

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 797 (Delegate Dembrow)

Judiciary

District Court - Pilot Project for Testimony by Electronic Means

This bill authorizes the Chief Judge of the District Court to designate one or more districts to participate in a pilot project to test the efficacy of presenting testimony of witnesses electronically in proceedings for non-incarcerable offenses. Permitted types of electronic transmission would include:

- electronic transmission of audio;
- electronic transmission of audio and video; and
- a deposition prerecorded using electronic audio and video means.

The project would operate in accordance with rules adopted by the Court of Appeals.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential significant increase in general fund expenditures.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Fiscal Analysis

State Expenditures: Implementation of a pilot project for electronic testimony would require expenditures for cameras, monitors, wiring, installation, and recording equipment. The District Court of Maryland did not provide information upon which to base an estimate of the costs of such a project. Any such costs are expected to be significant, however. In 1998, based upon information supplied by the District Court for different legislation,

Legislative Services estimated that it could cost \$25,000 to \$35,000 to equip one courtroom with electronic testimony capability. Actual costs associated with the bill would depend upon the particular rules adopted by the Court of Appeals. It is assumed that the District Court would fund any pilot project implemented pursuant to the bill.

Small Business Effect: The bill could result in increased revenue for one or more small telecommunications businesses if selected to provide and install telecommunications equipment.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (District Court of Maryland), Department of Legislative Services

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dmm/jr

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