Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

122 nd General Assembly of Ohio

BILL:	**Sub. S.B. 140**	DATE:	**October 21, 1997**
STATUS:	**As Reported by Senate Judiciary**	SPONSOR:	**Sen. Latta**

LOCAL IMPACT STATEMENT REQUIRED: **No — No local cost**

CONTENTS: **Requires coroners to submit DNA specimens and fingerprints of unidentified dead persons to BCII, and authorizes BCII to establish a relatives of missing persons database**

State Fiscal Highlights

STATE FUND	FY 1998	FY 1999	FUTURE YEARS
General Revenue Fund			
Revenues	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -
Expenditures	Increase of up to $70,000	Increase of up to $70,000	Increase of up to $70,000

- The bill expands the potential uses of the DNA database established in the 121st General Assembly and requires BCII to provide assistance to county coroners in certain non-criminal death cases.

Local Fiscal Highlights

LOCAL GOVERNMENT	FY 1998	FY 1999	FUTURE YEARS
Counties			
Revenues	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -
Expenditures	Decrease of up to $70,000	Decrease of up to $70,000	Decrease of up to $70,000

- Assuming an average cost per test of $500, the bill would result in a minimal decrease in county expenditures as related to permitting county coroners to submit evidence for testing to BCII. Currently, in many counties evidence in non-criminal death cases is submitted to private laboratories with the cost varying depending on the type of test conducted.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

The bill: requires coroners to submit DNA specimens, fingerprints, and photographs of unidentified dead persons to the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII); authorizes BCII to establish a "relatives of missing persons database"; and requires BCII to notify the coroner or law enforcement agency that submitted the specimen when the person has been identified. Additionally, the bill permits county coroners to submit evidence directly to BCII for testing in the investigation of non-criminal death cases not currently under investigation by a local law enforcement agency.

According to a spokesperson for the Attorney General's office, there are approximately 10 unidentified dead persons in Ohio annually, and it is estimated that this number will remain constant in the future. The spokesperson further states that implementing these provisions of the bill will cost no more than $30,000, the "high-end cost" for: (1) programming and coding the existing DNA database to meet the new requirements; (2) covering the actual cost of the DNA tests; and (3) producing reports to send to the coroners and the law enforcement community. The Attorney General's office expects to absorb these costs within its current operating budget.

The bill also requires that in addition to assisting local law enforcement in the prevention and investigation of crimes, BCII shall aid county coroners in the investigation of non-criminal death cases not currently under investigation by a local law enforcement agency. According to a representative of county coroners, this provision could result in the referral to BCII of up to 75 cases per year. The tests that BCII would perform are as a general rule conducted by private laboratories at a cost of between $100 and $1,000 each. Assuming an average cost of $500 per test, this provision of the bill would result in an annual increase in state expenditures of up to $37,500. As a result of shifting the burden for testing to BCII, counties should experience an equivalent decrease in expenditures.

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