

SUBJECT: Authorizing psychological counseling for certain grand jurors

COMMITTEE: Criminal Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Moody, Hunter, Canales, Gervin-Hawkins, Hefner, Lang, Wilson
0 nays

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 19 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 56.04(f) allows commissioners courts to approve a program in which the crime victim liaison or victim assistance coordinator may offer to jurors or alternate jurors who have served in a criminal trial with graphic material up to 10 hours of post-trial psychological counseling.

DIGEST: SB 1264 would extend the option of psychological counseling through programs created under Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 56.04(f) to grand jurors and alternate grand jurors who were exposed to graphic material during an investigation.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

SUPPORTERS SAY: SB 1264 would allow counties to extend to grand jurors the same psychological counseling services available to trial jurors who witness graphic evidence or testimony. The bill would be permissive and would pose no significant cost to counties or the Office of Court Administration, according to the fiscal note.

OPPONENTS SAY: No apparent opposition.

NOTES: A companion bill, HB 2085 by Alvarado, was reported favorably by the

House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee on April 24 and placed on the General State Calendar for May 10.