

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 174 (Senators Stone and Miller)
(Task Force to Examine Maryland's Crime Victims' Rights Laws)
Judicial Proceedings

Courts - Court Costs - Victims of Crime

This bill increases the amount of additional court costs imposed on convicted criminal defendants from \$40 to \$45 in the circuit courts, and from \$30 to \$35 in the District Court. The Comptroller is required to increase deposits to both the Maryland Victims of Crime Fund and the Victim and Witness Protection and Relocation Fund by \$2.50 from each such fee collection.

The bill is effective on July 1, 1997.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund revenues to the Victims of Crime Fund could increase by approximately \$217,100 annually beginning in FY 1998. Special fund revenues to the Victim and Witness Protection and Relocation Fund would also increase by approximately \$217,100 annually beginning in FY 1998. General fund expenditures could increase by \$10,000 in FY 1998 due to additional printing costs.

Local Effect: Local fund expenditures could increase by \$24,000 in FY 1998 due to additional printing costs.

Small Business Effect: None. The bill would not directly affect small businesses.

Fiscal Analysis

Background: Although the Comptroller of the Treasury is directed to collect the fees from the courts, under current practice, the Comptroller actually sets up the accounts for the respective courts to directly deposit the fee revenue.

State Revenues: Under current law, \$10 of the additional \$30 court cost in the District

Court must be directed to the Victims of Crime Fund, a State operated special fund. In addition, \$20 of the additional \$40 court cost in the circuit courts must be directed to that same fund. In fiscal 1996 the District Court directed \$578,972 and the circuit courts directed \$126,034 to the Victims of Crimes Fund in accordance with existing provisions.

Since this bill increases each of these assessments by \$5 and directs that \$2.50 of that increase must be deposited with the Victims of Crime Fund, there will be a 25% increase (\$144,743) in fees paid to the fund by the District Court, and a 13% increase (\$72,373) in fees to the fund paid by the circuit courts. Thus, the Victims of Crime Fund revenues are anticipated to increase by \$217,116 in fiscal 1998. Future years are assumed to be relatively constant.

The Victim and Witness Protection and Relocation Fund is a State special fund. Since the bill requires that \$2.50 from the additional fee collection must be directed to this fund, revenues to the Victim and Witness Protection and Relocation Fund would also increase by \$217,116 annually beginning in fiscal 1998.

State Expenditures: It is assumed that any additional administrative costs for each of the funds would be borne by the funds themselves. However, general fund expenditures could increase by approximately \$10,000 as a result of Division of Parole and Probation forms being reprinted to display the new fees. Any such additional expenditures would be subject to the normal State budgetary processes.

Local Expenditures: Local expenditures could increase by approximately \$24,000 as a result of circuit courts having to reprint Parole and Probation forms to reflect the fee increase.

The State's Attorneys' Coordinator administers the Victim and Witness Protection and Relocation Program. Any additional expenditures from that special fund must be made pursuant to an appropriation approved by the General Assembly in the annual State budget.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Comptroller of the Treasury; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Office of the Secretary, Division of Parole and Probation); Department of Fiscal Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 4, 1997

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