

**SUBJECT:** Removing \$3 per meal spending cap for jurors in civil cases

**COMMITTEE:** Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 8 ayes — Leach, Davis, Julie Johnson, Krause, Middleton, Moody, Schofield, Smith

0 nays

1 absent — Dutton

**WITNESSES:** For — Judith Snively, Harris County District Clerk; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Thamara Narvaez, Harris County Commissioners Court; Lee Parsley, Texans for Lawsuit Reform; Thomas Parkinson)

Against — None

**BACKGROUND:** Under Government Code sec. 62.202, a district judge in applicable counties may keep the jurors together for deliberation to expedite the final disposition of a civil case in the district court instead of dismissing the jurors for meals. The district judge may draw a warrant on the jury fund or other appropriate fund of the county in which the civil case is tried to cover the cost of buying and transporting the meals to the jury room. No more than \$3 per meal may be spent for each juror.

Interested parties have called for removing the \$3 per meal cap and instead allow a judge to authorize an amount the judge considers appropriate for each meal.

**DIGEST:** HB 2375 would remove the \$3 per meal cap and instead authorize a judge to spend out of county funds an amount the judge considered appropriate to provide food to jurors in a civil case.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021.