



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: Sub. H.B. 10 of the 128th G.A. **Date:** June 24, 2009
Status: As Reported by House Civil & Commercial Law **Sponsor:** Rep. Brown

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: Yes

Contents: Protection order for a child

State Fiscal Highlights

STATE GOVERNMENT

FY 2010 – FUTURE YEARS

Victims of Crime/Reparations Fund (Fund 4020)

Revenues - 0 -

Expenditures Potential increase to reimburse local electronic monitoring costs, annual magnitude uncertain

Note: The state fiscal year is July 1 through June 30. For example, FY 2010 is July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010.

- **Victims of Crime/Reparations Fund (Fund 4020).** An uncertain amount of additional money may need to be disbursed from Fund 4020 annually to reimburse local law enforcement agencies for the cost to install and monitor electronic monitoring devices where the respondent is determined by the court to be indigent.

Local Fiscal Highlights

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

FY 2010 – FUTURE YEARS

Courts of Common Pleas (juvenile and general divisions)

Revenues - 0 -

Expenditures Factors increasing and decreasing court operating costs, with net annual fiscal effect uncertain, but potentially resulting in more than minimal annual increase in jurisdictions with relatively large caseloads

County Sheriffs

Revenues Potential state reimbursement of monitoring costs, annual magnitude uncertain

Expenditures Potential increase to electronically monitor respondents, annual magnitude uncertain

Note: For most local governments, the fiscal year is the calendar year. The school district fiscal year is July 1 through June 30.

- **Juvenile division of courts of common pleas.** The bill's provisions related to a protection order for a child will, in all likelihood, increase the number of matters to be disposed of by the juvenile division of the court of common pleas. However, LSC fiscal staff cannot estimate with much certainty the fiscal effect of these child

protection order provisions on the juvenile division of any given court of common pleas other than to assert the possibility that certain courts, most likely those with jurisdictions carrying relatively large caseloads, could require a more than minimal increase in resources. For the purposes of this fiscal analysis, a more than minimal increase means a cost estimated in excess of \$5,000 per year for any affected court.

- **General division of courts of common pleas.** Relative to the general divisions of courts of common pleas, the bill's child protection order provisions create a potential savings effect that may or may not manifest itself in terms of an actual reduction in the annual operating expenses of any given general division. It seems more likely that, given the magnitude and increase in the caseloads of courts generally and the tight budgetary environment, the general divisions of courts of common pleas would be able to reallocate existing resources in order to more efficiently and effectively perform other duties and responsibilities.
- **County sheriffs.** Presumably, in many, if not all, instances, the duty to electronically monitor certain respondents will be performed by another county-affiliated entity, possibly the county sheriff or a unit of the court, which would incur the cost to install and monitor the electronic device placed on an indigent respondent. The annual magnitude of the additional installation and monitoring costs that any given county might incur is uncertain. Also uncertain is the degree to which the cash balance in the state's Fund 4020 will be sufficient to pay for these locally incurred costs.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Operation of the bill

For the purposes of this fiscal analysis, the bill most notably:

- Gives the juvenile court jurisdiction to hear, determine, and enforce matters involving protection orders against a child.
- Permits any person on behalf of that person, any parent or adult household member on behalf of any other family or household member, or anyone who is determined by the juvenile court in its discretion as an appropriate person to seek such relief on behalf of any child.
- Allows the juvenile court to determine if the respondent is entitled to court-appointed counsel.
- Requires the juvenile court, when certain specified circumstances are met, to expunge all of the records in a proceeding.
- Includes a foster parent in the definition of "family or household member" in the criminal and civil domestic violence laws.

Protection orders for a child

The most pronounced fiscal effect produced by the bill will likely be experienced by courts of common pleas, which, under current law, have jurisdiction over matters involving protection orders against a child. Based on LSC fiscal staff's conversations with various court personnel, including juvenile court judges, it appears that the bill's provisions regarding the giving of jurisdiction involving protection orders against a child to the juvenile division raise some potential workload and cost concerns. Additionally, other components of county government, specifically county sheriffs or probation departments, may experience a related increase in their workload and associated annual operating expenses.

Juvenile division of courts of common pleas

As noted, the provisions of the bill related to a protection order for a child will, in all likelihood, increase the number of matters to be disposed of by the juvenile division of the court of common pleas. This increase will be a function of at least three variables: (1) the number of protection order-related matters where the juvenile division would have jurisdiction, (2) the number of new matters generated by permitting certain persons to file for a motion for a protection order on behalf of a child, and (3) the number of additional hearings, or increased complexity, to dispose of these matters involving questions of electronic monitoring, court-appointed counsel, or expungement of a respondent's record.

The data necessary for LSC fiscal staff to reliably estimate the potential increase in juvenile court caseloads statewide, or for the juvenile division of any given court of common pleas, is not readily available; however, we have collected the following information that is suggestive of the dynamic that the bill may trigger:

- Surveys of younger persons (teens, students, girls) indicate anywhere from one-quarter to one-half of the respondents have experienced, or know someone who has experienced, a violent relationship.
- An increase in the number or complexity of hearings for protection orders involving electronic monitoring, the appointment of counsel, and expungement of the order following the respondent's eighteenth birthday.
- In conversations with LSC fiscal staff, some judges, who more or less exclusively handle juvenile matters, expressed concern over how large the increase in their annual caseloads could be and the likely expenditure effect. From their perspective, court resources are already generally strained and the adding of new matters to that situation creates more pressure, especially in light of the fact that hearings and determinations have to be done in a timely manner when involving a protection order.

Unfortunately, LSC fiscal staff cannot project the fiscal effect of these child protection order provisions on the juvenile division of any given court of common pleas other than to assert the possibility that certain courts, most likely those with jurisdictions carrying relatively large caseloads, could require a more than minimal increase in resources. For the purposes of this fiscal analysis, a more than minimal increase means a cost estimated in excess of \$5,000 per year for any affected court.

General division of courts of common pleas

As a result of the bill's child protection order provisions, some number of matters that would have been under the jurisdiction of the general division of a court of common pleas will be assumed by the court's juvenile division, sometimes referred to as the juvenile court. Presumably, this creates a potential savings effect that may or may not manifest itself in terms of an actual reduction in the annual operating expenses of any given general division. It seems more likely that, given the magnitude and increase in the caseloads of courts generally and the tight budgetary environment, the general divisions of courts of common pleas would be able to reallocate existing resources in order to more efficiently and effectively perform other duties and responsibilities.

Monitoring costs

As a result of the bill, it is possible that the court will order additional respondents be subject to electronic monitoring by the appropriate law enforcement agency, the cost of which is generally the responsibility of the respondent. Under current law, if the court determines that the respondent is indigent, then the cost to

install and monitor the electronic monitoring device is to be paid out of funds drawn from the state's Victims of Crime/Reparations Fund (Fund 4020).

Presumably, in many, if not all, instances, this monitoring duty will be performed by another county-affiliated entity, possibly the county sheriff or a unit of the court, that would incur the cost to install and monitor the electronic device placed on an indigent respondent. The annual magnitude of the additional installation and monitoring costs that any given county might incur is uncertain. Also uncertain is the degree to which the cash balance in the state's Fund 4020 will be sufficient to pay for these locally incurred costs.

Foster parents as domestic violence victims

By expanding the definition of "family or household member" in the criminal and civil domestic violence laws to include a foster parent, the bill provides an additional class of persons access to a wider array of civil and criminal protection orders and potentially subjects certain offenders to enhanced penalties. Based on LSC fiscal staff's research into the fiscal implications, it does not appear that this definitional expansion will generate any noticeable fiscal effect on the caseloads of local criminal or civil justice systems, nor for the state in terms of locally collected state court cost revenues or incarceration costs.