

Department of Fiscal Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE  
Revised

Senate Bill 559 (Senator Blount, et al.)

Judicial Proceedings and Budget and Taxation

Referred to Judiciary

Judges - Baltimore City Circuit Court

This amended bill adds four resident judges to the Baltimore City Circuit Court: two on October 1, 1996, and two on July 1, 1997.

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures would increase by \$271,900 in FY 1997 and \$717,500 in FY 1998, increasing in future years due to inflation. Revenues would not be affected. The FY 1997 State budget contains \$275,000 to establish and support two additional circuit court judgeships for Baltimore City contingent upon enactment of this bill.

(in dollars)	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001
GF Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditures	271,900	717,500	725,500	731,100	736,800
Net Effect	(\$271,900)	(\$717,500)	(\$725,500)	(\$731,100)	(\$736,800)

Note: ( ) - decrease; GF - general funds; FF - federal funds; SF - special funds

**Local Effect:** Baltimore City expenditures could increase by \$97,700 in FY 1997 and \$259,900 annually thereafter, in addition to an estimated \$1.8 million in capital costs. **This bill imposes a mandate on Baltimore City.**

Fiscal Analysis

**State Expenditures:** General fund expenditures could increase by an estimated \$271,944 in fiscal 1997, which reflects the bill's October 1, 1996 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring two judges and two courtroom clerks. It includes salaries of \$171,579 and fringe benefits of \$100,365.

Judicial Salaries	\$	144,750
Fringe Benefits		88,246
Clerk Salaries		26,829
Fringe Benefits		<u>12,119</u>
<b>Total FY 1997 State Expenditures</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>271,944</b>

Future year expenditures reflect full salaries with 3.5% annual increases, 3% employee turnover for the clerks, and two new judges and clerks beginning July 1, 1997. Judicial salary increases are not included because they are determined by the Judicial Compensation Commission and the General Assembly. Fringe benefit costs assume the Social Security Wage Base increases by 3% annually.

The fiscal 1997 State budget contains \$275,000 for this purpose, contingent upon enactment of this bill.

This estimate is based on the salaries contained in the Judicial Compensation Commission report (SJ 4/HJ 7) as amended by the General Assembly.

**Local Effect:** Baltimore City provides support staff and supplies for the Baltimore City Circuit Court as well as all capital and operating expenses for courtrooms. Each judge has a law clerk and secretary. Baltimore City uses video recording instead of a court reporter. Personnel expenditures could increase by \$97,706 in fiscal 1997 and \$259,900 annually thereafter. This estimate is based on: (1) the October 1 effective date; (2) law clerk salary of \$24,707 annually; (3) secretary salary of \$24,146 annually; and (4) fringe benefits at 33% of salaries.

One cent on Baltimore City's property tax yields approximately \$841,648 in fiscal 1997. Accordingly, this \$259,900 annual expenditure increase is equivalent to \$0.0031 on the city's property tax rate.

In addition to the operating expenses listed above, Baltimore City would have to provide four additional courtrooms and office space. Assuming the need for 3,000 square feet at \$125 per square foot and including \$70,000 per courtroom for video recording equipment, capital costs could be \$1.8 million. As the existing court facilities cannot accommodate these new judges, Baltimore City would have to find or rent space as soon as the judges are appointed until permanent courtrooms are available.

**Information Source(s):** Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Fiscal Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 4, 1996

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