

- SUBJECT:** Duties performed by a county domestic relations office
- COMMITTEE:** Juvenile Justice and Family Issues — committee report recommended
- VOTE:** 5 ayes — Dutton, Eiland, Farrar, Gonzalez Toureilles, Hernandez
0 nays
4 absent — Bolton, Farias, Strama, Vaught
- WITNESSES:** For —David W. Simpson, Texas Association of Domestic Relations Office Harris County Domestic Relations Office; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Cecelia Burke Texas Association of Domestic Relations Offices)
Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** Family Code, ch. 203 provides for the establishment, administration, powers and duties, fees and charges of a county Domestic Relations Office (DRO). DROs provide services that range from pre-divorce counseling and representing a child as a guardian ad litem, to collecting child support to be paid through a domestic relations registry.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 1575 would amend Family Code Sec. 203.004 to allow a DRO to:
- provide an informal forum for the use of alternative dispute resolution to solve disputes;
 - prepare a court-ordered social study into the circumstances and condition of the child and of the home of any person requesting managing conservatorship or possession of the child; and
 - provide parenting coordinator services to resolve issues related to parenting or other family issues in the suit.
- The administering entity would be able to authorize a DRO to assess and collect a reasonable fee for parenting coordinator services, and a reasonable fee for alternative dispute resolution services. A DRO would be allowed to:
- obtain records that relate to a person who had court-ordered possession of a child, or filed suit to adopt a child;

- obtain from the DPS records relating to a person's criminal history record information; and
- obtain criminal history record information that related to a person who was a party to a proceeding in which the DRO had been requested to enforce a court order for possession of and access to a child.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2007.