

STATE OF TEXAS

RESOLUTION

of the

TEXAS JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Judicial Resources Committee Court Fees Recommendations

WHEREAS, the Texas Judicial Council was created under Chapter 71, Texas Government Code and is charged with improving the administration of justice; and

WHEREAS, the Council has charged its Judicial Resources Committee with studying existing judicial resources and whether enhancements are needed; and

WHEREAS, inflation has reduced the effectiveness of existing court-cost funding streams; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature consolidated court fees for criminal cases effective 2020 and civil cases effective 2022; and

WHEREAS, the consolidated fees support different funds or accounts depending on whether the case is civil or criminal and depending on the level of the criminal offense; and

WHEREAS, as a result of variance in funds supported by specific case types or levels, raising a consolidated court cost for only one case type or level will not benefit all funds or even all funds directly supporting the judiciary; and

WHEREAS, many of the funds directly support the judiciary, including the Fair Defense Account, the Judicial Fund, Specialty Court Account, Statewide Electronic Filing System Account, Judicial and Court Personnel Training Account, Courthouse Security Fund, and the Jury Service Fund; and

WHEREAS, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the buying power of these accounts are not keeping up with inflation; and

WHEREAS, the impact of inflation is especially true of the Judicial and Court Personnel Training Fund (Fund 540), which supports the continuing education of judges and other justice system actors in Texas; and

WHEREAS, continued limitations on fund replenishment could jeopardize Texas' place as a leader in judicial and legal education;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas Judicial Council respectfully recommends that the Legislature:

1. Increase the consolidated court costs to restore purchasing power eroded by inflation and preserve the level of services originally intended by the Legislature; and
2. Provide General Revenue funds for the initial training of all new judges, court personnel, and prosecutors.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Blacklock', written over a horizontal line.

Honorable Jimmy Blacklock
Chairman, Texas Judicial Council