

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
77R2904 MTD-D

S.C.R. 12
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As Filed

DIGEST

The strategy of the United States Department of Justice for reducing crime along the United States border focuses on illegal immigration, alien smuggling, and drug trafficking. The resulting increase in related criminal cases has been handled by the five federal southwestern judicial districts along the border, including two in Texas. In 1999, these five courts received 27 percent of all criminal case filings in the United States, while the other 73 percent of cases were spread among the country's remaining 84 federal district courts. The total number of cases has increased dramatically in the past five years, while the judicial resources have hardly increased. Smaller cases are referred to local district attorneys in the border counties of Texas to prosecute, thereby burdening the local governments, which are among the poorest in the United States. The annual cost to prosecute these federal criminal cases ranges from \$2.7 million to approximately \$8.2 million per district attorney jurisdiction, and it is anticipated that the total cost will reach \$25 million per year. The federal government has more resources than the state and local governments, and in turn must shoulder a larger portion of the financial burden of federal border cases.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.C.R. 12 submits the following resolutions:

Respectfully urges the Congress of the United States to authorize an additional 16 federal judges and commensurate staff to handle the current and anticipated caseloads along the Texas-Mexico border and to fully reimburse local governments for the costs incurred in prosecuting and incarcerating federal defendants; and

Requires the Texas secretary of state to forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.