

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
76R1601 JSA-D

S.J.R. 20  
By: Duncan  
Jurisprudence  
2/25/1999  
As Filed

### **DIGEST**

Since 1876, Texas' district courts have not been comprehensively redistricted, and the legislature has added 361 courts in a piecemeal fashion since the original redistricting 123 years ago. In 1985, Texans amended their constitution to create a mechanism to provide for periodic judicial redistricting, making the Judicial Districts Board responsible for reapportionment of judicial districts, if the legislature fails to do so. However, the Judicial Districts Board's work has not been addressed by the legislature. S.J.R. 20 gives Texas voters the choice to abolish the Judicial Districts Board, and creates the Legislative Redistricting Board.

### **PURPOSE**

As proposed, S.J.R. 20 requires the submission to the voters of a constitutional amendment to abolish the Judicial Districts Board, and to grant the Legislative Redistricting Board the authority to make statewide reapportionments of judicial districts.

### **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 7a, Article V, Texas Constitution, as follows:

- Sec. 7a. (a) Requires the Legislative Redistricting Board to make a statewide reapportionment of the judicial districts as provided by this section. Deletes text describing the duty of the Judicial Districts Board (JDB).
- (b) Deletes existing Subsection (b).
- (c) Redesignates Subsection (c) as Subsection (b). Deletes text describing the authority and prohibitions of the JDB.
- (d) Clarifies the dates by which the legislature must enact a statewide reapportionment of judicial districts. Deletes text specifying consequences of the JDB's failure to make a statewide reapportionment by a certain date. Deletes existing Subsection (f). Makes a conforming change.
- (e) Redesignated from existing Subsection (g). Deletes existing Subsection (h). Makes conforming changes.
- (f) Redesignated from existing Subsection (i). Makes conforming and nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Requires this constitutional amendment to be submitted to the voters at an election to be held on November 2, 1999. Sets forth the required language for the ballot.