

GOVERNMENT CODE
SUBTITLE D. JUDICIAL PERSONNEL AND OFFICIALS
CHAPTER 51. CLERKS

SUBCHAPTER A. CLERK OF SUPREME COURT

Sec. 51.001. APPOINTMENT; RESIDENCE; BOND; SEAL. (a) The order appointing the clerk of the supreme court must be recorded in the minutes of the court.

(b) The clerk must reside at Austin.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 285, Sec. 31(6).

(d) The clerk shall provide a seal for the use of the supreme court. The seal must have a five-pointed star and must be engraved with the words "Supreme Court of the State of Texas."

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985; Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 285, Sec. 31(6), eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 51.002. CLERK PRO TEMPORE; DEPUTY CLERK. (a) The supreme court, when necessary, may appoint a clerk pro tempore.

(b) The supreme court, by an order recorded in the minutes of the court, may authorize the clerk to appoint three deputy clerks who may discharge the duties required by law of the clerk. Each deputy clerk must give a bond that is approved by the supreme court and is in the same amount and subject to the same conditions as required for the bond of the clerk of the court. A deputy clerk serves at the will of the court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.003. REMOVAL OF CLERK. (a) The supreme court by motion may remove the clerk for neglect of duty or misconduct in office. The motion must specify the particular charges.

(b) Before the court may act on the motion, it must give the clerk at least 10 days' notice of the motion, including the particular charges.

(c) In acting on the motion, the court determines the law and facts.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.004. DUTIES. The clerk of the supreme court shall:

(1) file and carefully preserve the transcripts of records certified to the supreme court and papers relative to the record;

(2) docket causes in the order in which the supreme court directs;

(3) faithfully record the proceedings and decisions of the supreme court; and

(4) certify the judgments of the supreme court to the courts from which the cases were brought.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.005. FEES AND COSTS. (a) The clerk shall collect the fees described in Subsection (b) in a civil case before the court for the following services:

(1) filing records, applications, motions, briefs, and other necessary and proper papers;

(2) docketing and making docket and minute book entries;

(3) issuing notices, citations, processes, and mandates; and

(4) performing other necessary clerical duties.

(b) The fees are:

(1) application for writ of error \$ 50

(2) additional fee if application for writ of error is granted \$ 75

(3) motion for leave to file petition for writ of mandamus, prohibition, injunction, and other similar proceedings originating in the supreme court \$ 50

(4) additional fee if a motion under Subdivision (3) is granted \$ 75

(5) certified question from a court of appeals to the supreme court \$ 75

(6) case appealed to the supreme court from the district court by direct appeal \$100

(7) any other proceeding filed in the supreme court \$ 75.

(c) In addition, the clerk of the supreme court shall collect:

(1) a fee of \$5 for administering an oath and giving a sealed certificate of the oath;

(2) a minimum fee of \$5, or 50 cents per page if more than 10 pages, for making copies of any papers of record in offices,

including certificate and seal; and

(3) a reasonable fee fixed by the order or rule of the supreme court for any official service performed by the clerk for which a fee is not otherwise provided by this section.

(d) The clerk shall collect and pay into the state treasury the fees and costs received under this section by the clerk under rules prescribed by the comptroller of public accounts, approved by the justices of the supreme court, and recorded in the minutes of the court. The comptroller shall deposit the fees and costs in the judicial fund.

(e) The supreme court shall provide by order or rule for the making of deposits to cover the costs provided by this section in cases before the court. A deposit may not be required in a case in which the petitioner, relator, or appellant in the supreme court is exempt from the bond requirement.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1986, 69th Leg., 2nd C.S., ch. 11, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 22, 1986.

Sec. 51.006. FEE FOR ATTORNEY'S LICENSE OR CERTIFICATE. The clerk shall collect a fee of \$10 for the issuance of an attorney's license or certificate affixed with a seal. The fee shall be held by the clerk and expended by the supreme court or under the direction of the court for the preparation and issuance, including mailing, of the license or certificate.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.007. VACANCY DURING VACATION. If the office of clerk becomes vacant during vacation, the chief justice and one justice shall appoint an individual to serve as clerk until a regular appointment is made. The individual appointed must give the bond and oath prescribed for the regular clerk. The bond must be approved by a justice of the court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

SUBCHAPTER B. CLERK OF COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS

Sec. 51.101. OATH; BOND. The clerk of the court of criminal appeals must sign the oath prescribed for officers of this state and must give a bond in the amount of \$5,000. The bond must be approved by the court of criminal appeals and is subject to the same conditions as the bond required of the clerk of the supreme court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.102. DEPUTY CLERK. (a) The court of criminal appeals, or the clerk of the court of criminal appeals with the court's approval, may appoint a stenographer employed by the court to act as a deputy clerk to perform the clerk's duties during the absence, illness, or other disability of the clerk.

(b) The stenographer appointed deputy clerk shall perform the duties of the clerk in the name of the clerk and shall sign his own name as deputy clerk after signing the clerk's name.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.103. REMOVAL OF CLERK. The court of criminal appeals may remove the clerk for good cause, entered in the minutes of the court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.104. DUTIES AND LIABILITIES. (a) The clerk of the court of criminal appeals shall perform the like duties for the court of criminal appeals that the clerk of the supreme court performs for the supreme court.

(b) The clerk of the court of criminal appeals is subject to the liabilities prescribed for the clerk of the supreme court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.105. ELECTRONIC STORAGE. (a) In the performance of the duties imposed by Section 51.104, the clerk of the court of criminal appeals may maintain writs and other records and documents in an electronic storage format. If the clerk electronically stores writs, records, or documents, the clerk may destroy the originals or copies of the writs, records, or documents according to the retention policy described by Subsection (b).

(b) The clerk of the court of criminal appeals shall establish a records retention policy. The retention policy shall provide a plan for the storage and retention of writs and other documents and shall include a retention period to preserve the writs and other records in accordance with state law and applicable rules of the court of criminal appeals.

(c) For purposes of this section, "electronic storage" means the maintenance of data in the form of digital electronic signals on a computer hard disk, magnetic tape, optical disk, or

similar machine-readable medium.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 718, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

SUBCHAPTER C. CLERKS OF COURTS OF APPEALS

Sec. 51.201. APPOINTMENT; RESIDENCE; BOND; SEAL. (a) A clerk of a court of appeals serves for a term of two years and the order appointing the clerk must be recorded in the minutes of the court.

(b) The clerk must reside within a county that is part of the court of appeals district of the court of appeals making the appointment.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 285, Sec. 31(7).

(d) Each clerk shall provide a seal for the use of the court. The seal must have a five-pointed star and must be engraved with the words "Court of Appeals of the State of Texas."

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 1.61, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 285, Sec. 31(7), eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 51.202. CLERK PRO TEMPORE; DEPUTY CLERK. (a) A court of appeals, when necessary, may appoint a clerk pro tempore.

(b) With the approval of the court, the clerk may appoint deputy clerks as provided by legislative appropriation. A deputy clerk must give a bond to the clerk, conditioned on the faithful performance of the duties of office.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.203. REMOVAL OF CLERK. (a) After motion and a hearing, a court of appeals may remove its clerk for neglect of duty or malfeasance in office. The motion must specify the particular charges.

(b) The court must give the clerk at least 10 days' notice of the hearing.

(c) At the hearing, the court determines the law and facts.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.204. RECORDS OF COURT. (a) The clerk of a court of appeals shall:

(1) file and carefully preserve records certified to the court and papers relative to the record;

(2) docket causes in the order in which they are filed;

(3) record the proceedings of the court except opinions and orders on motions; and

(4) certify the judgments of the court to the proper courts.

(b) On the issuance of the mandate in each case, the clerk shall notify the attorneys of record in the case that:

(1) exhibits submitted to the court by a party may be withdrawn by that party or the party's attorney of record; and

(2) exhibits on file with the court will be destroyed three years after final disposition of the case or at an earlier date if ordered by the court.

(c) Not sooner than the 60th day and not later than the 90th day after the date of final disposition of a criminal case, the clerk shall remove and destroy all duplicate papers in the file on record of that case.

(d) Six years after the final disposition of a civil case in the court, the clerk shall, not sooner than the 90th day after the date the clerk provides notice to the district or county clerk, destroy all records filed in the court related to the case except:

(1) records that the clerk of the trial court requests be returned to the trial court for preservation in accordance with records retention schedules for records of district and county clerks issued under Section 441.158 and applicable rules of the supreme court;

(2) records that, in the opinion of the clerk or other person designated by the court, contain highly concentrated, unique, and valuable information unlikely to be found in any other source available to researchers;

(3) indexes, original opinions, minutes, and general court dockets unless the documents are microfilmed in accordance with this section for permanent retention, in which case the original document shall be destroyed; and

(4) other records of the court determined to be archival state records under Section 441.186.

(e) Twenty-five years after the final disposition of a criminal case to which this subsection applies, the clerk shall destroy all records relating to the case, other than a record described by Subsection (d)(2), (3), or (4). This subsection

applies to a criminal case in which the sentence, suspended sentence, term of community supervision, combined sentence and term of community supervision, cumulative sentences or terms of community supervision, or the longest sentence or term of community supervision of two or more sentences or terms of community supervision to be served concurrently is 20 years or less.

(f) The clerk shall retain other records of the court, such as financial records, administrative correspondence, and other materials not related to particular cases in accordance with Section 441.185.

(g) Before microfilming records, the clerk must submit a plan in writing to the justices of a court of appeals for that purpose. If a majority of the justices of a court of appeals determines that the plan meets the requirements of Section 441.188, rules adopted under that section, and any additional standards and procedures the justices may require, the justices shall inform the clerk in writing and the clerk may adopt the plan. The decision of the justices must be entered in the minutes of the court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 873, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 408, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Sec. 51.206. LAW LIBRARY. (a) Each clerk of a court of appeals is the librarian of the court and shall keep the books in the court's library in good order and catalogue them.

(b) The clerk may purchase additional law books for the use of the court from the fees collected by the court. Those expenditures may not exceed annually the specific amounts additionally authorized for the purchase of law books in the General Appropriations Act.

(c) All fees collected for the purchase of law books shall be deposited in the state treasury to the credit of the appropriate court. Book expenditures shall be made on a warrant drawn on the state treasury by the state comptroller as provided by the judiciary section of the General Appropriations Act.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.207. FEES AND COSTS. (a) The clerk of a court of appeals shall collect the fees described in Subsection (b) in a civil case before the court for the following services:

- (1) filing records, applications, motions, briefs, and other necessary and proper papers;
- (2) docketing and making docket and minute book entries;
- (3) issuing notices, citations, processes, and mandates;
- (4) preparing transcripts on application for writ of error to the supreme court; and
- (5) performing other necessary clerical duties.

(b) The fees are:

- (1) for cases appealed to and filed in the court of appeals from the district and county courts within its court of appeals district \$100
- (2) motion for leave to file petition for writ of mandamus, prohibition, injunction, and other similar proceedings originating in the court of appeals \$ 50
- (3) additional fee if the motion under Subdivision (2) is granted \$ 75
- (4) motion to file or to extend time to file record on appeal from district or county court \$ 10

(c) In addition, the clerk of a court of appeals shall collect:

- (1) a fee of \$5 for administering an oath and giving a sealed certificate of the oath;
- (2) a fee of \$5, or \$1 per page if more than five pages, for a certified copy of any papers of record in the court offices, including certificate and seal;
- (3) a fee of \$5, or \$1 per page if more than five pages, for comparing any document with the original filed in the offices of the court for purposes of certification; and
- (4) a reasonable fee fixed by the order or rule of the supreme court for any official service performed by the clerk for which a fee is not otherwise provided by this section.

(d) The supreme court shall provide by order or rule for the making of deposits to cover the costs provided by this section in cases before a court of appeals. A deposit may not be required in a case in which the petitioner, relator, appellant, or movant in the

court of appeals is exempt from the bond requirement.

(e) The clerk of a court of appeals shall pay into the state treasury the fees and costs under rules prescribed by the comptroller of public accounts and approved by the justices of the clerk's court. The clerk shall make a sworn report to the court not later than January 10 and July 10 of each year regarding the amount of costs collected in the previous six months, the cases in which the costs were collected, and the disposition of the costs. This report shall be filed with the financial records of the court.

(f) Repealed by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.66, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

(g) One-half of the fees collected under this section shall be deposited to the credit of the judicial fund.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1986, 69th Leg., 2nd C.S., ch. 11, Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 22, 1986; Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 1.62, 2.66, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1080, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

SUBCHAPTER D. DISTRICT CLERKS

Sec. 51.301. VACANCY; BOND; SEAL. (a) If a vacancy occurs in the office of district clerk, the vacancy shall be filled by the district judge of the county.

(b) If a vacancy in the office of district clerk occurs in a county that has two or more district courts, the vacancy shall be filled by agreement of the judges of the courts. If the judges cannot agree on an appointee, they shall certify that fact to the governor, who shall order a special election to fill the vacancy.

(c) An appointee to fill a vacancy in the office of district clerk must qualify and give a bond.

(d) Each district clerk shall be provided with a seal for the district court. The seal must have a five-pointed star and must be engraved with the words "District Court of _____ County, Texas." The seal shall be impressed on all process issued by the court except subpoenas and shall be kept and used by the clerk to authenticate official acts.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.302. BOND; OATH; INSURANCE. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (g), before beginning the duties of office, each district clerk must give a bond with two or more sufficient sureties or with a surety company authorized to do business in this state as a surety. The bond must:

(1) be payable to the governor;

(2) be conditioned on the faithful performance of the duties of the office;

(3) be approved by the commissioners court; and

(4) be in an amount equal to not less than 20 percent of the maximum amount of fees collected in any year during the term of office immediately preceding the term of office for which the bond is given, except that the bond may not be in an amount less than \$5,000 nor more than \$100,000.

(b) The district clerk must take and sign the oath prescribed for officers of this state, which must be endorsed on the bond, if a bond is required, and the bond and oath, or oath, must be filed and recorded in the office of the county clerk.

(c) Each district clerk shall obtain an insurance policy or similar coverage from a governmental pool operating under Chapter 119, Local Government Code, or from a self-insurance fund or risk retention group created by one or more governmental units under Chapter 1084, Acts of the 70th Legislature, Regular Session, 1987 (Article 715c, Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes), to cover the district clerk and any deputy clerk against liabilities incurred through errors or omissions in the performance of official duties. The amount of the policy or other coverage document must be equal to the maximum amount of fees collected in any year during the term of office immediately preceding the term for which the insurance is obtained, except that the amount of the policy or other coverage document must be at least \$20,000 but not more than \$700,000. If the policy or other coverage document provides coverage for other county officials, the amount of the policy must be at least \$1 million.

(d) Each district clerk shall obtain an insurance policy or similar coverage from a governmental pool operating under Chapter 119, Local Government Code, or from a self-insurance fund or risk retention group created by one or more governmental units under Chapter 1084, Acts of the 70th Legislature, Regular Session, 1987 (Article 715c, Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes), to cover losses from

burglary, theft, robbery, counterfeit currency, or destruction. The amount of the policy or other coverage document must be at least \$20,000 but not more than \$700,000.

(e) The commissioners court may establish a contingency fund to provide the coverage required by Subsection (c) or (d) if it is determined by the district clerk that insurance coverage is unavailable at a reasonable cost. The commissioners court may set an additional filing fee in an amount not to exceed \$5 for each suit filed to be collected by the district clerk. The fee shall be paid into the fund. When the contingency fund reaches an amount equal to that required by Subsection (c) or (d), the clerk shall stop collecting the additional fee.

(f) The commissioners court shall pay the premiums on the bonds and insurance policies or other similar coverage required under this section from the county general fund.

(g) In lieu of the bond required by Subsection (a), the county may self-insure against losses that would have been covered by the bond.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 71, Sec. 3, 4, eff. May 7, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 561, Sec. 2, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1062, Sec. 1, eff. June 18, 1999.

Sec. 51.303. DUTIES AND POWERS. (a) The clerk of a district court has custody of and shall carefully maintain and arrange the records relating to or lawfully deposited in the clerk's office.

(b) The clerk of a district court shall:

- (1) record the acts and proceedings of the court;
- (2) enter all judgments of the court under the direction of the judge; and
- (3) record all executions issued and the returns on the executions.

(c) The district clerk shall keep an index of the parties to all suits filed in the court. The index must list the parties alphabetically using their full names and must be cross-referenced to the other parties to the suit. In addition, a reference must be made opposite each name to the minutes on which is entered the judgment in the case.

(d) Repealed by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 641, Sec. 1.05, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

(e) The clerk of a district court may:

- (1) take the depositions of witnesses; and
- (2) perform other duties imposed on the clerk by law.

(f) In addition to the other powers and duties of this section, a district clerk shall accept applications for protective orders under Chapter 71, Family Code.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 354, Sec. 1, eff. Aug. 31, 1987; Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 1248, Sec. 35, eff. Sept. 1, 1989; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 641, Sec. 1.05, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 1024, Sec. 20, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 51.3031. ISSUANCE OF UNITED STATES PASSPORTS. (a) A district clerk may perform all duties necessary to process an application for a United States passport, including taking passport photographs.

(b) To recover the costs of taking passport photographs, a district clerk may collect a reasonable fee in an amount set by the commissioners court of the county in which the district clerk's office is located.

(c) A district clerk, after collecting a fee under Subsection (b), shall pay the fee to the county treasurer, or to an official who discharges the duties of the county treasurer, for deposit in the general fund of the county.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 179, Sec. 1, eff. May 21, 1999.

Sec. 51.304. PRESERVATION OF RECORDS. (a) The district clerk may, pursuant to the clerk's duty to record the acts and proceedings of the court, provide a plan for the storage of records, acts, proceedings, minutes of the court, and registers, records, and instruments for which the clerk is responsible by law, by microfilm, image processing technology, or other process that correctly and legibly reproduces or that forms a medium for copying or reproducing or by optical data storage. The plan must be in writing and provide for the maintenance, retention, security, retrieval, and reproduction of stored records.

(b) The plan must:

- (1) require the recording and filing of original

instruments, records, and minutes within a specified time after presentation to the district clerk;

(2) permit the use of original paper records in a proceeding before the court;

(3) provide standards for the organizing, identifying, coding, and indexing of records so a record can be retrieved rapidly and the reproduced record can be certified as a true and correct copy;

(4) provide for the use of materials to reproduce records and, if appropriate to the method by which records are stored, provide for the use of processes relating to the development, fixation, and washing of the photographic duplicates, that are of a quality approved for permanent photographic records by the American National Standards Institute, or another nationally recognized entity that establishes archival standards for mediums used to store data and records; and

(5) provide for the permanent retention of records, including security provisions to guard against physical loss, alteration, and deterioration.

(c) Repealed by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 1248, Sec. 85(3), eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

(d) A reproduction of a record stored in accordance with the provisions of a plan adopted under this section is an original record and shall be accepted as an original record by the courts and administrative agencies of this state.

(e) A transcript, exemplification, copy, or reproduction on paper or film of a record stored in accordance with the provisions of a plan adopted under this section is a certified copy of the original record.

(f), (g) Repealed by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 1248, Sec. 85(3), eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 978, Sec. 1, eff. Aug. 28, 1989.

Sec. 51.306. RECORDING PROCEEDINGS OF MORE THAN ONE COURT. (a) A district clerk who has duties in more than one district court may combine the minutes of the civil business of the courts into one record. The clerk may also combine the minutes of the criminal business of the courts into a separate record.

(b) The clerk shall enter the minutes into the appropriate record sequentially, regardless of the district court from which the business originates.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.307. TRANSFERRED JUDGMENTS. If a district clerk receives a certified copy of a judgment rendered in a county court in which jurisdiction has been transferred to the district court, the district clerk shall immediately record the judgment in the minutes of the district court. The district court shall enforce the judgment in the same manner as judgments rendered in the district court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.308. CLERK PRO TEMPORE. If a district clerk is a party to an action in a court he serves, the district judge, on the application of any interested person or on the judge's own motion, may appoint a clerk pro tempore for the purposes of the action. The clerk pro tempore must take an oath to faithfully and impartially perform the duties of the appointment and must give a bond, payable to the State of Texas, conditioned on the faithful performance of those duties, in an amount fixed and approved by the judge. The clerk pro tempore shall perform the duties of the district clerk relating to the action during the period of the appointment.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.309. DEPUTY CLERK. (a) The district clerk may appoint deputy clerks. Each appointment must be in writing under the hand and seal of the district court and must be recorded in the office of the county clerk. A deputy clerk must take the oath prescribed for officers of this state. A deputy clerk may perform in the name of the district clerk all official acts of the office of district clerk.

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), the district clerk shall obtain a surety bond to cover a deputy clerk or a schedule surety bond or a blanket surety bond to cover more than one deputy and all employees of the office. A deputy clerk and an employee must be covered on the same conditions and in the same amount as the district clerk. The bond covering the deputies and employees shall be made payable to the governor for the use and benefit of the

district clerk.

(c) In lieu of the bond required by Subsection (b), the county may self-insure against losses that would have been covered by the bond.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 71, Sec. 5, 6, eff. May 7, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 199, Sec. 2, eff. May 19, 1993.

Sec. 51.310. DEPUTY DISTRICT CLERKS OF BEXAR COUNTY. (a) The district clerk of Bexar County shall appoint one or more deputy clerks to serve each district court in Bexar County. Persons appointed deputy clerk must be acceptable to the judges. An appointment of a clerk to serve a particular court must be confirmed in writing by the judge of that court. Before assuming the duties of office, a deputy clerk must take the oath prescribed for officers of this state.

(b) The district clerk may require a deputy clerk to give a bond. The district clerk may prescribe the conditions and amount of the bond, or those terms may be set as otherwise provided by law.

(c) The deputy clerk shall perform the official duties of the district clerk and shall attend each session of the court to which the deputy is appointed. The deputy clerk shall also perform services requested by a judge.

(d) The deputy clerks may act for each other in any matter pertaining to the clerical business of the courts or when requested to do so by a judge or the district clerk. A deputy clerk acting for another deputy clerk may not receive additional compensation.

(e) A deputy clerk serves at the pleasure of the judge of the court the deputy serves. If the office of a deputy clerk becomes vacant, the district clerk shall appoint another deputy clerk in the manner provided for initial appointments.

(f) The district clerk shall fix the annual salary of the deputy clerk of each court. The salary must be approved by the commissioners court and shall be paid in equal installments twice monthly from the county fund established for the purpose.

(g) This section does not prevent the district clerk from appointing additional deputy clerks to any of the courts if necessary or if requested by the judge of one of the courts.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.311. SPECIAL DEPUTY DISTRICT CLERK IN LUBBOCK AND NUECES COUNTIES. (a) In Lubbock and Nueces counties, the district clerk shall appoint, at the request of a district judge, a special deputy district clerk to serve that judge's court.

(b) The salary of a special deputy clerk appointed under this section shall be paid out of the general fund of the county.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.312. SPECIAL DEPUTY DISTRICT CLERK IN DALLAS, EL PASO, HARRIS, TARRANT, AND TRAVIS COUNTIES. (a) In Dallas, El Paso, Harris, Tarrant, and Travis counties, the district clerk may appoint, at the request of a district judge, a special deputy district clerk to serve that judge's court.

(b) The salary of a special deputy clerk appointed under this section shall be paid out of the general fund of the county.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.313. SPECIAL DEPUTY DISTRICT CLERK IN COLLIN AND DENTON COUNTIES. (a) In Collin and Denton counties, the district clerk may appoint, at the request of a district judge, a special deputy district clerk to serve that judge's court.

(b) The salary of a special deputy clerk appointed under this section shall be paid out of the general fund of the county.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.314. SPECIAL DEPUTY DISTRICT CLERK IN GALVESTON COUNTY. The Commissioners Court of Galveston County may pay for the services of a special deputy district clerk if the commissioners court considers a deputy clerk necessary. The clerk of the court in which the deputy clerk serves shall appoint the deputy clerk.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.315. SPECIAL DEPUTY DISTRICT CLERKS FOR CERTAIN COURTS IN HARRIS COUNTY. (a) The Commissioners Court of Harris County may pay the salary of the special deputy district clerks that it considers necessary for the 177th, 178th, 179th, and 180th district courts.

(b) The clerk of the court shall appoint a deputy district clerk under this section.

(c) A deputy district clerk serves at the will of the

appointing clerk.

(d) A deputy district clerk is entitled to a salary from the county paid monthly from the general funds of the county. The salary may not exceed the compensation allowed by law to other deputy district clerks.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.316. DEPUTY CLERK AND ASSISTANT IN HIDALGO, JEFFERSON, AND NUECES COUNTIES. (a) In Hidalgo, Jefferson, and Nueces counties, the district clerk may apply in writing to the district judges in the county to appoint a deputy district clerk or an assistant. The application must state the number of deputies or assistants to be appointed and the probable receipts and disbursements of the office. If a majority of the judges approve the appointment, they shall certify the list to the commissioners court. The application and the order approving the application must be recorded in the minutes of the district court.

(b) A deputy clerk or assistant appointed under this section shall perform the duties required by the district clerk and serves at the pleasure of the district clerk. A deputy clerk or assistant may not be employed except as provided by this section.

(c) An assistant appointed under this section must take the oath prescribed for officers of this state.

(d) The salary of an assistant appointed under this section shall be paid out of the general fund or the officers' salary fund of the county. The salary of a court clerk, index clerk, or clerk handling the jury shall be paid out of the general fund or the jury fund.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.317. FEES DUE AT FILING. (a) The district clerk shall collect at the time the suit or action is filed the fees provided by Subsections (b) and (b-1) for services performed by the clerk.

(b) The fees are:

(1) except as provided by Subsection (b-1), for filing a suit, including an appeal from an inferior court \$50

(2) for filing a cross-action, counterclaim, intervention, contempt action, motion for new trial, or third-party petition \$15

(3) for issuing a citation or other writ or process not otherwise provided for, including one copy, when requested at the time a suit or action is filed \$8

(4) for records management and preservation \$10.

(b-1) The fees for filing a suit, including an appeal from an inferior court, are:

(1) \$75, for a suit with at least 11 but not more than 25 plaintiffs;

(2) \$100, for a suit with at least 26 but not more than 100 plaintiffs;

(3) \$125, for a suit with at least 101 but not more than 500 plaintiffs;

(4) \$150, for a suit with at least 501 but not more than 1,000 plaintiffs; and

(5) \$200, for a suit with more than 1,000 plaintiffs.

(c) The district clerk, after collecting a fee under Subsection (b)(4), shall pay the fee to the county treasurer, or to an official who discharges the duties commonly delegated to the county treasurer, for deposit as follows:

(1) \$5 to the county records management and preservation fund for records management and preservation, including automation, in various county offices; and

(2) \$5 to the district clerk records management and preservation fund for records management and preservation services performed by the district clerk when a case or document is filed in the records office of the district clerk.

(d) A fee deposited in accordance with Subsection (c) may be used only to provide funds for specific records management and preservation, including for automation purposes, on approval by the commissioners court of a budget as provided by Chapter 111, Local Government Code.

(e) An expenditure from a records management and preservation fund must comply with Subchapter C, Chapter 262, Local Government Code.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1986, 69th Leg., 2nd C.S., ch. 11, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 22, 1986; Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 186, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991;

Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 675, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 641, Sec. 1.01, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 976, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 732, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1080, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003; Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 804, Sec. 3, eff. June 18, 2005.

Sec. 51.318. FEES DUE WHEN SERVICE PERFORMED OR REQUESTED. (a) In addition to a fee under Section 51.317 the district clerk shall collect at the time the service is performed or at the time the service is requested the fees provided by Subsection (b) for services performed by the clerk.

(b) The fees are:

- (1) for issuing a subpoena, including one copy . . . \$8
- (2) for issuing a citation, commission for deposition, writ of execution, order of sale, writ of execution and order of sale, writ of injunction, writ of garnishment, writ of attachment, or writ of sequestration not provided for in Section 51.317, or any other writ or process not otherwise provided for, including one copy if required by law \$8
- (3) for searching files or records to locate a cause when the docket number is not provided \$5
- (4) for searching files or records to ascertain the existence of an instrument or record in the district clerk's office \$5
- (5) for abstracting a judgment \$8
- (6) for approving a bond \$4
- (7) for a certified copy of a record, judgment, order, pleading, or paper on file or of record in the district clerk's office, including certificate and seal, for each page or part of a page \$1
- (8) for a noncertified copy, for each page or part of a page not to exceed \$1.

(c) The fee is the obligation of the party to the suit or action initiating the request.

(d) The district clerk may accept a bond as security for a fee imposed under this section.

(e) The district clerk may not charge the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service a fee for a copy of any document on file or of record in the clerk's office relating to an individual's criminal history, regardless of whether the document is certified.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 186, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 465, Sec. 1, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 641, Sec. 1.02, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 976, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 51.319. OTHER FEES. The district clerk shall collect the following fees for services performed by the clerk:

- (1) for performing services related to the matter of the estate of a deceased person or a minor transacted in the district court, the same fees allowed the county clerk for those services;
 - (2) for serving process by certified or registered mail, the same fee that sheriffs and constables are authorized to charge for the service under Section 118.131, Local Government Code; and
 - (3) for performing any other service prescribed or authorized by law for which no fee is set by law, a reasonable fee.
- Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 641, Sec. 1.03, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 51.3195. COPIES OF COURT RECORDS PRESERVED ONLY ON MICROFILM OR BY ELECTRONIC METHOD. (a) On the written request of a party in an action, the district clerk shall provide the court with a copy of a motion, order, or other pleading in the action that is preserved only on microfilm or by other electronic means. The request must specify the document sought and the approximate date that the document was filed.

(b) The district clerk may not charge a fee for a copy made under this section.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1356, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Sec. 51.320. BILL FOR SERVICES. A fee under this subchapter is not payable until the district clerk produces, or is ready to produce, a bill for services that contains the particulars of the fee charged before payment of the fee is required. The bill must be signed by the clerk or the clerk's successor in office or legal

representative who charges the fee or to whom the fee is due.
Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.322. REMOVAL. A court rendering a judgment removing a district clerk under Article V, Section 9, of the Texas Constitution shall include in the judgment an order removing the clerk.

Added by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 2, Sec. 8.28(a), eff. Aug. 28, 1989.

SUBCHAPTER E. COUNTY CLERKS

Sec. 51.401. CLERK PRO TEMPORE. If a county clerk is a party to an action in the court he serves, the county judge, on the application of any interested person or on the judge's own motion, shall appoint a clerk pro tempore for the purposes of the action. The clerk pro tempore must take an oath to faithfully and impartially perform the duties of the appointment and must give a bond conditioned on the faithful performance of those duties in an amount fixed and approved by the judge. The bond must be payable to the State of Texas. A clerk pro tempore shall perform the duties of the clerk during the period of the appointment.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.402. DUTIES AND POWERS. (a) The clerk of a county court may:

- (1) issue marriage licenses; and
- (2) take affidavits and depositions.

(b) On the last day of each term of the court, the clerk shall make a written statement of fines and jury fees received since the last statement. The statement must include the name of the party from whom a fine or jury fee was received, the name of each juror who served during the term, the number of days served, and the amount due the juror for the services. The statement shall be recorded in the minutes of the court after it is approved and signed by the presiding judge.

(c) The clerk shall deposit fines and jury fees received by the clerk in the county treasury for the use of the county.

(d) In addition to the other powers and duties of this section, a county clerk that serves as the clerk for a court having jurisdiction of applications for protective orders under Chapter 71, Family Code, shall accept those applications.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 1024, Sec. 21, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 51.403. TRANSFER OF CASES. (a) If a case is transferred from a county court to a district court, the clerk of the county court shall send to the district clerk:

(1) a certified transcript of the proceedings held in the county court;

(2) the original papers filed in the county court; and

(3) a bill of the costs that have accrued in the county court.

(b) If civil or criminal jurisdiction of a county court is transferred to a district court, the clerk of the county court shall send a certified copy of the judgments rendered in the county court that remain unsatisfied to the district clerks of the appropriate counties.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.404. SPECIAL DEPUTY COUNTY CLERK IN GALVESTON COUNTY. The Commissioners Court of Galveston County may pay for the services of a special deputy district county clerk if the commissioners court considers a deputy clerk necessary. The clerk of the court in which the deputy clerk serves shall appoint the deputy clerk.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

SUBCHAPTER F. JOINT CLERKS

Sec. 51.501. JOINT CLERKS. (a) Except as otherwise provided by this section, a county with a population of less than 8,000 shall elect a single clerk to perform the duties of the district clerk and the county clerk.

(b) The offices of county clerk and district clerk may remain separate if a majority of the qualified voters in the county vote to keep the offices separate at an election held for that purpose. The commissioners court of the county may hold a special election for that purpose on a uniform election date authorized by law that occurs not later than the 30th day before the date of the regular primary election that precedes the expiration of the constitutional term of office for the clerk. Notice of the special election shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation

in the county not later than the 20th day before the date scheduled for the election. The question may be presented to the voters again immediately before the expiration of each subsequent constitutional term of office of the separate clerk. The special election may not prevent a county clerk, district clerk, or joint clerk from serving the full term of office to which the clerk was elected.

(c) The commissioners court of a county that has a population of 6,000 to 6,125 shall determine whether the county shall have a joint clerk but may not take action to prevent a district clerk, county clerk, or joint clerk from serving the full term of office to which the clerk was elected.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 597, Sec. 69, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 669, Sec. 17, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Sec. 51.502. SEAL. A joint clerk performing the duties of the district clerk and the county clerk shall use the district court seal to authenticate official acts for the district court and the county court seal to authenticate official acts for the county court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

SUBCHAPTER G. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 51.601. COURT REPORTER SERVICE FEE. (a) The clerk of each court that has an official court reporter shall collect a court reporter service fee of \$15 as a court cost in each civil case filed with the clerk to maintain a court reporter who is available for assignment in the court.

(b) The clerk shall collect this fee in the manner provided for other court costs and shall deliver the fee to the county treasurer, or the person who performs the duties of the county treasurer, of the county in which the court sits. The county treasurer, or the person who performs the duties of the county treasurer, shall deposit the fees received into the court reporter service fund.

(c) The commissioners court of the county shall administer the court reporter service fund to assist in the payment of court-reporter-related services, that may include maintaining an adequate number of court reporters to provide services to the courts, obtaining court reporter transcription services, closed-caption transcription machines, Braille transcription services, or other transcription services to comply with state or federal laws, or providing any other service related to the functions of a court reporter.

(d) The commissioners court shall, in administering the court reporter service fund, assist any court in which a case is filed that requires the payment of the court reporter service fee.

(e) This section does not apply to an action brought to collect delinquent taxes.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 1080, Sec. 6, eff. Sept. 1, 1989; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 144, Sec. 2, eff. Aug. 28, 1995.

Sec. 51.602. COMPENSATION OF CERTAIN CLERKS. The salaries of the clerks of the supreme court, the court of criminal appeals, and the courts of appeals are determined by the legislature in the acts appropriating funds for the support of the judiciary. The legislature shall also fix the amount of supplemental salaries paid to those clerks from court fees and receipts.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.604. JURY FEE. (a) The district clerk shall collect a \$30 jury fee for each civil case in which a person applies for a jury trial. The clerk of a county court or statutory county court shall collect a \$22 jury fee for each civil case in which a person applies for a jury trial. The clerk shall note the payment of the fee on the court's docket.

(b) The fee required by this section must be paid by the person applying for a jury trial not later than the 10th day before the jury trial is scheduled to begin.

(c) The fee required by this section includes the jury fee required by Rule 216, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, and any other jury fee allowed by law or rule.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 897, Sec. 1, eff. June 19, 1987. Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 641, Sec. 1.04, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 976, Sec. 3, eff. Jan. 1, 1998.

Sec. 51.605. CONTINUING EDUCATION. (a) In this section, the word "clerk" includes a county clerk, district clerk, or county and

district clerk.

(b) A clerk shall complete 20 hours of instruction regarding the performance of the clerk's duties of office during each calendar year that begins after the clerk's election or appointment to office.

(c) A clerk must annually complete 20 hours of continuing education courses including at least one hour of continuing education courses regarding registry funds handled under Chapter 117, Local Government Code, in the performance of the duties of office. The 20 hours of required continuing education courses must include at least one hour of continuing education regarding fraudulent court documents and fraudulent document filings.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 345, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1988. Renumbered from V.T.C.A., Government Code Sec. 51.604 by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 2, Sec. 16.01(23), eff. Aug. 28, 1989. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 189, Sec. 13, eff. May 21, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 505, Sec. 23, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 976, Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 154, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 2004.

Sec. 51.606. PROHIBITED FEES. A clerk is not entitled to a fee for:

(1) the examination of a paper or record in the clerk's office;

(2) filing any process or document the clerk issues that is returned to court;

(3) a motion or judgment on a motion for security for costs; or

(4) taking or approving a bond for costs.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 268, Sec. 10, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Sec. 51.607. IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW OR AMENDED COURT COSTS AND FEES. (a) Following each regular session of the legislature, the comptroller shall identify each law enacted by that legislature, other than a law disapproved by the governor, that imposes or changes the amount of a court cost or fee collected by the clerk of a district, county, statutory county, municipal, or justice court from a party to a civil case or a defendant in a criminal case, including a filing or docketing fee, jury fee, cost on conviction, or fee or charge for services or to cover the expenses of a public official or agency. This subsection does not apply to attorney's fees, civil or criminal fines or penalties, or amounts charged, paid, or collected on behalf of another party to a proceeding other than the state in a criminal case, including restitution or damages.

(b) The comptroller shall prepare a list of each court cost or fee covered by Subsection (a) to be imposed or changed and shall publish the list in the Texas Register not later than August 1 after the end of the regular session of the legislature at which the law imposing or changing the amount of the cost or fee was enacted. The comptroller shall include with the list a statement describing the operation of this section and stating the date the imposition or change in the amount of the court cost or fee will take effect under Subsection (c).

(c) Notwithstanding the effective date of the law imposing or changing the amount of a court cost or fee included on the list, the imposition or change in the amount of the court cost or fee does not take effect until the next January 1 after the law takes effect.

(d) This section does not apply to a court cost or fee if the law imposing or changing the amount of the cost or fee:

(1) expressly provides that this section does not apply to the imposition or change in the amount of the cost or fee; or

(2) takes effect before August 1 or after the next January 1 following the regular session of the legislature at which the law was enacted.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 209, Sec. 81(a), eff. Sept. 1, 2003 and Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 823, Sec. 1, eff. June 20, 2003.

SUBCHAPTER H. ADDITIONAL FILING FEE FOR JUDICIAL FUND

Sec. 51.702. ADDITIONAL FEES AND COSTS IN CERTAIN STATUTORY COUNTY COURTS. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (g), in addition to all other fees authorized or required by other law, the clerk of a statutory county court shall collect a \$40 filing fee in each civil case filed in the court to be used for court-related purposes for the support of the judiciary.

(b) In addition to other court costs, a person shall pay \$15 as a court cost on conviction of any criminal offense in a statutory

county court, including cases in which probation or deferred adjudication is granted. A conviction that arises under Chapter 521, Transportation Code, or a conviction under Subtitle C, Title 7, Transportation Code, is included, except that a conviction arising under any law that regulates pedestrians or the parking of motor vehicles is not included.

(c) Court costs and fees due under this section shall be collected in the same manner as other fees, fines, or costs are collected in the case.

(d) The clerk shall deposit the fees and costs collected under this section to be sent to the comptroller as provided by Subchapter B, Chapter 133, Local Government Code. The comptroller shall deposit the fees in the judicial fund.

(e) Section 51.320 applies to a fee or cost collected under this section.

(f) Subsections (a)-(d) and (g)-(k) apply only to fees and costs for a 12-month period beginning July 1 in a county in which the commissioners court:

(1) adopts a resolution authorizing the fees and costs under Subsections (a) and (b); and

(2) files the resolution with the comptroller not later than June 1 immediately preceding the first 12-month period during which the fees and costs are to be collected.

(g) A resolution under Subsection (f) continues from year to year allowing the county to collect fees and costs under Subsections (a) and (b) under the terms of this section until the resolution is rescinded.

(h) A commissioners court that desires to rescind a resolution adopted under Subsection (f) must submit to the comptroller not later than June 1 preceding the beginning of the first day of the state fiscal year the commissioners court desires to rescind the resolution.

(i) A county that is not eligible to participate under Subsection (f) on July 1 of a year but is eligible to participate later in the year may submit a resolution meeting the requirements of Subsection (f) to the comptroller. The comptroller shall determine the date the county may begin to collect fees and costs under Subsections (a) and (b). A county that begins to collect fees and costs under Subsections (a) and (b) after July 1 is not eligible for a payment by the comptroller under Section 25.0015 until the 60th day after the date the comptroller determines the county may begin to collect fees and costs under Subsections (a) and (b).

(j) A clerk may not collect a fee under this section and under Section 51.701.

(k) Money collected under Subsections (a) and (b) after a county ceases to participate in the collection of additional fees and costs under Subsections (a) and (b) shall be remitted to the comptroller. The money shall be deposited in the judicial fund and shall be distributed to counties currently participating under this section in the manner described in Section 25.0005.

(l) In a county in which court costs are not collected under Subsection (b), a person shall pay, in addition to other court costs, \$15 as a court cost on conviction of any criminal offense in a statutory county court, including cases in which probation or deferred adjudication is granted. A conviction that arises under Chapter 521, Transportation Code, or a conviction under Subtitle C, Title 7, Transportation Code, is included, except that a conviction arising under any law that regulates pedestrians or the parking of motor vehicles is not included.

(m) Court costs due under Subsection (l) shall be collected in the same manner as other fees, fines, and costs are collected in the case. The clerk shall send the costs to the county treasurer or other person performing the duties of county treasurer at least as frequently as monthly. The county treasurer or other person shall deposit the costs collected in the county treasury.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 746, Sec. 67, eff. Oct. 1, 1991. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 144, Sec. 4, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 144, Sec. 3, eff. Aug. 28, 1995; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 461, Sec. 2, eff. Aug. 28, 1995; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 641, Sec. 2.03, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 30.186, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1119, Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1467, Sec. 1.10, eff. June 19, 1999; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1572, Sec. 6, eff. Oct. 1, 1999; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 209, Sec. 70(a), eff. Jan. 1, 2004; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 616,

Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 51.703. ADDITIONAL FEES AND COSTS IN CERTAIN COUNTY COURTS. (a) In addition to all other fees authorized or required by other law, the clerk of a county court with a judge who is entitled to an annual salary supplement from the state under Section 26.006 shall collect a \$40 filing fee in each civil case filed in the court to be used for court-related purposes for the support of the judiciary.

(b) In addition to other court costs, a person shall pay \$15 as a court cost on conviction of any criminal offense in a county court, including cases in which probation or deferred adjudication is granted. A conviction that arises under Chapter 521, Transportation Code, or a conviction under Subtitle C, Title 7, Transportation Code, is included, except that a conviction arising under any law that regulates pedestrians or the parking of motor vehicles is not included.

(c) Court costs and fees due under this section shall be collected in the same manner as other fees, fines, or costs are collected in the case.

(d) The clerk shall deposit the fees and costs collected under this section to be sent to the comptroller as provided by Subchapter B, Chapter 133, Local Government Code. The comptroller shall deposit the fees in the judicial fund.

(e) Section 51.320 applies to a fee or cost collected under this section.

(f) A clerk may not collect a fee under this section and under Section 51.702(a).

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1467, Sec. 1.11, eff. June 19, 1999; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1572, Sec. 7, eff. Oct. 1, 1999. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 209, Sec. 71(a), eff. Jan. 1, 2004; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 616, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 51.704. ADDITIONAL FEES IN CERTAIN STATUTORY PROBATE COURTS. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (f), in addition to all other fees authorized or required by other law, the clerk of a statutory probate court shall collect a \$40 filing fee in each probate, guardianship, mental health, or civil case filed in the court to be used for court-related purposes for the support of the judiciary.

(b) Court fees due under this section shall be collected in the same manner as other fees, fines, or costs are collected in the case.

(c) The clerk shall deposit the fees collected under this section to be sent to the comptroller as provided by Subchapter B, Chapter 133, Local Government Code. The comptroller shall deposit the fees in the judicial fund.

(d) Section 51.320 applies to a fee collected under this section.

(e) This section applies only to fees for a 12-month period beginning July 1 in a county in which the commissioners court:

(1) adopts a resolution authorizing the fees under this section; and

(2) files the resolution with the comptroller not later than June 1 immediately preceding the first 12-month period during which the fees are to be collected.

(f) A resolution under Subsection (e) continues from year to year allowing the county to collect fees under the terms of this section until the resolution is rescinded.

(g) A commissioners court that desires to rescind a resolution adopted under Subsection (e) must submit to the comptroller not later than June 1 preceding the beginning of the first day of the state fiscal year a resolution stating the commissioners court's desire to rescind the resolution.

(h) A county that is not eligible to participate under Subsection (e) on July 1 of a year but is eligible to participate later in the year may submit a resolution meeting the requirements of Subsection (e) to the comptroller. The comptroller shall determine the date the county may begin to collect fees under this section. A county that begins to collect fees under this section after July 1 is not eligible for a payment by the comptroller under Section 25.00211 until the 60th day after the date the comptroller determines the county may begin to collect fees under this section.

(i) A clerk may not collect a fee under this section and under Section 51.701 or 51.702.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1572, Sec. 8, eff. Oct. 1, 1999. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 209, Sec. 72(a), eff. Jan. 1,

2004.

Sec. 51.705. ADDITIONAL FILING FEE FOR DALLAS COUNTY CIVIL COURTS. (a) In this section, "Dallas County civil court" means a district court, including a family district court, a probate court, a county court at law, or a justice court in Dallas County. The term does not include a small claims court.

(b) In addition to all other fees authorized or required by other law, the clerk of a Dallas County civil court shall collect a filing fee of not more than \$15 in each civil case filed in the court to be used for the construction, renovation, or improvement of the facilities that house the Dallas County civil courts.

(c) Court fees due under this section shall be collected in the same manner as other fees, fines, or costs are collected in the case.

(d) The clerk shall send the fees collected under this section to the county treasurer at least as frequently as monthly. The treasurer shall deposit the fees in a special account in the county treasury dedicated to the construction, renovation, or improvement of the facilities that house the Dallas County civil courts.

(e) This section applies only to fees for a 12-month period beginning July 1, if the commissioners court:

(1) adopts a resolution authorizing a fee of no more than \$15;

(2) adopts a resolution requiring the county to spend one dollar for the construction, renovation, or improvement of the courts' facilities for each dollar spent from the special account dedicated to that purpose; and

(3) files the resolutions with the county treasurer not later than June 1 immediately preceding the first 12-month period during which the fees are to be collected.

(f) A resolution adopted under Subsection (e) continues from year to year until July 1, 2016, allowing the county to collect fees under the terms of this section until the resolution is rescinded.

(g) The commissioners court may rescind a resolution adopted under Subsection (e) by adopting a resolution rescinding the resolution and submitting the rescission resolution to the county treasurer not later than June 1 preceding the beginning of the first day of the county fiscal year. The commissioners court may adopt an additional resolution in the manner provided by Subsection (e) after rescinding a previous resolution under that subsection.

(h) A fee established under a particular resolution is abolished on the earlier of:

(1) the date a resolution adopted under Subsection (e) is rescinded as provided by Subsection (g); or

(2) July 1, 2016.

(i) The county may make the required expenditure described by Subsection (e)(2) at any time, regardless of when the expenditure from the special account occurs.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1199, Sec. 1, eff. June 15, 2001.

SUBCHAPTER I. ELECTRONIC FILING OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS

Sec. 51.801. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "electronic filing of documents" means the filing of data transmitted to a district or county clerk or a clerk of a court of appeals by the communication of information, displayed originally in written form, in the form of digital electronic signals transformed by computer and stored on microfilm, magnetic tape, optical disks, or any other medium.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.67(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 51.802. PLACE OF FILING. The place of filing is the receiving station designated by the district or county clerk or the clerk of the court of appeals to which electronic information is transmitted.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.67(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 51.803. SUPREME COURT REGULATION AND APPROVAL. (a) The supreme court shall adopt rules and procedures to regulate the use of electronic copying devices for filing in the courts.

(b) An instrument may only be filed as provided by this subchapter if the district, county, or court of appeals has established a system for receiving electronically transmitted information from an electronic copying device, and the system has been approved by the supreme court. A district or county clerk or

clerk of a court of appeals who believes there is justification for use of an electronic filing system in the clerk's office must request approval of the system from the supreme court. The supreme court shall approve or disapprove the system and may withdraw approval any time the system does not meet its requirements. Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.67(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 51.804. COMPLETION OF ELECTRONIC FILING. To complete an electronic filing:

(1) the person filing an instrument with the district or county clerk or the clerk of a court of appeals must transmit the instrument electronically;

(2) the receiving station must transmit acknowledgment to the sending party by encoding electronic receipt of the transmission;

(3) the sending station must encode validation of the encoded receipt as correct; and

(4) the receiving station must respond by encoded transcription into the computer system that validation has occurred and that the electronic transmission has been completed.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.67(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 51.805. TRANSMISSION OR DISTRIBUTION OF DATA. (a) A receiving station, on completion of an electronic filing, shall:

(1) transmit data to the appropriate court as required; and

(2) distribute data as required by statute or rule.

(b) Data must be distributed or transmitted from or through the medium of direct computer transmission, microfilm, magnetic tape, or optical disks, or any other medium approved by the supreme court.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.67(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 51.806. SIGNATURE ON ORIGINAL. (a) If the supreme court determines that each document filed by electronic transmission must be signed in the original, that requirement is satisfied if the sending station at the point of origin maintains a hard copy with the original signature affixed that, on order of the court, shall be filed in original hard copy medium. The electronic transmission of the data to be filed must bear a facsimile or printing of the required signature. The signature may be represented in numerical form. The electronically reproduced document must bear a copy of the signature or its representation in numerical form.

(b) The electronically reproduced document shall be accepted as the signature document for all court-related purposes unless the hard copy with the original signature affixed is requested by one or more parties to a suit or other agent required by statute, law, or other legal requirement. A request under this subsection must be made in the form of a motion to the court. If the court grants the motion, the court shall order that the original be filed with the court.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.67(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 51.807. LOCAL RULES. (a) The courts of a county may adopt local rules that govern the transmission and receipt of documents or reports stored or created in digital electronic or facsimile form and that provide for recognition of those documents as the original record for file or for evidentiary purposes.

(b) The rules shall be submitted to the supreme court for review and adoption as a part of the overall plan or procedure for the electronic filing of documents.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.67(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

SUBCHAPTER J. CERTAIN FRAUDULENT RECORDS OR DOCUMENTS

Sec. 51.901. FRAUDULENT DOCUMENT OR INSTRUMENT. (a) If a clerk of the supreme court, clerk of the court of criminal appeals, clerk of a court of appeals, district clerk, county clerk, district and county clerk, or municipal clerk has a reasonable basis to believe in good faith that a document or instrument previously filed or recorded or offered or submitted for filing or for filing and recording is fraudulent, the clerk shall:

(1) if the document is a purported judgment or other document purporting to memorialize or evidence an act, an order, a directive, or process of a purported court, provide written notice

of the filing, recording, or submission for filing or for filing and recording to the stated or last known address of the person against whom the purported judgment, act, order, directive, or process is rendered; or

(2) if the document or instrument purports to create a lien or assert a claim on real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property, provide written notice of the filing, recording, or submission for filing or for filing and recording to the stated or last known address of the person named in the document or instrument as the obligor or debtor and to any person named as owning any interest in the real or personal property described in the document or instrument.

(b) A clerk shall provide written notice under Subsection (a):

(1) not later than the second business day after the date that the document or instrument is offered or submitted for filing or for filing and recording; or

(2) if the document or instrument has been previously filed or recorded, not later than the second business day after the date that the clerk becomes aware that the document or instrument may be fraudulent.

(c) For purposes of this section, a document or instrument is presumed to be fraudulent if:

(1) the document is a purported judgment or other document purporting to memorialize or evidence an act, an order, a directive, or process of:

(A) a purported court or a purported judicial entity not expressly created or established under the constitution or the laws of this state or of the United States; or

(B) a purported judicial officer of a purported court or purported judicial entity described by Paragraph (A); or

(2) the document or instrument purports to create a lien or assert a claim against real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property and:

(A) is not a document or instrument provided for by the constitution or laws of this state or of the United States;

(B) is not created by implied or express consent or agreement of the obligor, debtor, or the owner of the real or personal property or an interest in the real or personal property, if required under the laws of this state, or by implied or express consent or agreement of an agent, fiduciary, or other representative of that person; or

(C) is not an equitable, constructive, or other lien imposed by a court with jurisdiction created or established under the constitution or laws of this state or of the United States.

(d) If a county clerk believes in good faith that a document filed with the county clerk to create a lien is fraudulent, the clerk shall:

(1) request the assistance of the county or district attorney to determine whether the document is fraudulent before filing or recording the document;

(2) request that the prospective filer provide to the county clerk additional documentation supporting the existence of the lien, such as a contract or other document that contains the alleged debtor or obligor's signature; and

(3) forward any additional documentation received to the county or district attorney.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 189, Sec. 14, eff. May 21, 1997. Amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 407, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2005.

Sec. 51.902. ACTION ON FRAUDULENT JUDGMENT LIEN. (a) A person against whom a purported judgment was rendered who has reason to believe that a document previously filed or recorded or submitted for filing or for filing and recording is fraudulent may complete and file with the district clerk a motion, verified by affidavit by a completed form for ordinary certificate of acknowledgment, of the same type described by Section 121.007, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, that contains, at a minimum, the information in the following suggested form:

In Re: A Purported	MISC. DOCKET NO. _____
Judgment Lien Against	In the _____ Judicial District
(Name of Purported	In and For _____
Debtor)	County, Texas

Motion for Judicial Review of a Documentation Purporting to Create
a Judgment Lien

Now Comes (name) and files this motion requesting a judicial determination of the status of a court, judicial entity, or judicial officer purporting to have taken an action that is the basis of a judgment lien filed in the office of said clerk, and in support of the motion would show the court as follows:

I.

(Name), movant herein, is the person against whom the purported judgment was rendered.

II.

On (date), in the exercise of the county clerk's official duties as County Clerk of (county name) County, Texas, the county clerk received and filed or filed and recorded the documentation attached hereto and containing (number) pages. Said documentation purports to have been rendered on the basis of a judgment, act, order, directive, or process of a court, judicial entity, or judicial officer called therein "(name of purported court, judicial entity, or judicial officer)" against one (name of purported debtor).

III.

Movant alleges that the purported court, judicial entity, or judicial officer referred to in the attached documentation is one described in Section 51.901(c)(1), Government Code, as not legally created or established under the constitution or laws of this state or of the United States, and that the documentation should therefore not be accorded lien status.

IV.

Movant further attests that the assertions contained herein are true and correct.

PRAYER

Movant requests the court to review the attached documentation and enter an order determining whether it should be accorded lien status, together with such other orders as the court deems appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signature and typed name and address)

(b) The completed form for ordinary certificate of acknowledgment, of the same type described by Section 121.007, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, must be as follows:

THE STATE OF TEXAS

AFFIDAVIT

COUNTY OF _____

BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, personally appeared _____, who, being by me duly sworn, deposed as follows:

"My name is _____. I am over 21 years of age, of sound mind, with personal knowledge of the following facts, and fully competent to testify.

I further attest that the assertions contained in the accompanying motion are true and correct."

Further affiant sayeth not.

SUBSCRIBED and SWORN TO before
me, this _____ day of _____,
_____.

NOTARY PUBLIC, State of Texas
Notary's printed name:

My commission expires:

(c) A motion filed under this section may be ruled on by a district judge having jurisdiction over real property matters in the county where the subject documentation was filed. The court's finding may be made solely on a review of the documentation attached to the movant's motion and without hearing any testimonial evidence. The court's review may be made ex parte without delay or notice of any kind. The court's ruling on the motion, in the nature of a finding of fact and a conclusion of law, is unappealable if it is substantially similar to the form suggested in Subsection (g).

(d) The district clerk may not collect a filing fee for filing a motion under this section.

(e) After reviewing the documentation attached to a motion

under this section, the district judge shall enter an appropriate finding of fact and conclusion of law, which must be filed and indexed in the same class of records in which the subject documentation or instrument was originally filed.

(f) The county clerk may not collect a filing fee for filing a district judge's finding of fact and conclusion of law under this section.

(g) A suggested form order appropriate to comply with this section is as follows:

In Re: A Purported
Judgment Lien Against
(Name of Purported
Debtor)

MISC. DOCKET NO. _____
In the _____ Judicial District
In and For _____
County, Texas

Judicial Finding of Fact and Conclusion of Law Regarding a
Documentation Purporting to Create a Judgment Lien

On the (number) day of (month), (year), in the above entitled and numbered cause, this court reviewed a motion verified by affidavit of (name) and the documentation attached thereto. No testimony was taken from any party, nor was there any notice of the court's review, the court having made the determination that a decision could be made solely on review of the documentation under the authority vested in the court under Subchapter J, Chapter 51, Government Code.

The court finds as follows (only an item checked and initialed is a valid court ruling):

_____ The documentation attached to the motion herein refers to a legally constituted court, judicial entity, or judicial officer created by or established under the constitution or laws of this state or of the United States. This judicial finding and conclusion of law does not constitute a finding as to any underlying claims of the parties.

_____ The documentation attached to the motion herein DOES NOT refer to a legally constituted court, judicial entity, or judicial officer created by or established under the constitution or laws of this state or of the United States. There is no valid judgment lien created by the documentation.

This court makes no finding as to any underlying claims of the parties involved and expressly limits its finding of fact and conclusion of law to a ministerial act. The county clerk shall file this finding of fact and conclusion of law in the same class of records as the subject documentation was originally filed, and the court directs the county clerk to index it using the same names that were used in indexing the subject document.

SIGNED ON THIS THE _____ DAY OF _____.

DISTRICT JUDGE

JUDICIAL DISTRICT
COUNTY, TEXAS

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 189, Sec. 14, eff. May 21, 1997.

Sec. 51.903. ACTION ON FRAUDULENT LIEN ON PROPERTY. (a) A person who is the purported debtor or obligor or who owns real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property and who has reason to believe that the document purporting to create a lien or a claim against the real or personal property or an interest in the real or personal property previously filed or submitted for filing and recording is fraudulent may complete and file with the district clerk a motion, verified by affidavit by a completed form for ordinary certificate of acknowledgment, of the same type described by Section 121.007, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, that contains, at a minimum, the information in the following suggested form:

In Re: A Purported
Lien or Claim Against
(Name of Purported
Debtor)

MISC. DOCKET NO. _____
In the _____ Judicial District
In and For _____
County, Texas

Motion for Judicial Review of Documentation or Instrument
Purporting to Create a Lien or Claim

Now Comes (name) and files this motion requesting a judicial determination of the status of documentation or an instrument purporting to create an interest in real or personal property or a lien or claim on real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property filed in the office of the Clerk of (county name) County, Texas, and in support of the motion would show the court as

follows:

I.

(Name), movant herein, is the purported obligor or debtor or person who owns the real or personal property or the interest in real or personal property described in the documentation or instrument.

II.

On (date), in the exercise of the county clerk's official duties as County Clerk of (county name) County, Texas, the county clerk received and filed and recorded the documentation or instrument attached hereto and containing (number) pages. Said documentation or instrument purports to have created a lien on real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property against one (name of purported debtor).

III.

Movant alleges that the documentation or instrument attached hereto is fraudulent, as defined by Section 51.901(c)(2), Government Code, and that the documentation or instrument should therefore not be accorded lien status.

IV.

Movant attests that assertions herein are true and correct.

V.

Movant does not request the court to make a finding as to any underlying claim of the parties involved and acknowledges that this motion does not seek to invalidate a legitimate lien. Movant further acknowledges that movant may be subject to sanctions, as provided by Chapter 10, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, if this motion is determined to be frivolous.

PRAYER

Movant requests the court to review the attached documentation or instrument and enter an order determining whether it should be accorded lien status, together with such other orders as the court deems appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signature and typed name and address)

(b) The completed form for ordinary certificate of acknowledgment, of the same type described by Section 121.007, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, must be as follows:

THE STATE OF TEXAS

AFFIDAVIT

COUNTY OF _____

BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, personally appeared _____, who, being by me duly sworn, deposed as follows:

"My name is _____. I am over 21 years of age, of sound mind, with personal knowledge of the following facts, and fully competent to testify.

I further attest that the assertions contained in the accompanying motion are true and correct."

Further affiant sayeth not.

SUBSCRIBED and SWORN TO before me, this _____ day of _____, _____.

NOTARY PUBLIC, State of Texas
Notary's printed name:

My commission expires:

(c) A motion under this section may be ruled on by a district judge having jurisdiction over real property matters in the county where the subject document was filed. The court's finding may be made solely on a review of the documentation or instrument attached to the motion and without hearing any testimonial evidence. The court's review may be made ex parte without delay or notice of any kind. An appellate court shall expedite review of a court's finding under this section.

(d) The district clerk may not collect a filing fee for filing a motion under this section.

(e) After reviewing the documentation or instrument attached to a motion under this section, the district judge shall enter an appropriate finding of fact and conclusion of law, which must be filed and indexed in the same class of records in which the subject documentation or instrument was originally filed. A copy

of the finding of fact and conclusion of law shall be sent, by first class mail, to the movant and to the person who filed the fraudulent lien or claim at the last known address of each person within seven days of the date that the finding of fact and conclusion of law is issued by the judge.

(f) The county clerk may not collect a fee for filing a district judge's finding of fact and conclusion of law under this section.

(g) A suggested form order appropriate to comply with this section is as follows:

In Re: A Purported Lien or Claim Against (Name of Purported Debtor)	MISC. DOCKET NO. _____ In the _____ Judicial District In and For _____ County, Texas
--	---

Judicial Finding of Fact and Conclusion of Law Regarding a
Documentation or Instrument Purporting to Create a Lien or Claim

On the (number) day of (month), (year), in the above entitled and numbered cause, this court reviewed a motion, verified by affidavit, of (name) and the documentation or instrument attached thereto. No testimony was taken from any party, nor was there any notice of the court's review, the court having made the determination that a decision could be made solely on review of the documentation or instrument under the authority vested in the court under Subchapter J, Chapter 51, Government Code.

The court finds as follows (only an item checked and initialed is a valid court ruling):

_____ The documentation or instrument attached to the motion herein IS asserted against real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property and:

(1) IS provided for by specific state or federal statutes or constitutional provisions;

(2) IS created by implied or express consent or agreement of the obligor, debtor, or the owner of the real or personal property or an interest in the real or personal property, if required under the laws of this state, or by consent of an agent, fiduciary, or other representative of that person; or

(3) IS an equitable, constructive, or other lien imposed by a court of competent jurisdiction created or established under the constitution or laws of this state or of the United States.

_____ The documentation or instrument attached to the motion herein:

(1) IS NOT provided for by specific state or federal statutes or constitutional provisions;

(2) IS NOT created by implied or express consent or agreement of the obligor, debtor, or the owner of the real or personal property or an interest in the real or personal property, if required under the law of this state or by implied or express consent or agreement of an agent, fiduciary, or other representative of that person;

(3) IS NOT an equitable, constructive, or other lien imposed by a court of competent jurisdiction created by or established under the constitution or laws of this state or the United States; or

(4) IS NOT asserted against real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property. There is no valid lien or claim created by this documentation or instrument.

This court makes no finding as to any underlying claims of the parties involved, and expressly limits its finding of fact and conclusion of law to the review of a ministerial act. The county clerk shall file this finding of fact and conclusion of law in the same class of records as the subject documentation or instrument was originally filed, and the court directs the county clerk to index it using the same names that were used in indexing the subject documentation or instrument.

SIGNED ON THIS THE _____ DAY OF _____.

DISTRICT JUDGE
_____ JUDICIAL DISTRICT
_____ COUNTY, TEXAS

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 189, Sec. 14, eff. May 21, 1997.

Sec. 51.904. WARNING SIGN. A clerk described by Section 51.901(a) shall post a sign, in letters at least one inch in height, that is clearly visible to the general public in or near the clerk's

office stating that it is a crime to intentionally or knowingly file a fraudulent court record or a fraudulent instrument with the clerk.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 189, Sec. 14, eff. May 21, 1997.

Sec. 51.905. DOCUMENTS FILED WITH SECRETARY OF STATE. (a) If the lien or other claim that is the subject of a judicial finding of fact and conclusion of law authorized by this subchapter is one that is authorized by law to be filed with the secretary of state, any person may file a certified copy of the judicial finding of fact and conclusion of law in the records of the secretary of state, who shall file the certified copy of the finding in the same class of records as the subject document or instrument was originally filed and index it using the same names that were used in indexing the subject document or instrument.

(b) The secretary of state may charge a filing fee of \$15 for filing a certified copy of a judicial finding of fact and conclusion of law under this section.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 189, Sec. 14, eff. May 21, 1997.

SUBCHAPTER L. ADDITIONAL FILING FEE FOR BASIC CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FOR INDIGENTS

Sec. 51.941. ADDITIONAL FILING FEE IN APPELLATE COURTS FOR BASIC CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FOR INDIGENTS. (a) In addition to other fees authorized or required by law, the clerk of the supreme court and courts of appeals shall collect a \$25 fee on the filing of any civil action or proceeding requiring a filing fee, including an appeal, and on the filing of any counterclaim, cross-action, intervention, interpleader, or third-party action requiring a filing fee.

(b) Court fees under this section shall be collected in the same manner as other fees, fines, or costs in the case.

(c) The clerk shall send the fees collected under this section to the comptroller not later than the last day of the month following each calendar quarter.

(d) The comptroller shall deposit the fees received under this section to the credit of the basic civil legal services account of the judicial fund for use in programs approved by the supreme court that provide basic civil legal services to the indigent.

(e) In this section, "indigent" means an individual who earns not more than 125 percent of the income standard established by applicable federal poverty guidelines.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 699, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997. Renumbered from V.T.C.A., Government Code Sec. 51.901 by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 62, Sec. 19.01(28), eff. Sept. 1, 1999. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 209, Sec. 73(a), eff. Jan. 1, 2004.

Sec. 51.942. RULES. (a) The supreme court shall adopt:

(1) rules and procedures for the distribution of funds under this subchapter; and

(2) rules and procedures for imposing sanctions, including the reduction or cancellation of funding.

(b) Funds may be distributed only to nonprofit organizations that provide basic civil legal services to persons meeting the income eligibility requirements established by the supreme court.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 699, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997. Renumbered from V.T.C.A., Government Code Sec. 51.902 by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 62, Sec. 19.01(28), eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Sec. 51.943. BASIC CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES ACCOUNT. (a) The basic civil legal services account is an account in the judicial fund administered by the supreme court.

(b) Funds in the basic civil legal services account may be used only for the support of programs approved by the supreme court that provide basic civil legal services to the indigent. The comptroller may pay money from the account only on vouchers approved by the supreme court.

(c) Except as provided by this subsection, funds from the basic civil legal services account may not be used to directly or indirectly support a class action lawsuit, abortion-related litigation, or a lawsuit against a governmental entity, political party, candidate, or officeholder for an action taken in the individual's official capacity or for lobbying for or against a candidate or issue. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, funds from the basic civil legal services account may not be used for the representation of an individual who is confined to a local, state, or federal jail or prison. Funds from the basic civil legal services account may not be used to provide legal services to

an individual who is not legally in this country, unless necessary to protect the physical safety of the individual. Funds from the basic civil legal services account may be used to support a lawsuit brought by an individual, solely on behalf of the individual or the individual's dependent or ward, to compel a governmental entity to provide benefits that the individual or the individual's dependent or ward is expressly eligible to receive, by statute or regulation, including social security benefits, aid to families with dependent children, financial assistance under Chapter 31, Human Resources Code, food stamps, special education for the handicapped, Medicare, Medicaid, subsidized or public housing, and other economic, shelter, or medical benefits provided by a government directly to an indigent individual, but not to support a claim for actual or punitive damages.

(d) Except as provided by this subsection, funds from the basic civil legal services account may not be used for a lawsuit or other legal matter that if undertaken on behalf of an indigent individual by an attorney in private practice might reasonably be expected to result in payment of a fee for legal services from an award to the individual client from public funds or from an opposing party. Funds from the basic civil legal services account may be used to support a lawsuit if the indigent individual seeking legal assistance made a reasonable effort to obtain legal services from an attorney in private practice for the particular legal matter, including contacting attorneys who practice law in the judicial district that is the residence of the indigent individual and who normally accept cases of a similar nature, and the indigent individual has been unable to obtain legal services.

(e) The supreme court shall file a report with the Legislative Budget Board at the end of each fiscal year showing disbursements from the account and the purpose for each disbursement and the sanctions imposed, if any. All funds expended are subject to audit by the supreme court, the comptroller, and the state auditor.

(f) The purpose of this subchapter is to increase the funds available for basic civil legal services to the indigent. Funds available from the basic civil legal services account may be supplemented by local or federal funds and private or public grants.

(g) A legal aid society or legal services program that is awarded attorney's fees in a case shall send the attorney's fees to the comptroller if any attorney representing any party involved in the case was paid in that case directly from funds from a grant made under this subchapter. The comptroller shall deposit the fees to the credit of the basic civil legal services account of the judicial fund for use in programs approved by the supreme court that provide basic civil legal services to the indigent.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 699, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997. Renumbered from V.T.C.A., Government Code Sec. 51.903 by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 62, Sec. 19.01(28), eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

SUBCHAPTER M. ADDITIONAL FILING FEE FOR FAMILY PROTECTION

Sec. 51.961. FAMILY PROTECTION FEE. (a) The commissioners court of a county shall adopt a family protection fee in an amount not to exceed \$30.

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), the district clerk or county clerk shall collect the family protection fee at the time a suit for dissolution of a marriage under Chapter 6, Family Code, is filed. The fee is in addition to any other fee collected by the district clerk or county clerk.

(c) The clerk may not collect a fee under this section from a person who is protected by an order issued under:

- (1) Subtitle B, Title 4, Family Code; or
- (2) Article 17.292, Code of Criminal Procedure.

(d) The clerk shall pay one-half of the fee collected under this section to the appropriate officer of the county in which the suit is filed for deposit in the county treasury to the credit of the family protection account. The account may be used by the commissioners court of the county only to fund a service provider located in that county or an adjacent county. The commissioners court may provide funding to a nonprofit organization that provides services described by Subsection (e).

(e) A service provider who receives funds under Subsection (d) may provide family violence and child abuse prevention, intervention, family strengthening, mental health, counseling, legal, and marriage preservation services to families that are at

risk of experiencing or that have experienced family violence or the abuse or neglect of a child.

(f) In this section, "family violence" has the meaning assigned by Section 71.004, Family Code.

(g) The clerk shall pay one-half of the fee collected under this section to the comptroller, who shall deposit the money to the credit of the child abuse and neglect prevention trust fund account established under Section 40.105, Human Resources Code.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 198, Sec. 2.165(a), eff. Sept. 1, 2003. Amended by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., ch. 268, Sec. 1.66, eff. Sept. 1, 2005.