be punitive, but the use of alternative methods to hold people accountable when they are not able to pay are not used frequently enough.</li> <li>• Only 1% of cases in justice and municipal courts are fines discharged through community service, and 2 in 5 courts do not offer community service at all.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Katherine@Texaslsg.org">Katherine@Texaslsg.org</a></p>



<p><b>HB 1434</b> By: Simmons, Larson, Leach, &amp; Fallon</p>		<p>Homeland Security &amp; Public Safety</p>	<p>This legislation may allow Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to make available informational materials and videos on driving with autism at driver’s license office. The materials will be developed by an appropriate entity determined by DPS. This bill seeks to help destigmatize autism and it will help inform the driving public. No significant fiscal state nor local impact is anticipated. It is assumed any costs associated with implementing this bill could be absorbed within existing resources.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Andrea Elizondo 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Andrea@Texaslsg.org">Andrea@Texaslsg.org</a></p>
--	--	--	--	---

