

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 2279
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Jurisprudence
9/15/2009
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Under the Business & Commerce Code, there exist a number of provisions under which the attorney general is authorized to seek civil penalties against persons or organizations for fraudulent and abusive business practices or for engaging in business practices that are specifically prohibited. In most cases, the lawsuit results in settlements with requirements that the attorney general be reimbursed for investigative and other fees. When individual victims are identified, the settlements generally provide for restitution of affected customers. The remaining civil penalty, if any, is directed into the state treasury and may be used in subsequent years for appropriations.

S.B. 2279 amends current law relating to the dedication of certain civil penalties for violations of the Deceptive Trade Practices–Consumer Protection Act to provide civil legal services to the indigent.

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 402.007, Government Code, as follows:

Sec. 402.007. New heading: PAYMENT TO TREASURY; ALLOCATION OF CERTAIN PENALTIES. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text.

(b) Requires the comptroller of public accounts, subject to Subsection (c), to credit to the judicial fund for programs approved by the supreme court that provide basic civil legal services to the indigent the net amount of a civil penalty that is recovered in an action by the attorney general in any matter actionable under Subchapter E (Deceptive Trade Practices and Consumer Protection), Chapter 17 (Deceptive Trade Practices), Business & Commerce Code, after deducting amounts allocated to or retained by the attorney general as authorized by law, unless another law requires that the penalty be credited to a different fund or account or the judgment awarding the penalty requires that the penalty be paid to another named recipient.

(c) Prohibits the total amount credited to the judicial fund for programs approved by the supreme court that provide basic civil legal services to the indigent under Subsection (b) from exceeding \$10 million per state fiscal biennium.

SECTION 2. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.