

By: Neave

H.B. No. 1729

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to establishing and funding a grant program for testing
3 evidence collected in relation to sexual assaults or other sex
4 offenses; authorizing voluntary contributions.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

6 SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 521, Transportation Code,
7 is amended by adding Section 521.012 to read as follows:

8 Sec. 521.012. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION FOR EVIDENCE TESTING
9 GRANT PROGRAM. (a) When a person applies for an original or
10 renewal driver's license under this chapter, the person may
11 contribute \$1 or more to the evidence testing grant program
12 established under Section 772.00715, Government Code.

13 (b) The department shall:

14 (1) include space on the first page of each
15 application for an original or renewal driver's license that allows
16 a person applying for an original or renewal driver's license to
17 indicate the amount that the person is voluntarily contributing to
18 the grant program; and

19 (2) provide an opportunity for the person to
20 contribute to the grant program during the application process for
21 an original or renewal driver's license on the department's
22 Internet website.

23 (c) The department shall send any contribution made under
24 this section to the comptroller for deposit to the credit of the

1 evidence testing account established under Section 772.00716,
2 Government Code, not later than the 14th day of each month. Before
3 sending the money to the comptroller, the department may deduct
4 money equal to the amount of reasonable expenses for administering
5 this section.

6 SECTION 2. Subchapter A, Chapter 772, Government Code, is
7 amended by adding Sections 772.00715 and 772.00716 to read as
8 follows:

9 Sec. 772.00715. EVIDENCE TESTING GRANT PROGRAM. (a) In
10 this section:

11 (1) "Accredited crime laboratory" has the meaning
12 assigned by Section 420.003.

13 (2) "Criminal justice division" means the criminal
14 justice division established under Section 772.006.

15 (3) "Grant program" means the evidence testing grant
16 program established under this section.

17 (4) "Law enforcement agency" means:

18 (A) the police department of a municipality;

19 (B) the sheriff's office of a county; or

20 (C) a constable's office of a county.

21 (b) The criminal justice division shall establish and
22 administer a grant program and shall disperse funds to assist law
23 enforcement agencies in testing evidence collected in relation to a
24 sexual assault or other sex offense.

25 (c) Grant funds may be used only for the testing by an
26 accredited crime laboratory of evidence that was collected in
27 relation to a sexual assault or other sex offense.

1 (d) The criminal justice division:

2 (1) may establish additional eligibility criteria for
3 grant applicants; and

4 (2) shall establish:

5 (A) grant application procedures;

6 (B) guidelines relating to grant amounts; and

7 (C) criteria for evaluating grant applications.

8 (e) The criminal justice division shall include in the
9 biennial report required by Section 772.006(a)(9) detailed
10 reporting of the results and performance of the grant program.

11 (f) The criminal justice division may use any revenue
12 available to the division to fund the grant program.

13 Sec. 772.00716. EVIDENCE TESTING ACCOUNT. (a) The
14 evidence testing account is created as a dedicated account in the
15 general revenue fund of the state treasury.

16 (b) Money in the account may be appropriated only to the
17 criminal justice division established under Section 772.006 for
18 purposes of the evidence testing grant program established under
19 Section 772.00715.

20 (c) Funds distributed under Section 772.00715 are subject
21 to audit by the comptroller.

22 SECTION 3. The changes in law made by this Act apply only to
23 a person who applies for an original or renewal driver's license on
24 or after January 1, 2018.

25 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.