

SUBJECT: Amending meeting requirements for bail bond boards in certain counties

COMMITTEE: County Affairs — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — Coleman, Farias, Burrows, Romero, Schubert, Spitzer,
Stickland, Tinderholt, Wu

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — Scott Walstad, Professional Bondsmen of Texas; Richard Gladden; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Wynn Dillard, Professional Bondsmen of Texas; Clarence Clark; John Mccluskey; R. Glenn Smith)

BACKGROUND: Occupations Code, sec. 1704.055 requires the bail bond board in a county with fewer than 50,000 residents to meet at least four times each year during January, April, July, and October at the call of the presiding officer. The bail bond board in a county with at least 50,000 residents must meet once a month and whenever the presiding officer calls.

DIGEST: CSHB 885 would expand the requirement in current law that bail bond boards in counties with fewer than 50,000 residents meet four times each year to apply to counties with fewer than 150,000 residents.

The bill also would require that bail bond boards in counties with fewer than 150,000 residents meet at other times at the call of the presiding officer.

This bill would take effect September 1, 2015.

SUPPORTERS SAY: CSHB 885 would reduce unnecessary meetings for county bail bond boards in counties with fewer than 150,000 residents and, in doing so, allow board members to use their time more productively. Current law requires boards of counties with at least 50,000 residents to meet every month, which is unproductive when there is no new business to conduct.

Requiring fewer meetings would increase government efficiency.

This bill also would support local authority by allowing the bond boards to meet more than four times in a year at the call of the presiding officer. The affected county bail bond boards would have the discretion to decide if more than four meetings a year were necessary.

CSHB 885 would not create an undue burden for bail bondsmen in renewing their licenses. To renew a license, a bondsman must file an application with the county bond board at least 31 days before the license is due to expire, and the bondsman can apply for renewal before that date at any time. If the license was set to expire during a three-month period when the board was not scheduled to hold a meeting, the bondsman could plan to renew early or could request another meeting at the discretion of the presiding officer.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

CSHB 885 could create a burden on bail bondsmen whose licenses were scheduled to expire during the three-month period that the board did not meet to approve licenses. A bondsman whose license was going to expire during this time might have to convince the presiding officer of the board to meet before the expiration of the license. Bond boards of counties with at least 50,000 residents should continue to be required to meet monthly to ensure bondsmen's licenses did not expire during gaps between board meetings.