

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.J.R. 27
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In the years following the American Civil War (1861-1865), Texas' indigent population sharply increased. In response to this Reconstruction-era public policy problem, the Texas Constitution was amended in 1869 to authorize counties to operate manual labor poor houses and farms. According to a survey by the Texas Historical Commission, at least 65 Texas counties operated a poor farm at one time.

Interested parties observe that the need for county-run manual labor poor houses and farms became obsolete by the mid-20th century. Currently, while some counties may own land that was once used for poor house or farm purposes, no Texas counties operate or maintain a manual labor poor house or farm as authorized by the state constitution.

S.J.R. 27 repeals Section 14, Article IX of the Texas Constitution, authorizing counties to provide for manual labor poor houses and farms. This change strikes an antiquated provision within the constitution that no longer serves a public purpose.

As proposed, S.J.R. 27 proposes a constitutional amendment to repeal county authority to provide for manual labor poor houses and farms.

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. Repealer: Section 14 (County Poor House and Farm), Article IX (Counties), Texas Constitution.

SECTION 2. Requires that the proposed constitutional amendment be submitted to the voters at an election to be held November 7, 2017. Sets forth the required language of the ballot.