

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 601
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Intergovernmental Relations
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As Filed

DIGEST

In 1995, the Texas Legislature passed a law that allowed municipal courts to use computer technology to conduct court business. This legislation allowed the courts to conduct business in a more efficient manner. Cities require new computer hardware, software, and a court management system to implement this technology. The approximate cost to implement computer imaging in a major city court system may cost between \$1.5 to \$2.5 million or more. Other technological improvements such as hand held ticket writers and other related items may increase the total cost to exceed \$3.5 million, depending on the size of the court system. S.B. 601 would allow municipalities to establish a municipal court technology fund to be funded through court costs.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 601 creates a municipal court technology 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 Chapter 102A, Code of Criminal Procedure, by adding Article 102.0172, as follows:

Art. 102.0172. COURT COSTS; MUNICIPAL COURT TECHNOLOGY FUND. Authorizes the governing body of a municipality by ordinance to create a municipal court technology fund and to require a defendant convicted of a misdemeanor offense in a municipal court or municipal court of record to pay a technology fee not to exceed \$10 as a cost of court. Provides that in this article, a person is convicted if a sentence is imposed on the person, the person receives probation or deferred adjudication, or the court defers final disposition of the person's case. Requires the municipal court clerk to collect the cost of court provided by this section and to pay the funds collected to the municipal treasurer, or to any other official who discharges the duty commonly delegated to the municipal treasurer, for deposit in a fund to be known as the municipal court technology fund. Provides that the municipal court technology fund authorized by this section may be used only to finance the purchase of technological enhancements for a municipal court or municipal court of record, including but not limited to certain items. Requires the municipal court technology fund to be administered by or under the direction of the governing body of the municipality.

SECTION 2. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 1999.

SECTION 4. Emergency clause.