

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
80R10839 PEP-D

H.B. 371
By: Dukes, et al. (Carona)
Criminal Justice
5/13/2007
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Class C misdemeanors constitute a significant portion of the criminal offenses processed each year in Texas courts.

H.B. 371 requires the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System (OCA) to conduct a study of the feasibility, efficiency, and potential cost savings of changing certain Class C misdemeanors to civil violations. The bill also requires OCA to consult with certain persons and entities, and to file a report containing its findings and recommendations with certain elected officials.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. (a) Requires the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System (OCA) to conduct a study to determine the feasibility, efficiency, and potential cost savings of converting certain Class C misdemeanors to civil infractions. Requires OCA, in conducting the study, to examine which Class C misdemeanors are appropriate to convert to civil infractions, and which civil collections procedures involving judicial oversight could be used to collect fines, court costs, and fees on the civil infractions.

(b) Requires OCA to consult with county and municipal court judges, justices of the peace, the Department of Public Safety, the Parks and Wildlife Department, and the Texas District and County Attorneys Association for input regarding the study. Authorizes OCA to consult with any other appropriate agency or organization.

(c) Requires OCA, not later than October 1, 2008, to file a report containing the results of the study and recommendations for legislation with the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the chairs of the standing committees of the senate and house of representatives with jurisdiction over the judicial system.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2007.