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FACT SHEET

DRUG COURT PROGRAMS CURB ADDICTION AND REDUCE RECIDIVISM

H.B. 530 HELPS ADULTS AND YOUTH FREE THEMSELVES FROM DRUG ADDICTION

WHAT ARE DRUG COURT PROGRAMS?

Drug courts are a proven effective diversion program for individuals convicted of illicit drug use in Texas. These programs involve intensive interaction between offenders and judges, more comprehensive supervision than regular probation, routine drug testing, immediate sanctions for violations, and meaningful incentives for good behavior. The programs have been highly successful and immensely popular in Texas, yet drug courts are still unavailable in many counties. Given drug courts' proven success at eliminating addiction and reducing criminal recidivism, Texas must further expand and institutionalize the drug court model.

WHAT DOES H.B. 530 DO?

This bill mandates the implementation of drug court programs for low-level drug possession offenders in counties with populations greater than 200,000. Essentially, counties would make available pre-trial diversion programs for individuals facing low-level possession charges; individuals entering the programs would not have to plead guilty or *nolo contendere*.

Counties failing to meet requirements of implementation would risk losing Community Supervision and Corrections Department funding from the Department of Criminal Justice.

ADVANTAGES OF DRUG COURT PROGRAMS:

- **Drug courts are far less expensive than incarceration.** Treatment programs cost on average nearly ten times less than incarceration. Furthermore, treatment expansion can avoid costly new prison construction, saving Texas taxpayers \$520 million.
- **Drug court programs will help resolve the prison overcrowding crisis.** Approximately 22% of Texas prisoners are incarcerated for non-violent drug offenses. Diverting these individuals into drug court programs would preserve much needed prison beds for dangerous criminals.
- **Drug court programs successfully reduce drug abuse and recidivism.** Columbia University's National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse found that individuals participating in drug court programs are 19-44% less likely to recidivate upon completion.
- **Drug courts encourage personal responsibility.** H.B. 530 holds participants responsible for paying program and court costs to the extent that they are financially able to do so.

**SUPPORT H.B. 530 BY CHAIRMAN MADDEN AND REPRESENTATIVE RODRIGUEZ,
REPRESENTATIVE PEÑA, REPRESENTATIVE HODGE, AND REPRESENTATIVE WOOLLEY**