

SUBJECT: Allowing tribal government employees to be exempt from jury service

COMMITTEE: Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Farrar, Y. Davis, Julie Johnson, Meyer, Neave, Smith, White
0 nays
2 present not voting — Leach, Krause

WITNESSES: For — Jason Nelson, Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas (*Registered, but did not testify*: Thomas Parkinson)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Lee Parsley, Texans for Lawsuit Reform)

BACKGROUND: Government Code sec. 62.106(a) establishes grounds for certain exemptions from jury service. An otherwise qualified person is exempted from jury service if the person is an officer or employee of the Senate, the House of Representatives, or any department, commission, board, office, or other agency in the legislative branch of state government, among other exemptions.

DIGEST: HB 2068 would allow documented tribal council members or employees of the legislative branch of certain tribal governments to be exempt from jury service. The bill would apply to the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Tribe, the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo (Tigua Indian Tribe), and the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019, and would apply only to people summoned for jury service who are required to appear on or after that date.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 2068 would extend the same jury service exemptions to members or employees of tribal governments that are extended to members or employees of the state government. Allowing certain people involved in

government to be exempt from jury service prevents disruptions in the legislative process. The bill would put tribal governments on equal footing with the state with respect to jury service and would allow for the effective functioning of those governments.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

There should be no additional exemptions to jury service.