

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1911
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

When defendants appear in court with an attorney, their likelihood of success is greater. Accordingly, pro se litigants are often at a disadvantage during the legal process. Some resources exist for pro se litigants in Texas, but where there is information, it is often inconsistent and difficult to access. S.B. 1911 requires a court to include on its website (if available) a link to a legal self-help resources website maintained by the Office of Court Administration in consultation with the Texas Access to Justice Commission. This would improve access to self-help resources for Texans facing court proceedings without an attorney to represent them and provide them with a better shot at a fair outcome in court.

As proposed, S.B. 1911 amends current law relating to posting notice of self-help resources on the Internet website of a state court and in the office of the court clerk.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter I, Chapter 51, Government Code, by adding Section 51.808, as follows:

Sec. 51.808. NOTICE OF SELF-HELP RESOURCES. (a) Requires the clerk of each court in this state to:

(1) post on the court's Internet website, if any, a link to:

(A) the self-help resources Internet website designated by the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System (OCA) in consultation with the Texas Access to Justice Commission. Requires that the designated website include information about (1) lawyer referral services certified under Chapter 952 (Lawyer Referral Services), Occupations Code, (2) references or links to the names and locations of local legal aid offices, and (3) information about court affiliated self-help centers that serve the county in which the court is located; and

(B) the State Law Library.

(2) conspicuously display in the clerk's office in a location frequently accessed by the public a sign with the information described in Subdivision (1).

(b) Requires OCA to prescribe the format for the information required under Subsection (a).

SECTION 2. Requires OCA, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, to prescribe the format of the information required under Section 51.808, Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2017.