

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
OVERSIGHT DIVISION

FISCAL NOTE

L.R. No.: 0292-02
Bill No.: SCS for SB 91
Subject: Attorneys; Boards, Commissions, Committees, Councils; Courts
Type: Original
Date: April 2, 2015

Bill Summary: This proposal modifies laws relating to public defenders.

FISCAL SUMMARY

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON GENERAL REVENUE FUND			
FUND AFFECTED	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
General Revenue	\$0	\$0	More than \$100,000
Total Estimated Net Effect on General Revenue	\$0	\$0	More than \$100,000

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON OTHER STATE FUNDS			
FUND AFFECTED	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Total Estimated Net Effect on <u>Other</u> State Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0

Numbers within parentheses: () indicate costs or losses.

This fiscal note contains 6 pages.

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON FEDERAL FUNDS			
FUND AFFECTED	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Total Estimated Net Effect on <u>All</u> Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)			
FUND AFFECTED	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Total Estimated Net Effect on FTE	0	0	0

Estimated Net Effect (expenditures or reduced revenues) expected to exceed \$100,000 in any of the three fiscal years after implementation of the act.

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON LOCAL FUNDS			
FUND AFFECTED	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Local Government	\$0	\$0	More than \$100,000

FISCAL ANALYSIS

ASSUMPTION

Officials from the **Office of the State Public Defender (SPD)** state this bill postpones the required implementation date for public defender district offices to realign themselves concurrently with judicial circuits until after the 2020 realignment of judicial circuits authorized under Section 478.073, avoiding the likelihood that SPD would realign its offices to match existing judicial circuits by 2018 only to have to re-do those efforts two years later.

The SPD has 33 trial district offices serving 45 judicial circuits and 115 counties. By statute, office space for these district offices is provided and paid for by the counties served by that district office, each county paying a proportion of the total rent and utilities according to comparative population. Each time the geographic boundaries of a defender office's area of service are changed, the leases which the counties have signed and the respective payment obligations of all the counties involved, are also impacted. Because of the significant complications involved in realignment of offices, avoiding the necessity of back to back realignments makes fiscal and operational sense.

As stated by the SPD above, without this bill several office realignments may need to occur in 2018, which is shortly before the 2020 realignment of judicial circuits occurs (as authorized under Section 478.073). Therefore, **Oversight** concurs that this proposal may, in effect, save money for the state's SPD as well as the counties who help support them. It is not possible to measure the amount of potential savings to the state and counties until the details of the 2020 realignment are available.

For example, as part of the report submitted to fulfill requirements of Section 600.042, the SPD stated that currently there is a PD District office in Callaway County (Fulton). Callaway County is currently part of the 13th Judicial Circuit along with Boone County. A PD District Office already exists in Columbia, so the office in Fulton will need to move to another location within the 12th Judicial Circuit (currently Audrain, Montgomery and Warren Counties). However, the 2020 realignment may possibly move Callaway County out of the 13th Judicial Circuit and into the 12th Judicial Circuit, which could allow the PD District Office to be moved back to Fulton.

At the very least, this bill will delay the expense of implementing the SPD office realignments from 2018 to 2021.

For purposes of this fiscal note, **Oversight** will reflect a savings of More than \$100,000 in FY 2018 to the state as well as local political subdivisions, as the SPD realignment will be delayed until after the 2020 realignment of judicial circuits. In some cases, the costs may simply be

ASSUMPTION (continued)

delayed until 2020; however, in some cases, a cost avoidance (of moving twice in three years) may occur.

The **SPD** states that eliminating the biennial sweep of the Legal Defense and Defender Fund will assist the Public Defender System with budgeting of expenditures from the fund. A large percentage of the monies collected from prior public defender clients, is during the tax intercept season, March, April and May. This affords very little time to budget and expend the monies collected. Eliminating the sweep would allow constant fiscal year spending rather than a flurry at the end of every two years. The SPD states the biennial sweep of this fund occurs on odd number fiscal years (FY 2015).

Oversight notes that according to Office of the State Treasurer (STO) reports, the balance of Legal Defense and Defender Fund (0670) as of March 31, 2015 was \$808,186. The STO also noted that this fund has not had monies swept into the General Revenue Fund recently. Therefore, Oversight will assume the proposed changes regarding this fund would not have a fiscal impact on this fund or the General Revenue Fund.

Officials from the **Office of the State Courts Administrator**, the **Office of Administration - Division of Accounting**, and the **Office of Prosecution Services** each assume the proposal would not fiscally impact their respective agencies.

Officials from the **Attorney General's Office** assume that any potential costs arising from this proposal could be absorbed with existing resources.

<u>FISCAL IMPACT - State Government</u>	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
	(10 Mo.)		
GENERAL REVENUE			
<u>Cost Avoidance and/or Cost Delaying -</u>			
SPD - delaying the realignment of SPD	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	More than
offices until after the judicial circuit			<u>\$100,000</u>
realignment			
ESTIMATED NET EFFECT TO THE			More than
GENERAL REVENUE FUND	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$100,000</u>

<u>FISCAL IMPACT - Local Government</u>	FY 2016 (10 Mo.)	FY 2017	FY 2018
COUNTIES			
<u>Cost Avoidance and/or Cost Delaying -</u> SPD - delaying the realignment of SPD offices until after the judicial circuit realignment	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	More than <u>\$100,000</u>
ESTIMATED NET EFFECT TO COUNTIES	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	More than <u>\$100,000</u>

FISCAL IMPACT - Small Business

No direct fiscal impact to small businesses would be expected as a result of this proposal.

FISCAL DESCRIPTION

Current law allows the director of the Missouri State Public Defender System to delegate the legal representation of any person to any licensed attorney. This act specifies that the director can delegate the legal representation of people who are eligible for representation by the Public Defender System.

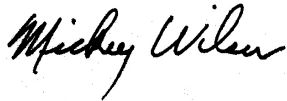
In addition, current law allows unexpended funds of up to \$150,000 to remain in the Legal Defense and Defender Fund at the end of the fiscal year. This act removes the cap, so all unexpended money remains in the fund.

Under current law, the director of the State Public Defender System must implement a plan to establish district offices that align with judicial circuit boundaries by December 31, 2018. This proposal extends the date of implementation to December 31, 2021.

This legislation is not federally mandated, would not duplicate any other program and would not require additional capital improvements or rental space.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Office of the State Public Defender
Office of the State Courts Administrator
Office of Prosecution Services
Attorney General's Office
Office of Administration
Office of the State Treasurer



Mickey Wilson, CPA
Director
April 2, 2015

Ross Strobe
Assistant Director
April 2, 2015