

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
80R2457 YDB-D

H.B. 368
By: Hartnett (Watson)
Jurisprudence
4/12/2007
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Office of Court Administration (office) and the Judicial Committee on Information Technology (committee) have provided small grants to courts in Texas in cooperation with the county information resources agency of the Texas Association of Counties for over a decade. The office has provided the grants in the form of interagency memoranda of understanding with funding from an appropriation line item. The office currently lacks clear grant-making authority in statute.

Additionally, the office is required to dispose of surplus computer equipment from the office and the appellate courts by standard procedures outlined in Chapter 2175 (Surplus and Salvage Property), Government Code. This statute prohibits the office from transferring said equipment to state or local judicial entities that may benefit from the use of that equipment.

H.B. 368 authorizes the office to award a grant of money to a local or state governmental entity in the judicial branch to fund programs that are approved by the committee and that provide technological support for the judiciary. This bill also exempts the office from Chapter 2175, Government Code, and requires the office to give preference to state and local entities in the judicial branch of local and state government.

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 Section 72.021, Government Code, by adding Subsections (c) and (d), as follows:

(c) Authorizes the Office of Court Administration (office) to award a grant to an entity in the judicial branch of local or state government to fund programs that are approved by the Judicial Committee on Information Technology under Chapter 77 (Judicial Committee on Information Technology), Government Code, and that provide technological support for the judiciary.

(d) Requires the office to file a report with the Legislative Budget Board on the amount, recipient, and purpose of each grant awarded under Subsection (c) at the end of each fiscal year. Provides that all money expended under said grant is subject to audit by the comptroller of public accounts and the state auditor.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter F, Chapter 2175, Government Code, by adding Section 2175.307, as follows:

Sec. 2175.307. EXCEPTION FOR OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION. Provides that Chapter 2175 (Surplus and Salvage Property), Government Code, does not apply to the office's disposition of surplus computer equipment. Requires the office to give preference to the transference of equipment to an entity in the judicial branch of local or state government.

SECTION 3. Repealer: Section 77.032 (Judicial Technology Account), Government Code.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2007.