

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

House Bill 860 (Delegate Montague, *et al.*)
Judiciary

Referred to Judicial Proceedings

District Court Fees - Maryland Legal Services Corporation Funding

This amended bill establishes the Maryland Legal Services Corporation Fund and directs the Chief Judge of the District Court to assess a surcharge on court costs in civil cases to be deposited into the nonlapsing fund dedicated to the Maryland Legal Services Corporation for civil legal services to indigents. The surcharge will be not more than \$3 per summary ejectment case.

The bill's effective date is July 1, 1997 and sunsets June 30, 1998.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Indeterminate increase in special fund revenues for the Maryland Legal Services Corporation offset by an equal increase in expenditures. Indeterminate increase in general fund revenues.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal. Small businesses involved in civil cases could pay the additional fee.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: The number of cases that would be subject to the bill's surcharge would vary from year to year. In fiscal 1996, there were 588,046 summary ejectment (landlord and tenant) cases filed in the District Court. For illustrative purposes, assuming that each case filed in the District Court in fiscal 1996 had been assessed the \$3 surcharge, revenues would have increased by an additional \$1,764,138.

It is assumed that the nonlapsing fund identified in the bill would be administered by the

Comptroller. Administration of this fund could be handled with existing resources.

It is assumed that any revenue collected by the surcharge imposed under this bill would be offset by an equal expenditure increase in grants made by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts, District Court of Maryland); Annual Report of the Maryland Judiciary 1995-1996; Department of Fiscal Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 4, 1997
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