

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 987
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Finance
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As Filed

DIGEST

Currently, Texas law provides that proceeds from the Compensation to Victims of Crime Fund be used to assist victims with various expenses that may result from a crime, such as medical, counseling, and funeral expenses. The 73rd Legislature enacted law which greatly increased fund revenues. However, at the same time program awards have been relatively stable, and as a result, the fund has accumulated a cash balance of approximately \$93.5 million.

S.B. 987 would require the comptroller of public accounts, with the assistance of the attorney general, to certify each year how much money will be necessary to make awards under the current Crime Victims' Compensation Act. This certification will include a 15 percent "cushion" for unexpected increases in demands for assistance under the Act. In addition, the legislature would be given authority to appropriate amounts in the fund over that which is certified for the current awards program if the receiving program or purpose "provides substantial and direct benefits, services, or assistance to crime victims or other person affected by criminal conduct."

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 987 sets forth requirements for the comptroller in regard to the amount of money that will be required to make payments of awards under the Compensation to Victims Crime Fund.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Articles 56.54(b) and (c), Code of Criminal Procedure, to authorize the compensation to victims of crime fund to be used, except as provided by Article 56.541, only by the attorney general for the payment of compensation to claimants or victims under this subchapter and other expenses in administering this subchapter. Makes nonsubstantive and conforming changes.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 56B, Code of Criminal Procedure, by adding Article 56.541, as follows:

Art. 56.541. APPROPRIATION OF EXCESS MONEY FOR OTHER CRIME VICTIM ASSISTANCE. Requires the comptroller, not later than September 1 of each year, after consulting with the attorney general, to certify an estimate of certain amounts of money. Authorizes the legislature to appropriate from the compensation to victims of crime fund or the auxiliary compensation to victims of crime fund the amount in that fund certified by the comptroller under Subsection (a)(2) for a program or purpose that provides substantial and direct benefits, services, or assistance to crime victims or other persons affected by criminal conduct.

SECTION 3. (a) Effective date: September 1, 1997.

(b) Requires the attorney general, notwithstanding the September 1 deadline provided by Article 56.541, Code of Criminal Procedure, as added by this Act, to make and certify certain estimated amounts within a certain deadline.

SECTION 4. Emergency clause.