

SUBJECT: Increasing court costs to pay for Juvenile Crime Center

COMMITTEE: Criminal Jurisprudence — favorable, with amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Hinojosa, Dunnam, Keel, Talton, Kitchen, Martinez Fischer
0 nays
3 absent — Garcia, Green, Shields

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 20 — voice vote

WITNESSES: For — None
Against — None
On — Dr. Charles A. Hines, Prairie View A&M University

BACKGROUND: In 1997, the 75th Legislature enacted HB 1550 by Goodman to establish the Center for the Study and Prevention of Juvenile Crime and Delinquency at Prairie View A&M University. The center conducts research relating to juvenile crime and delinquency and provides degree programs and other educational programs for criminal justice and social service professionals in these subjects. The center also develops programs and strategies to address juvenile crime and delinquency in partnership with communities, governmental agencies, and private entities.

Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 102.075 lists court costs that persons convicted of an offense are required to pay. Every person convicted of an offense other than a parking or pedestrian violation must pay 25 cents on conviction to be used for the operation of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Juvenile Crime and Delinquency.

DIGEST: SB 1421 would increase the court cost for the Center for the Study and Prevention of Juvenile Crime and Delinquency to 50 cents per person convicted of an offense.

The bill would take effect on September 1, 2001, and only would apply to an offense, any element of which was committed on or after the effective date.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

The Center for the Study and Prevention of Juvenile Crime and Delinquency provides a valuable service to Texas. Doubling its funding would enable the center to expand its programs and provide more services. An additional fee of 25 cents would not be a significant burden on criminal defendants, and it would be appropriate that they provided the funding for this crime prevention center.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

SB 1421 would increase financial hardship for defendants. Probationers, for example, already pay up to 30 separate fees, not including court costs, and some pay in excess of \$400 per month. Although the increase proposed in this bill is nominal, fees have gotten as high as they are for defendants mostly through small incremental increases.

**OTHER
OPPONENTS
SAY:**

The House should reinstate the 50-cent fee imposed by the Senate to pay for the Correctional Management Institute of Texas and the Criminal Justice Center at Sam Houston State University. These programs, which provide the majority of professional development training to institutional and community corrections personnel in Texas, lack a permanent funding source. They are dependent on the appropriations process, with some additional funding from Governor's Office grants, interagency agreements, and minimal fees charged to participants and their agencies. Creating a permanent funding source through this fee would enable the programs to meet the expanding needs of the correctional industry in Texas.

NOTES:

The committee Amendment would strike a section of the original bill that would set a court cost of 50 cents per convicted person to be used for the establishment and operation of the Correctional Management Institute of Texas and the Criminal Justice Center at Sam Houston State University.

The fiscal note shows that the fee would generate \$2.9 million for the Center for the Study and Prevention of Juvenile Crime and Delinquency over the 2002-03 biennium. If the 50-cent fee for the Correctional Management Institute of Texas and the Criminal Justice Center were reinstated, the estimated revenue over the fiscal 2002-03 biennium would be \$5.8 million.

