

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 909  
By: Zaffirini  
Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Interested parties assert that the case assignments provided in statute for the Bexar County courts at law are redundant and antiquated in regard to jurisdiction over civil and criminal proceedings. Additionally, the parties suggest that there is a need to provide uniformity in certain provisions relating to the judges of those courts. S.B. 909 seeks to update statutory provisions related to the Bexar County courts at law in order to address these issues.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

S.B. 909 amends the Government Code to remove the requirement that the Bexar County Courts at Law Nos. 4, 6, 11, and 12 give preference to criminal cases and appeals de novo from the municipal and justice courts and to instead authorize any of the county courts at law in Bexar County to hear such cases. The bill adds County Court at Law No. 7 to the Bexar County courts at law required to give preference to certain cases involving family violence. The bill changes the required approach to setting the salary of a county court at law judge in Bexar County from an annual salary in an amount not less than \$25,000 and not more than the total annual salary paid to a district judge in the county to a salary as provided by statutory provisions governing the salary of statutory county court judges generally. The bill removes the requirement that the county commissioners court consider the county's financial condition and the statutory county court judges' duties and needs in setting the judges' salaries. The bill extends to all county court at law judges in Bexar County the exemption of specified such judges from statutory provisions requiring statutory county court judges to execute a bond as prescribed by law for county judges and authorizing the removal of such a judge from office in the same manner and for the same reasons as a county judge. The bill exempts statutory probate courts from statutory provisions governing Bexar County courts at law and removes such an exemption for Bexar County Court at Law No. 1 and Probate Court.

S.B. 909 repeals Sections 25.0172(a), (b), and (i), Government Code, which require Bexar County Court at Law No. 1 to give preference to criminal cases and Bexar County Court at Law No. 10 to give preference to civil cases.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2015.