

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 2102
By: Goodman (Ellis)
Jurisprudence
5-7-97
Engrossed

DIGEST

Currently, court proceedings for juveniles ages 10 to 17 may be open to the public. Many juveniles who are not yet convicted of a crime have been subject to public scrutiny due to the access that the general public holds in these juvenile court hearings, if the judge determines that the court hearing is to be open. This bill will provide regulations regarding the closing of juvenile court hearings to the public.

PURPOSE

As proposed, H.B. 2102 provides regulations regarding the closing of juvenile court hearings to the public.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 54.08, Family Code, to prohibit the court from prohibiting a person who is a victim of the conduct of a child, or the person's family, from personally attending a hearing under this title relating to the conduct by the child unless the victim or member of the victim's family is to testify in the hearing or any subsequent hearing relating to the conduct and the court determines that the victim's or family member's testimony would be materially affected if the victim or member of the victim's family hears other testimony at trial. Defines "family." Requires the court to close the hearing to the public if a child is under the age of 14 at the time of the hearing, unless the court finds that the interests of the child or the interests of the public would be better served by opening the hearing to the public.

SECTION 2. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 3. Emergency clause.
Effective date: upon passage.