

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 904  
By: Perry  
Juvenile Justice & Family Issues  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Reports indicate a clear desire across Texas for the child welfare system to become more trauma-informed. It has been suggested that the most prevalent inadequacy in the system is the lack of education with regard to recognizing and distinguishing the behaviors that children exhibit. Specifically, there have been calls to improve the knowledge of attorneys involved in these cases by educating them about the effects that trauma has on children. S.B. 904 seeks to address this issue by requiring certain attorneys to complete a training program on trauma-informed care and the effect of trauma on children in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

S.B. 904 amends the Family Code to require an attorney who is on a court-maintained list as being qualified for appointment as an attorney ad litem for a child in a child protection case to provide proof that the attorney has completed a training program regarding trauma-informed care and the effect of trauma on children in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services. The bill sets out the information required to be included in the training and requires the training to be designed to educate an attorney regarding the duty to periodically review the safety and well-being of a child that the attorney is appointed to represent, including any effects of trauma to the child, and take appropriate action.

S.B. 904 requires an attorney to complete the training as soon as practicable after the attorney is placed on the court-maintained list and requires an attorney who is on the court-maintained list on the bill's effective date to complete the training not later than September 1, 2022. The training may satisfy certain annual continuing legal education requirements in a year in which an attorney completes the training.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2021.