

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1911
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Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

There is concern that many Texans fall into what has been called a "justice gap" in which they are neither poor enough to qualify for free legal services nor affluent enough to afford legal services on their own, thus putting these pro se litigants at a disadvantage during the legal process. S.B. 1911 seeks to address this gap by requiring the courts of Texas to make information relating to legal self-help resources publicly available on each court's website, if the court has a website, and in the office of the court clerk.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 1911 amends the Government Code to require the clerk of each court in Texas to post on the court's website, if any, a link to the State Law Library's website and a link to the self-help resources website designated by the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System (OCA) in consultation with the Texas Access to Justice Commission that includes information on certified lawyer referral services; the name, location, and any website of any local legal aid office; and any court-affiliated self-help center serving the county in which the court is located. The bill requires each clerk to conspicuously display a sign with such information in the clerk's office in a location frequently accessed by the public and requires OCA to prescribe the format for the required information.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2017.