

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
81R29353 AJA-D

C.S.H.B. 1736
By: Anchia et al. (Duncan)
State Affairs
5/5/2009
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

There have been approximately 40 people in Texas exonerated for crimes they did not commit. Together, these individuals served a total of 500 years in prison. Currently, Texas law allows those individuals to be compensated \$50,000 per year for each year the person spent in prison. However, according to the Innocence Project, of those who were exonerated after being wrongfully convicted, "most...leave prison without immediate financial support; it can take months or years before restitution is forthcoming, and some exonerees are never compensated." Those who do receive some financial compensation for their wrongful convictions are left to live on a small amount of their compensation money after incurring various expenses due to the often extended legal proceedings required to prove their innocence.

C.S.H.B. 1736 amends current law relating to compensation of and services to persons wrongfully imprisoned.

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. Requires that this Act be known as the Tim Cole Act.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 103.001, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, by adding Subsection (c), to entitle the person's heirs, legal representatives, and estate, if a deceased person would be entitled to compensation under Subsection (a)(2) (relating to the requirements for entitlement to compensation) if living, including a person who received a posthumous pardon, to lump-sum compensation under Section 103.052 (Amount and Timing of Compensation).

SECTION 3. Amends Section 103.003, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, to require a person seeking compensation under this chapter, not later than the third anniversary of the date the person on whose imprisonment the claim is based received the pardon or was granted relief, rather than found not guilty, as required by Section 103.001 (Claimants Entitled to Compensation), to file an application with the comptroller of public accounts (comptroller) for compensation under Subchapter B (Administrative Hearing). Deletes existing text requiring a person seeking compensation under this chapter to file suit against the state for compensation under Subchapter C (Filing Suit) not later than the third anniversary of the date the person received the pardon or was found not guilty. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 4. Reenacts Section 103.051(a), Civil Practice and Remedies Code, as amended by Chapters 1190 (H.B. 814) and 1388 (S.B. 1719), Acts of the 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007, and amends it to require the claimant, to apply for compensation under this subchapter, to file with the comptroller of public accounts' (comptroller) judiciary section certain information including a statement provided by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and any county or municipality that incarcerated the person on whose imprisonment the claim is based in connection with the relevant sentence verifying the length of incarceration; if applicable, a statement from the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas (DPS) verifying registration as a sex offender and length of registration; and if applicable, a statement from TDCJ verifying the length of time spent on parole. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 5. Amends Section 103.052, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, as follows:

Sec. 103.052. New heading: LUMP-SUM COMPENSATION. (a) Entitles a person who meets the requirements of Section 103.001 to compensation in an amount equal to \$80,000, rather than \$50,000, multiplied by the number of years served in prison, expressed as a fraction to reflect partial years, and compensation for child support payments owed by the person on whose imprisonment the claim is based that became due and interest on child support arrearages that accrued during the time served in prison but were not paid. Deletes existing Subsection (a-1), entitling a person sentenced to death who meets the requirements of Section 103.001, notwithstanding Subsection (a)(1) (relating to a person entitled to compensation of \$80,000 multiplied by the number of years served in prison, expressed as a fraction to reflect partial years), to compensation in an amount equal to \$100,000 multiplied by the number of years served in prison, expressed as a fraction to reflect partial years.

(b) Entitles a person who, after serving a sentence in a Texas prison for which the person is entitled to compensation under Subsection (a)(1) (relating to a person entitled to compensation of \$80,000 multiplied by the number of years served in prison, expressed as a fraction to reflect partial years), was released on parole or required to register as a sex offender under Chapter 62 (Sex Offender Registration Program), Code of Criminal Procedure, to compensation in an amount equal to \$25,000 multiplied by the number of years served either on parole or as a registered sex offender, expressed as a fraction to reflect partial years. Deletes existing text requiring a person who is owed an amount of compensation under Subsection (a)(1) or (a-1) equal to or greater than \$50,000 to be paid that compensation in two equal annual installments.

(c) Redesignates Subsection (d) as Subsection (c). Deletes existing text of Subsection (c) requiring that, if requested by the claimant, the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation provide appropriate counseling for one year to the claimant at a mutually agreed-on location at no charge to the claimant. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 6. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 103, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, by adding Section 103.053, as follows:

Sec. 103.053. ANNUITY COMPENSATION. (a) Entitles a person entitled to compensation under Section 103.001(a) (relating to therequirements for entitlement to compensation) to annuity payments, based on a present value sum equal to the amount to which the person is entitled under Sections 103.052(a)(1) and (b).

(b) Provides that the annuity payments under this section are payable in equal monthly installments for the life of the claimant and are required to be based on a five percent per annum interest rate and other actuarial factors within the discretion of the comptroller.

(c) Prohibits the annuity payments from being accelerated, deferred, increased, or decreased. Prohibits the applicant from selling, mortgaging, or otherwise encumbering, or anticipating the payments, wholly or partly, by assignment or otherwise.

SECTION 7. Amends Section 103.151, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, as follows:

Sec. 103.151. ADMINISTRATIVE PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION. (a) Requires the comptroller to make the compensation, rather than first installment payment, due a claimant under Section 103.052, rather than due an applicant, and the lump-sum payment, if any, to be paid to the state disbursement unit, as defined by Section 101.0302 (State Disbursement Unit), Family Code, under Subchapter B, to the extent that funds are available and appropriated for that purpose, not later than the 30th day after the date the comptroller grants the application. Requires that a claim for lump-sum compensation

payable under Section 103.052(a) or (b) survive the death of the claimant in favor of the heirs, legal representatives, and estate of the claimant.

(b) Requires the comptroller to begin making annuity payments to a claimant under Section 103.053(a) on the first anniversary of the date of payment of the compensation due under Section 103.052, rather than pay the amount of the second installment payment on the first anniversary of the date of the first installment.

(c) Requires that the money, if appropriated funds are insufficient to pay the amount due a claimant, rather than an applicant, and the amount to be paid to the state disbursement unit, as defined by Section 101.0302, Family Code, be paid under the procedure described by Section 103.152.

SECTION 8. Amends Section 103.152(a), Civil Practice and Remedies Code, to require the comptroller, not later than November 1 of each even-numbered year, to provide a list of claimants entitled to payment under Subchapter B, rather than Subchapter B or C, and the amounts due for each claimant to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the chair of the appropriate committee in each house of the legislature so that the legislature may appropriate the amount needed to pay the amount owed to each claimant and the amount to be paid to the state disbursement unit, as defined by Section 101.0302, Family Code, on the claimant's behalf.

SECTION 9. Amends Section 103.154(b), Civil Practice and Remedies Code, to provide that annuity payments to a person under Section 103.151(b) terminate on the date of the person's death. Deletes existing text providing that, except as provided by Subsection (c) (relating to payments not qualifying to compensation for child support payments and interest on child support arrearages to paid on a person's behalf), compensation payments to a person under this chapter terminate on the date of the person's death.

SECTION 10. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 501, Government Code, by adding Section 501.091, as follows:

Sec. 501.091. REENTRY AND REINTEGRATION SERVICES FOR WRONGFULLY IMPRISONED PERSONS. (a) Defines "wrongfully imprisoned person."

(b) Requires TDCJ to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure the successful reentry and reintegration of wrongfully imprisoned persons into the community following discharge from TDCJ. Requires that the reentry and reintegration plan developed under this section include:

(1) life-skills, job, and vocational training for a wrongfully imprisoned person following discharge, for as long as those services are beneficial to the person;

(2) a requirement that TDCJ provide, before a wrongfully imprisoned person is discharged from TDCJ, the person with any documents that are necessary after discharge, including a state identification card; and

(3) the provision of financial assistance to aid a wrongfully imprisoned person in the reentry and reintegration process and in covering living expenses following discharge, in an amount not to exceed \$10,000.

(c) Requires that the provision of financial assistance under Subsection (b)(3) be administered by the Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments (TCOOMMI) or TDCJ.

(d) Requires that the amount of financial assistance provided to a wrongfully imprisoned person under Subsection (b)(3) be deducted from the amount of compensation provided to the person under Section 103.052, Civil Practice and Remedies Code.

(e) Authorizes TDCJ to contract with private vendors or other entities to implement the comprehensive reentry and reintegration plan required by this section.

SECTION 11. Amends Chapter 614, Health and Safety Code, by adding Section 614.021, as follows:

Sec. 614.021. SERVICES FOR WRONGFULLY IMPRISONED PERSONS. (a) Defines "wrongfully imprisoned person."

(b) Requires TCOOMMI to develop a plan to use existing case management functions to assist wrongfully imprisoned persons who are discharged from TDCJ in accessing medical and dental services, including assistance in completing documents required for application to federal entitlement programs; obtaining mental health treatment and related support services through the public mental health system for as long as the wrongfully imprisoned person requires assistance; and obtaining appropriate support services, as identified by the wrongfully imprisoned person and the assigned case manager, to assist the person in making the transition from incarceration into the community.

(c) Requires TCOOMMI to submit an annual report to the legislature on the provision of services under this section to wrongfully imprisoned persons.

SECTION 12. Repealers: Section 103.002 (Choice of Compensation Method); Subchapter C (Filing Suit), Chapter 103 (Compensation to Persons Wrongfully Imprisoned); and Section 103.152(c) (relating to the amount of compensation awarded to a claimant being required to be paid on the claimant's behalf in a lump-sum payment for distribution to the oblige under the child support order), Civil Practice and Remedies Code.

SECTION 13. (a) Requires TDCJ, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, to develop a comprehensive plan for the reentry and reintegration of wrongfully imprisoned persons as required by Section 501.091, Government Code, as added by this Act.

(b) Requires TCOOMMI, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, to develop a plan to assist wrongfully imprisoned persons as required by Section 614.021, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, and to submit the first annual report to the legislature as required by that section not later than September 1, 2010.

SECTION 14. (a) Makes application of Chapter 103, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, as amended by this Act, prospective.

(b) Entitles a person, notwithstanding Section 103.003, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, as amended by this Act, who received compensation under Chapter 103, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, before September 1, 2009, to annuity payments under Section 103.053, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, based on a present value sum equal to the amount the person would receive under Sections 103.052(a)(1) and (b), Civil Practice and Remedies Code, as amended by this Act, if the person were to receive compensation under those sections on September 1, 2009. Requires the comptroller to begin making payments to a claimant under this section not later than the 30th day after the date the comptroller determines the claimant is eligible to receive compensation under this section.

SECTION 15. Effective date: September 1, 2009.