

Proposed Texas Judicial Council Legislative Proposals – 85th Legislative Session

The Texas Judicial Council is a statutorily created judicial body responsible for the continuous study of “the organization, rules, procedures and practice, work accomplished, results, and uniformity of the discretionary powers of the state courts and methods for their improvement.”¹ The council is required to “receive and consider advice from judges, public officials, members of the bar, and citizens concerning remedies for faults in the administration of justice.”² To receive this advice, Chief Justice Nathan Hecht requested that numerous entities provide their legislative proposals to the Council for consideration at its August 19th meeting. While many of the proposals that were received have substantial merit, the Council is asked to consider those with significant policy implications in the administration of justice pursuant to the Council’s charge.³ The following proposals are forwarded for consideration by the Council (in no particular order):

1. A resolution advocating for adequate funding of the courts, with a special focus on funding for judicial education.
2. A resolution encouraging additional funding by the state for the increased cost of indigent defense since the passage of the Fair Defense Act.
3. A resolution in support of adequate funding for civil legal aid in Texas.
4. A resolution supporting an increase in judicial compensation and the recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Commission.
5. A resolution encouraging modification of the procedural statutes governing the assessment and satisfaction of criminal court costs.
6. A resolution supporting the recommendations of the Criminal Justice Committee regarding pretrial release.
7. A resolution supporting the recommendations of the Mental Health Committee.
8. A resolution supporting the recommendations of the Court Security Committee.
9. A resolution supporting the Elders Committee recommendations.
10. A resolution encouraging consolidation of civil filing fees and standardization of certain service fees, along with the standardization of costs for electronic copies of certain court documents.
11. A resolution encouraging repeal or modification of statutes requiring sensitive data in court filings.
12. A resolution supporting the recommendations of the Timothy Cole Exoneration Review Commission.
13. A resolution supporting recommended revisions to the reconstitution of the jury wheel.

¹ Texas Government Code 71.031

² Texas Government Code 71.032

³ A full list of the proposals received is attached.