

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

C.S.S.B. 230
By: Ellis
Jurisprudence
3/9/1999
Committee Report (Substituted)

DIGEST

Currently, there is no uniform jury summons for all counties in the State of Texas. The Texas Supreme Court Jury Task Force studied the issue of jury summons, and recommends that all counties use the same type and style of jury summons in order to provide the same information to all prospective jurors. This bill would require the Office of Court Administration to develop and maintain a model for a uniform written jury summons and an accompanying questionnaire.

PURPOSE

As proposed, C.S.S.B. 230 requires the Office of Court Administration to develop and maintain a model for a uniform jury summons and questionnaire.

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 62A, Government Code, by adding Sections 62.0131 and 62.0132, as follows:

Sec. 62.0131. FORM OF WRITTEN JURY SUMMONS. Requires the Office of Court Administration (office) to develop and maintain a model for a uniform written jury summons. Requires the model to include exemptions and restrictions governing jury service under Subchapter B. Requires the written jury summons to conform with the model established under this section. Requires the office to solicit and consider the opinions of the members of the judiciary and attorneys in the developing and maintaining the model.

Sec. 62.0132. WRITTEN JURY SUMMONS QUESTIONNAIRE. Requires the office to develop and maintain a questionnaire to accompany a written jury summons. Requires a person to provide certain biographical and demographic information that is relevant to service as a jury member. Sets forth information required on the questionnaire. Requires a person who has received a written jury summons and a written jury summons questionnaire to complete and submit the questionnaire when the person reports for jury duty. Requires the office to solicit and consider the opinion of members of the judiciary and attorneys in developing and maintaining the questionnaire. Provides that information contained in the completed questionnaire is confidential, except as provided by Subsection (g). Sets forth the individuals to whom the information contained in a completed questionnaire may be disclosed.

SECTION 2. (a) Effective date: September 1, 1999.

(b) Requires the Office of Court Administration to complete the model for the summons and the questionnaire required by this Act not later than October 1, 2000, and to distribute the model and questionnaire not later than November 1, 2000.

(c) Requires a county to conform its written jury summons to the model developed under this Act not later than January 1, 2001. Requires a county to include the questionnaire developed under this Act with its written jury summons not later than January 1, 2001.

SECTION 3. Emergency clause.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE CHANGES

SECTION 1.

Amends Section 62.0132, Government Code, to provide that information contained in a completed questionnaire is confidential, providing certain exceptions set forth in Subsection (g). Deletes Subsections (c)(1)(F), (c)(2), and (c)(3) regarding questionnaire information on the level of proficiency in reading, speaking, and understanding the English language, physical disabilities that may impair one's ability to serve on a jury, and whether a person has been convicted of perjury. Redesignates Subsections (c)(1)(A)-(c)(1)(E) as Subsections (c)(1)-(c)(5).

SECTION 2.

Requires the model for the summons and questionnaire to be completed not later than October 1, 2000, and distributed to each county not later than November 1, 2000. Requires a county to conform its written jury summons to the model developed under this Act, along with the questionnaire, not later than January 1, 2001.