Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: Sub. H.B. 268 of the 129th G.A. **Date**: February 8, 2012

Status: As Enacted **Sponsor**: Rep. Szollosi

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Contents: Jury service modernization and reform

State Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on the state.

Local Fiscal Highlights

LOCAL GOVERNMENT	FY 2012 – FUTURE YEARS
Counties and Municipalities (common pleas, municipal, and county courts)	
Revenues	Potential gain in juror fees taxed as court costs
Expenditures	Likely savings effect

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

- The bill's modernization and reform of Ohio's jury service law: (1) will have a savings effect on the operations of common pleas, municipal, and county courts by reducing workload and expenses associated with jury administration, and (2) may generate additional revenue for county and municipal treasuries by expanding the circumstances under which juror fees can be taxed as court costs.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

This bill makes numerous changes in order to modernize and reform the jury service law in Ohio as it applies to common pleas, municipal, and county courts. These changes carry two fiscal effects: (1) a likely gain in efficiency and possible expenditure savings by reducing jury administration workload and expenses and (2) a potential increase in revenue by expanding the circumstances in which juror fees can be taxed as court costs in civil and criminal actions.

Jury source list. Several of the bill's provisions are intended to create a more accurate and complete list of individuals eligible for jury service, the result of which may be to reduce the time and effort court personnel expend in order to ensure a sufficient pool of jurors is available to be seated on criminal and civil cases. Such a reduction could create an actual expenditure savings on certain items, such as postage and stationary, as well as efficiency gains by allowing administrators and staff to focus additional time and resources on other duties and responsibilities.

Juror fees. The bill expands the court's ability to tax juror fees as court costs to include: (1) when parties to a civil case settle just prior to the jury being sworn and (2) when a defendant enters a guilty plea less than 24 hours before the start of the criminal trial and before the jurors have been sworn. The amount of additional revenue that could be generated annually from these juror fees and credited to the appropriate county or municipal treasury may exceed minimal in certain local jurisdictions.

Other miscellaneous provisions. According to practitioners and experts contacted by LSC, the bill's remaining provisions will not have a fiscal impact on the state's political subdivisions beyond increasing the efficiency of the court system relative to the administration of jury service. These changes will not create a tangible expenditure savings, but will allow common pleas, municipal, and county courts to operate in an increasingly efficient manner.

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