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Rural Law Enforcement Funding Act

HB 9 – SB 11

Bill Analysis

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

Several studies have shown a positive relationship between salary and quality regarding law enforcement. In fact, one study indicated that the per capita number of crimes cleared (crimes resulting in arrests) was 12 percent higher in the months following pay raises for law enforcement officers.

This bill seeks to establish a grant program that will provide financial assistance to sheriff's departments, as well as district and county attorney's offices, in eligible counties to ensure professional law enforcement and legal representation of the people's interests throughout the state.

This bill amends current law relating to the establishment of grant programs to provide financial assistance to qualified sheriff's offices, constable's offices, and prosecutor's offices in rural counties

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Comptroller of Public Accounts of the State of Texas in SECTION 1 (Sections 130.911, 130.912, and 130.913, Local Government Code) of this bill.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 130, Local Government Code, by adding Sections 130.911, 130.912, and 130.913, as follows:

Sec. 130.911. RURAL SHERIFF'S OFFICE SALARY ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Defines "grant" and "qualified county."

(b) Requires the Comptroller of Public Accounts of the State of Texas (comptroller) to establish and administer the rural sheriff's office salary assistance grant program to support the state purpose of ensuring professional law enforcement throughout the state by providing financial assistance to sheriff's offices in qualified counties.

(c) Authorizes a county, not later than the 30th day after the first day of a qualified county's fiscal year, to submit an application for a grant to the

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comptroller. Authorizes a county to submit only one application each fiscal year.

(d) Requires the comptroller to award a grant to a qualified county that applies for the grant using money appropriated to the comptroller for that purpose. Requires that the grant be in the following applicable amount:

(1) $250,000 if the county has a population of less than 10,000;

(2) $350,000 if the county has a population of 10,000 or more and less than 50,000; or

(3) $500,000 if the county has a population of 50,000 or more and 300,000 or less.

(e) Requires a county that is awarded a grant to use or authorize the use of the grant money only:

(1) to provide a minimum annual salary of at least $75,000 for the county sheriff, $45,000 for each deputy who makes motor vehicle stops in the routine performance of their duties, and $40,000 for each jailer whose duties include the safekeeping of prisoners and the security of a jail operated by the county;

(2) to increase the salary of a person described by Subdivision (1);

(3) to hire additional deputies or staff for the sheriff's office; or

(4) to purchase vehicles, firearms, and safety equipment for the sheriff's office.

(f) Prohibits a county that is awarded a grant from using or authorizing the use of the grant money for a purpose other than to meet the minimum salary requirements prescribed by Subsection (e)(1) until those requirements are satisfied.

(g) Prohibits a county from reducing the amount of funds provided to the sheriff's office because of grant funds provided under this section.

(h) Requires the comptroller to adopt rules necessary to implement this section, including rules that establish a standardized application process, including the form to be used to apply for a grant and the manner of submitting the form; deadlines for applying for the grant, disbursement of grant money, and spending grant money; and procedures for monitoring the disbursement of grant money to ensure compliance with this section and the return of grant money that was not used by a county for a purpose



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authorized by this section.

Sec. 130.912. RURAL CONSTABLE'S OFFICE SALARY ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Defines "grant," "qualified constable," and "qualified county."

(b) Requires the comptroller to establish and administer the rural constable's office salary assistance grant program to support the state purpose of ensuring professional law enforcement throughout the state by providing financial assistance to constable's offices in qualified counties.

(c) Authorizes the county, not later than the 30th day after the first day of a qualified county's fiscal year, to submit an application for a grant to the comptroller. Authorizes a county to submit only one application each fiscal year.

(d) Requires the comptroller to award a grant to a qualified county that applies for the grant using money appropriated to the comptroller for that purpose. Authorizes the comptroller to only award a grant to a county if the county agrees in writing to contribute at least 75 percent of the money required to meet the minimum annual salary requirement established under Subsection (e) for each qualified constable for which the county will also use grant money to provide that salary

(e) Requires a county that is awarded a grant, subject to Subsection (d), to use or authorize the use of the grant money only to provide a minimum annual salary of $45,000 to a qualified constable.

(f) Prohibits a county from reducing the amount of funds provided to the constable's office because of grant funds provided under this section.

(g) Requires the comptroller to adopt rules necessary to implement this section, including rules that establish a standardized application process, including the form to be used to apply for a grant and the manner of submitting the form; deadlines for applying for the grant, disbursement of grant money, and spending grant money; procedures for monitoring the disbursement of grant money to ensure compliance with this section and the return of grant money that was not used by a county for a purpose authorized by this section; and standards to determine if a constable is a qualified constable.

Sec. 130.913. RURAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE SALARY ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Defines "grant" and "qualified prosecutor's office."

(b) Requires the comptroller to establish and administer the rural

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prosecutor's office salary assistance grant program to support the state purpose of ensuring professional legal representation of the people's interests throughout the state by providing financial assistance to qualified prosecutor's offices.

(c) Authorizes a prosecutor's office, not later than the 30th day after the first day of the qualified prosecutor's office's fiscal year, to submit an application for a grant to the comptroller. Authorizes a prosecutor's office to submit only one application each fiscal year.

(d) Requires the comptroller to award a grant to a qualified prosecutor's office that applies for the grant using money appropriated to the comptroller for that purpose. Requires that the grant be in the following applicable amount:

(1) $100,000 if the prosecutor's office's jurisdiction has a population of less than 10,000;

(2) $175,000 if the prosecutor's office's jurisdiction has a population of 10,000 or more and less than 50,000; or

(3) $275,000 if the prosecutor's office's jurisdiction has a population of 50,000 or more and 300,000 or less.

(e) Requires a prosecutor's office that is awarded a grant to use or authorize the use of the grant money only to increase the salary of an assistant attorney, investigator, or victim assistance coordinator employed at the office or to hire additional staff for the office.

(f) Prohibits a county from reducing the amount of funds provided to a prosecutor's office because of grant funds provided under this section.

(g) Requires the comptroller to adopt rules necessary to implement this section, including rules that establish a standardized application process, including the form to be used to apply for a grant and the manner of submitting the form; deadlines for applying for the grant, disbursement of grant money, and spending grant money; and procedures for monitoring the disbursement of grant money to ensure compliance with this section and the return of grant money that was not used by a qualified prosecutor's office for a purpose authorized by this section.

SECTION 2. Prohibits a qualified county or prosecutor's office, as defined by Sections 130.911, 130.912, or 130.913, Local Government Code, as added by this Act, from applying for a rural sheriff's office salary assistance grant, rural constable's office salary assistance grant, or rural prosecutor's office salary assistance grant before January 1, 2027.

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SECTION 3. Requires the comptroller, not later than January 1, 2029, to comply with the requirements of Sections 130.911, 130.912, and 130.913, Local Government Code, as added by this Act.

EFFECTIVE DATE
December 31, 2026.