

SUBJECT: Establishing the 32nd Judicial District Juvenile Board

COMMITTEE: Corrections — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 6 ayes — White, Allen, S. Davis, Romero, Sanford, Schaefer

1 nay — Tinderholt

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Kaci Singer, Texas Juvenile Justice Department)

BACKGROUND: Human Resources Code, ch. 152 establishes the juvenile board for Fisher, Mitchell, and Nolan counties, consisting of:

- a county judge from Fisher, Mitchell, or Nolan County elected by a majority vote of the county judges from those counties;
- the 32nd Judicial District judge or the county court at law judge in Nolan County;
- the city manager of Sweetwater or another person appointed by the Sweetwater City Commission, if the city agrees to pay certain salaries for Nolan County personnel and other expenses;
- the superintendent of the Sweetwater ISD or another person appointed by the Sweetwater ISD board of trustees, if the district agrees to pay certain salaries for Nolan County personnel and other expenses;
- one person each appointed by the Fisher County Commissioners Court, the Mitchell County Commissioners Court, and the Nolan County Commissioners Court;
- the county attorney of Fisher, Mitchell, or Nolan County, selected by a majority vote of the county judges of those counties; and
- one person selected by a majority vote of the county judges, subject

to a confirmation vote of the commissioners courts.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 4280 would include Fisher County, Mitchell County, and Nolan County in the 32nd Judicial District Juvenile Board.

The juvenile board's composition would be changed to consist of the county, statutory county, and district judges in Fisher, Mitchell, and Nolan counties. The juvenile board would be required to elect one of its members as chairman.

The bill also would require the board to hold regular meetings, maintain an advisory council composed of one person from each county, and select a fiscal officer from among the three counties' treasurers or auditors.

The bill would allow commissioners courts from the three counties to pay the board members an annual supplemental compensation from the counties' general funds or any other available funds. Statutory provisions for the defunct Fisher, Mitchell, and Nolan counties juvenile board would be repealed.

The bill would take effect October 1, 2017.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** CSHB 4280 would reconstitute the juvenile board for Fisher, Mitchell, and Nolan counties as the 32nd Judicial District Juvenile Board and modify the board to make it more closely resemble other multi-county juvenile boards in the state. Clarifying the operation, administration, and composition of the juvenile board would better equip it to meet the needs of the counties it serves.

Allowing discretion by commissioners courts on the pay of board members would be consistent with the approach taken by other counties' juvenile boards, and this bill would extend that practice to the juvenile board serving Fisher, Mitchell, and Nolan counties.

**OPPONENTS** CSHB 4280 would cost counties money, allow for elected officials to

**SAY:** receive a pay increase, and expand the scope of governmental oversight. The bill would not cap the amount that commissioners courts could pay board members, which could lead to potential abuse and double compensation for work that elected officials already were doing.

**NOTES:** The bill as filed differs from the committee substitute in that HB 4280 would have:

- required the commissioners courts to annually pay \$2,400 in supplemental compensation to juvenile board members;
- allowed the commissioners courts to reimburse board members for job-related expenses;
- required the juvenile board to pay the salaries of juvenile probation personnel and other expenses to the extent it received state aid for this purpose.