

would be a timeframe that adopts the time period required for the highest degree of offense charged. This bill would bring statewide uniformity to the courts on this issue.

It is difficult to determine the number of cases affected by this proposal and the amount of potential savings that may be realized. Some of Ohio's courts already interpret the law in the manner proposed by the bill. These jurisdictions would realize no savings caused by the passage of this bill. In some areas, county prosecutors drop misdemeanor charges if the accused pleads guilty to a felony charge. However, according to several Common Pleas Court judges, there are instances that involve the same act or transaction and have resulted in having a trial on the misdemeanor charge and a separate trial on the felony charge. This is an outgrowth of changes in criminal sentencing where increased penalties have resulted in more incidents involving both felonies and misdemeanors in the same act or transaction. This bill gives permissive authority to the judge to decide to hold a single trial within the time period required for the highest degree of offense.

This bill does not affect the length of either incarceration or the length of any pre-conviction detention. The bill can potentially cause savings through efficiencies for the Courts of Common Pleas, County Prosecutors and possibly in public defense if provided. These parties may be able to handle issues in one setting as opposed to in two separate trials. Any potential savings would be minimal as both the prosecution and any public defense would have to eventually provide some level of service. The effects of the bill also reduce the burden placed on parties, such as witnesses, who could now appear to give testimony only once as opposed to multiple times.

□ LBO staff: Corey C. Schaal, Budget/Policy Analyst

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