

SUBJECT: Increasing cap on claims under jurisdiction of county, justice courts

COMMITTEE: Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — Leach, Farrar, Y. Davis, Julie Johnson, Krause, Meyer, Smith, White

1 nay — Neave

WITNESSES: For — John Barton, Justices of the Peace and Constables Association of Texas; Lee Parsley, Texans for Lawsuit Reform; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Tom Sellers, ConocoPhillips; Cary Roberts, County and District Clerks' Association of Texas; Charles Reed, Dallas County Commissioners Court; Nicholas Chu, Bobby Gutierrez, and Lynn Holt, Justice of the Peace and Constables Association of Texas; Kelsey Bernstein, Texas Association of Counties; George Christian, Texas Civil Justice League; Sasha Moreno; Katina Whitfield)

Against — None

On — Russell Schaffner, Tarrant County; Bronson Tucker, Texas Justice Court Training Center

BACKGROUND: Government Code secs. 26.042(a) and 27.031(a) establish that county courts and justice courts have concurrent jurisdiction in civil cases with disputes that are more than \$200 but do not exceed \$10,000.

Some have proposed increasing the cap on current jurisdiction to allow greater access to justice courts and raising filing fees in these courts to help them meet their needs.

DIGEST: HB 1380 would increase from \$10,000 to \$20,000 the cap on the disputed claims amounts that would be under the jurisdiction of both county courts and justice courts.

The bill would increase the filing fee in justice courts from \$25 to \$50 and

would eliminate references to small claims courts.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019, and would apply to causes of action filed on or after that date.