

- SUBJECT:** Increasing the annual state salary supplement for certain county judges
- COMMITTEE:** Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Smithee, Farrar, Clardy, Hernandez, Laubenberg, Schofield, Sheets, S. Thompson
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Raymond
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, May 19 — 26–5 (Burton, Campbell, Hall, Huffines, V. Taylor)
- WITNESSES:** (*On House companion bill, HB 2774*)
For — Mike Sutherland, Association of Rural Communities in Texas; Jim Allison, County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas; Don Allred, Oldham County; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Benny Wilson, Hansford County; Donna Warndof, Harris County; Patti Jones, Lubbock County; Mike Hull, Texans for Lawsuit Reform; Rick Thompson, Texas Association of Counties; Donald Lee, Texas Conference of Urban Counties)
- Against — None
- On — David Slayton, Office of Court Administration, Texas Judicial Council
- BACKGROUND:** Under Government Code, sec. 659.012(a), district court judges are entitled to an annual salary from the state of at least \$125,000, with certain exceptions. In some cases, state judicial salaries may be supplemented by county funds. Sec. 26.006(a) entitles a county judge to an annual salary supplement from the state of \$15,000 if at least 40 percent of the functions performed by that judge are judicial functions.
- DIGEST:** SB 1025 would increase the annual state salary supplement for

constitutional county court judges whose functions were at least 40 percent judicial from \$15,000 to an amount equal to 18 percent of the amount appropriated for the annual salary of a district judge in the general appropriations act.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2015.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

SB 1025 is necessary to address salaries for constitutional county court judges, which have not been increased in the past 10 years despite the fact that the roles of constitutional county court judges have been expanding during that period. The bill would proportionally align the supplemental compensation that county court judges receive to that of district court judges who perform similar duties. It also would place constitutional county court judges in the same position as statutory county court judges, whose salaries already are aligned with the salaries of district court judges.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

The House companion bill, HB 2774 by Smithee, was placed on the May 12 General State Calendar but not considered.

The Legislative Budget Board estimates that SB 1025 would have a negative net impact of \$4.4 million to general revenue through fiscal 2016-17.