

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
87R1881 SMT-D

S.B. 186
By: Perry
Local Government
3/12/2021
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Under current law, counties may issue voter-approved bonds to fund a number of county projects including: building courthouses or jails, constructing homes or schools for dependent or delinquent children, creating facilities for needy or indigent people, constructing bridges, and to improve or maintain public roads. However, counties are not permitted to issue voter-approved bonds to restore or maintain courthouses.

Smaller counties with limited financial resources often lack the necessary funds to adequately restore or maintain rural courthouses. Therefore, many historic county courthouses that have been at the center of rural life for decades have begun to fall into disrepair.

Counties are currently permitted to use certificates of obligation to restore or maintain county courthouses. However, in an effort to promote greater transparency and community acceptance of these projects, counties would like to be able to have these courthouse bonds approved by the voters in an election instead of issuing certificates of obligation.

This bill amends Section 1301.001(a) of the Government Code to allow county commissioners courts to issue voter-approved bonds for the restoration or maintenance of county courthouses. County commissioners courts may issue these bonds only if a majority of the voters at an election to authorize bonds vote in favor of the proposition to authorize the bonds.

As proposed, S.B. 186 amends current law relating to the authority of a county to issue bonds to restore or maintain a county courthouse.

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 1301.001(a), Government Code, to authorize the commissioners court of a county to issue certain bonds for certain purposes, including restoring or maintaining a county courthouse, and to make nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.