

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
81R10216 PEP-F

S.B. 1681
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Criminal Justice
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The veracity of an in-custody informant's statement can be highly suspect. The person may have been offered a reduction in their own sentence, a plea deal in return for their testimony, or an improvement in their conditions of confinement as a reward for testifying. If an in-custody informant provides information related to a crime that only declares the crime was committed, and there is no additional evidence to substantiate the informant's claim, it is imprudent to convict a person based on the informant's statement alone.

Current law already requires that a conviction under the Texas Controlled Substances Act be supported by corroborating evidence that validates the testimony of a person who is not a peace officer or who is an undercover peace officer. This means that even the testimony of an undercover peace officer is required to be corroborated by evidence in seeking a conviction under the Texas Controlled Substances Act. The testimony of in-custody informant should be held to the same standard.

As proposed, S.B. 1681 prohibits the conviction of a defendant based solely on the testimony of an in-custody informant. S.B. 1681 defines "in-custody informant" and provides that corroboration is not sufficient if it only shows that the offense in question was committed.

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 Chapter 38, Code of Criminal Procedure, by adding Article 38.075, as follows:

Art. 38.075. TESTIMONY OF IN-CUSTODY INFORMANT. (a) Prohibits a defendant from being convicted of an offense on the testimony of an in-custody informant unless the testimony is corroborated by other evidence tending to connect the defendant with the offense committed.

(b) Provides that corroboration is not sufficient for the purposes of this article if the corroboration only shows that the offense was committed.

(c) Defines "in-custody informant."

SECTION 2. Provides that the change in law made by this Act applies to any case in which a judgment has not been entered before the effective date of this Act. Provides that a case in which a judgment has been entered before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect when the judgment was entered, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2009.