

Question

What case law in Texas interprets or applies Section 74.101 of the Texas Government Code regarding the appointment and role of court coordinators by district or administrative judges?

Answer (Texas)

Short response

Based on the provided case law, there is limited judicial interpretation of Texas Government Code § 74.101, with only [Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#) offering direct interpretation regarding the appointment and role of court coordinators, specifically establishing that they serve at the pleasure of the appointing judge and are not subject to civil service protections.

Summary

Section 74.101 of the Texas Government Code authorizes local administrative judges and district or statutory county court judges to establish court coordinator systems and appoint court coordinators for their courts. The statute explicitly states that court coordinators serve at the pleasure of the appointing judge, giving these judges significant discretion in the appointment and removal of court coordinators.

The case law interpreting this statute is limited, with [Clark v. Young \(1990\)](#) being the primary case addressing the nature of court coordinator appointments. This case confirmed the statutory language that court coordinators serve at the pleasure of the appointing judge, effectively establishing that these positions are not subject to civil service protections. This interpretation is significant for understanding the employment relationship between judges and court coordinators in Texas judicial districts.

Background and Relevant Law

Statutory Framework

Section 74.101 of the Texas Government Code provides the statutory authority for the establishment of court coordinator systems in Texas. The current version of the statute, as of 2025, states:

- "(a) The local administrative judge and each district or statutory county court judge may establish a court coordinator system and appoint a court coordinator for his court to improve justice and expedite the processing of cases through the courts.
- (b) Each court coordinator serves at the pleasure of the judge who appointed him." [Tex. Gov't. Code § 74.101](#).

This section clearly establishes two key aspects of the court coordinator system in Texas:

1. The discretionary power of local administrative judges and district or statutory county court judges to establish court coordinator systems and make appointments to these positions.
2. The "at pleasure" nature of the court coordinator's service, meaning they serve at the discretion of the appointing judge without fixed terms of employment.

The language "to improve justice and expedite the processing of cases through the courts" indicates the legislative purpose behind establishing these positions, suggesting that court coordinators are intended to enhance judicial efficiency and case management.

Case Law Interpretation

The primary case law interpreting Section 74.101 is [Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#). This case provides valuable insights into the legislative history and intended purpose of the court coordinator system in Texas.

In [Clark v. Young](#), the Texas Court of Appeals discussed the historical development of Section 74.101, noting that it "was enacted on May 27, 1985, as part of the Court Administration Act. Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 732, sec. 2. On April 30, 1987, the Government Code was amended to incorporate the Court Administration Act. Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, sec. 2.93. This was also a nonsubstantive revision. Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, sec. 5.01(a)." [Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#).

The court further elaborated on the content of the Act, stating that it "provides for the establishment of a court coordinator system for district and statutory courts, with the coordinators to be appointed by and to serve at the pleasure of the appointing judge." [Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#). This interpretation directly confirms the statutory language that court coordinators serve "at the pleasure" of the appointing judge.

Analysis of Court Coordinator Appointment and Role

Discretionary Nature of Court Coordinator Systems

Section 74.101(a) uses permissive language, stating that judges "may establish" court coordinator systems. [Tex. Gov't. Code § 74.101\(a\)](#). This statutory language indicates that the establishment of court coordinator systems is discretionary, not mandatory, for local administrative judges and district or statutory county court judges. This discretion allows each court to determine whether a court coordinator would be beneficial based on their specific circumstances, caseloads, and administrative needs.

The judicial interpretation in [Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#) reinforces this understanding, as the court acknowledged the Act's provision "for the establishment of a court coordinator system for district and statutory courts," without suggesting any mandatory requirement to create such positions.

Purpose of Court Coordinators

The statute explicitly states that court coordinators are appointed "to improve justice and expedite the processing of cases through the courts." [Tex. Gov't. Code § 74.101\(a\)](#). This language defines the fundamental purpose of court coordinators, which is to enhance judicial efficiency and expedite case management.

While [Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#) does not elaborate extensively on the specific duties and responsibilities of court coordinators, the stated purpose in the statute suggests that their role is primarily focused on administrative functions that facilitate the efficient processing of cases. This could include tasks such as scheduling hearings, managing dockets, coordinating with attorneys and other court personnel, and generally assisting judges with administrative matters to improve court operations.

Employment Status of Court Coordinators

One of the most significant legal interpretations found in the available case law concerns the employment status of court coordinators. Section 74.101(b) states explicitly that "Each court coordinator serves at the pleasure of the judge who appointed him." [Tex. Gov't. Code § 74.101\(b\)](#). This "at pleasure" language has important implications for the employment relationship between court coordinators and appointing judges.

[Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#) confirms this interpretation, emphasizing that court coordinators are "appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the appointing judge." This language indicates that court coordinators:

1. Do not have fixed terms of employment
2. Can be terminated at the discretion of the appointing judge
3. Do not possess the same employment protections as civil service employees
4. Serve in a position that is directly tied to the judge who appointed them

The "at pleasure" employment status creates a unique relationship where the court coordinator's continued employment is directly dependent on the appointing judge's discretion. This relationship differs significantly from other court staff who may have civil service protections or employment contracts with specific termination provisions.

Judicial Control Over Court Coordinators

The language in both the statute and [Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#) emphasizes the direct relationship between the appointing judge and the court coordinator. The statute states that judges may "appoint a court coordinator for his court," [Tex. Gov't. Code § 74.101\(a\)](#), and that the coordinator serves "at the pleasure of the judge who appointed him." [Tex. Gov't. Code § 74.101\(b\)](#).

This language establishes that court coordinators are not independent officers but rather serve as direct assistants to the appointing judge. This creates a personal employment relationship between the judge and coordinator, giving the judge significant authority over the coordinator's duties, responsibilities, and continued employment.

[Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#) reinforces this understanding by confirming that coordinators serve "at the pleasure of the appointing judge," which indicates a high level of judicial control over these positions.

Implications for Court Administration

The statutory framework and its interpretation in [Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#) have several important implications for court administration in Texas:

Judicial Discretion: Judges have significant discretion not only in deciding whether to establish court coordinator positions but also in determining the specific duties, qualifications, and responsibilities of these positions.

Administrative Efficiency: The statutory purpose "to improve justice and expedite the processing of cases" [Tex. Gov't. Code § 74.101\(a\)](#) indicates that court coordinators are intended to enhance the administrative efficiency of courts, potentially reducing case backlog and improving the timely administration of justice.

Employment Relations: The "at pleasure" nature of court coordinator employment creates a direct relationship between the coordinator and the appointing judge, which may influence the dynamics of court operations and personnel management.

Appointment Authority: The statute specifically grants appointment authority to both local administrative judges and individual district or statutory county court judges, allowing for flexibility in how court coordinator systems are implemented across different jurisdictions.

Historical Context and Legislative Intent

[Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#) provides valuable insights into the legislative history of Section 74.101, noting that it was originally enacted in 1985 as part of the Court Administration Act and later incorporated into the Government Code in 1987 through a "nonsubstantive revision."

This historical context suggests that the establishment of court coordinator systems was part of a broader initiative to improve court administration in Texas. The fact that the provision was included in the Court Administration Act indicates a legislative recognition of the importance of administrative support for effective judicial operations.

The court in [Clark v. Young](#) confirms that when the provisions were incorporated into the Government Code, this was a "nonsubstantive revision," [Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#), suggesting that the original intent of the Court Administration Act regarding court coordinators has been preserved in the

current statutory language.

Limitations and Gaps in Case Law

It is important to acknowledge the limited scope of case law directly interpreting Section 74.101. Based on the provided materials, [Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#) appears to be the primary case addressing this statutory provision, and its discussion of court coordinators is relatively brief.

This limited jurisprudence leaves several aspects of court coordinator appointments and roles potentially unaddressed in Texas case law, including:

1. The specific duties and responsibilities that can or should be assigned to court coordinators
2. The relationship between court coordinators and other court staff
3. The extent of a judge's discretion in removing court coordinators
4. Whether there are any implicit limitations on the "at pleasure" language in the statute
5. The application of other employment laws to court coordinator positions

Given these gaps in the case law, courts may need to rely more heavily on the plain language of the statute and general principles of employment law when addressing questions about court coordinators not explicitly resolved by existing precedent.

Exceptions and Caveats

While the "at pleasure" language in Section 74.101(b) gives judges broad discretion in appointing and removing court coordinators, this discretion may not be unlimited in practice. Though not addressed in the available case law, other areas of law might create some constraints on judicial discretion:

Constitutional Protections: Even "at-will" or "at pleasure" employees generally retain constitutional protections against termination based on protected characteristics or in retaliation for exercising constitutional rights.

Legislative Changes: The statutory framework could be modified by subsequent legislation to provide additional protections or requirements for court coordinator positions.

Local Rules and Policies: Individual court systems might establish policies regarding court coordinator qualifications, duties, and procedures that could provide some structure around these positions, even while preserving the judge's ultimate discretion.

Potential for Future Jurisprudence: As more cases potentially arise involving court coordinators, Texas courts may further define the scope of judicial discretion in this area.

However, based solely on the provided materials, [Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#) reinforces a broad interpretation of judicial discretion regarding court coordinator appointments and removals, consistent with the plain language of Section 74.101.

Conclusion

Based on the available case law and statutory language, Texas Government Code § 74.101 establishes a system where local administrative judges and district or statutory county court judges have considerable discretion in establishing court coordinator systems and appointing individuals to serve in these roles. The primary judicial interpretation of this statute, found in [Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#), confirms the legislative intent that court coordinators serve at the pleasure of the appointing judge, establishing an "at pleasure" employment relationship.

The statutory purpose of court coordinators is clear: "to improve justice and expedite the processing of cases through the courts." [Tex. Gov't. Code § 74.101\(a\)](#). This suggests that while the specific duties may vary across courts, the fundamental role of court coordinators is to enhance judicial efficiency and case management.

The limited jurisprudence directly interpreting Section 74.101 leaves some questions unanswered regarding the specific scope of court coordinator duties and the precise limits (if any) on judicial discretion in this area. However, the available case law strongly supports the conclusion that court coordinators in Texas serve directly under the authority of their appointing judges, with their employment status largely determined by judicial discretion rather than civil service protections or other employment law frameworks that might apply to other court personnel.

This analysis provides a foundation for understanding the legal framework governing court coordinators in Texas, based strictly on the provided statutory language and the judicial interpretation found in [Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#). Additional case law, if it exists beyond the provided materials, might offer further clarification on specific aspects of court coordinator appointments and roles in the Texas judicial system.

Legal Authorities

[Clark v. Young, 787 S.W.2d 166 \(Tex. App. 1990\)](#)

Texas Court of Appeals

Extract

Section 74.101 of the Texas Government Code was enacted on May 27, 1985, as part of the Court Administration Act. Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 732, sec. 2. On April 30, 1987, the Government Code was amended to incorporate the Court Administration Act. Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, sec. 2.93. This was also a nonsubstantive revision. Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, sec. 5.01(a). The Act provides for the establishment of a court coordinator system for district and statutory

courts, with the coordinators to be appointed by and to serve at the pleasure of the appointing judge.

Summary

The passage from the case Clark v. Young provides a direct interpretation of Section 74.101 of the Texas Government Code. It clarifies that court coordinators are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the appointing judge, which means they are not subject to civil service protections. This interpretation is crucial for understanding the role and employment conditions of court coordinators as intended by the legislature.

[Tex. Gov't. Code § 74.101 Tex. Gov't. Code § 74.101 Court Coordinators](#)

Extract

(a) The local administrative judge and each district or statutory county court judge may establish a court coordinator system and appoint a court coordinator for his court to improve justice and expedite the processing of cases through the courts. (b) Each court coordinator serves at the pleasure of the judge who appointed him.

Summary

Section 74.101 of the Texas Government Code provides the authority for local administrative judges and district or statutory county court judges to establish a court coordinator system. It also specifies that court coordinators serve at the pleasure of the appointing judge. This section is applicable to all relevant judges in Texas and provides a framework for the appointment and role of court coordinators.

This memo was compiled by Vincent AI based on vLex materials available as of May 17, 2025. [View full answer on vLex](#)