

SUBJECT: Modifying qualifications for service as a grand juror

COMMITTEE: Criminal Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Moody, Hunter, Canales, Gervin-Hawkins, Hefner, Lang, Wilson
0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Patti Henry, County and District Clerks' Association of Texas; *(Registered, but did not testify: Tiana Sanford, Montgomery County District Attorney's Office; Nanette Forbes, Texas Association of Counties; Justin Wood, Travis County District Attorney; Thomas Parkinson)*

Against — None

On — *(Registered, but did not testify: Shannon Edmonds, Texas District and County Attorneys Association (TDCAA))*

BACKGROUND: Code of Criminal Procedure, ch. 19 relates to the selection and qualifications for service as a grand juror.

Concerns have been raised about whether current law ensures that a sufficient number of prospective grand jurors are called to create an adequate jury pool and whether there is confusion about the juror questionnaire.

DIGEST: HB 2286 would change the number of prospective grand jurors required to be summoned from a range of 20 to 125 to a number that the district judge considered necessary to ensure an adequate number of jurors.

The bill would specify that a person selected to serve as a grand juror had to be at least 18 years old, a citizen of the United States, a resident of Texas, and qualified to vote in the county where the grand jury was sitting, regardless of voter registration status, in addition to other existing criteria.

A person could be excused from grand jury service if the person were responsible for the care of a child younger than 12 years old, down from 18 years old in current law, if the jury service would leave the child without adequate supervision.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017, and would apply to a grand jury impaneled on or after that date.