

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

123rd General Assembly of Ohio

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BILL: **Sub. H.B. 583** DATE: **May 23, 2000**

STATUS: **As Enacted – Effective June 14, 2000** SPONSOR: **Rep. Williams**

LOCAL IMPACT STATEMENT REQUIRED: **Yes**

CONTENTS: **Specifies that, in Summit County, jurisdiction over paternity, custody, visitation, child support, and allocation of parental rights and responsibilities for the care of children cases, and over post-decree proceedings arising from those cases, and over Uniform Interstate Family Support Act proceedings generally is in the Domestic Relations Division of the Summit County Court of Common Pleas and to declare an emergency**

State Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on the state.

Local Fiscal Highlights

LOCAL GOVERNMENT	FY 2000	FY 2001	FUTURE YEARS
Summit County			
Revenues	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -
Expenditures	\$383,582 increase, partially offset by expected administrative efficiency	\$414,195 increase, partially offset by expected administrative efficiency	\$414,195 increase, partially offset by expected administrative efficiency

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

- The total cost for remodeling space in the courthouse for the Domestic Relations Division, salaries and benefits for seven new employees, equipment and supplies for approximately half of the local FY 2000 should be about \$383,582. Of this figure, \$176,485 is for the remodeling of existing court space and initial office equipment purchases.
- Starting with FY 2001, and annually thereafter, the total salary and benefits for the seven new employees in the Domestic Relations Division and their supplies will cost \$414,195. Of this annual figure, \$3,000 covers the cost of supplies. Future cost of living increases would also apply, but are unknown at this time.
- The Domestic Relations Division utilizes more automated case processing procedures, which should produce some savings through increased efficiency.



Detailed Fiscal Analysis

The bill stipulates that, except in cases that are subject to the exclusive original jurisdiction of the Juvenile Division of the Summit County Common Pleas Court, the Domestic Relations Division shall be assigned all cases pertaining to:

- Paternity;
- Custody;
- Visitation;
- Child support;
- Allocation of parental rights and responsibilities;
- All post-decree proceedings pertaining to the above matters.

Currently, the Domestic Relations Division has exclusive jurisdiction over divorce cases, dissolutions and annulments. The Juvenile Division handles the cases listed above. This current configuration of case assignments has created an excessive workload in the Juvenile Division as well as confusion over jurisdiction in cases affecting families. The transfer of jurisdiction, as stipulated in the bill, is intended to readjust the caseload and bring more of the cases involving families, especially in the aftermath of divorce or dissolution, into the Domestic Relations Division.

The Domestic Relations Division is fully supportive of the changes in the court’s jurisdiction and will incur a one-time cost for remodeling as well as recurring costs for new personnel. The remodeling will create office space for seven new positions required to handle the expanded caseload. The cost for the construction is \$156,485 and has already been appropriated by the county. The State of Ohio does not pay any percentage of this cost and construction already began in the first week of March 2000. Additionally, the Domestic Relations Division will pay \$20,000 for assorted office equipment and furniture.

The Domestic Relations Division will also be responsible for the recurring cost of new personnel and benefits. According to the court administrator, seven new employees will be required to handle the expected influx of new cases from the Juvenile Division. Summit County will pay all of the salaries and benefits, which are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Annual Domestic Relations Division Operating Expenses

New Positions				Employee Benefits	
<i>Position</i>	<i># of Positions</i>	<i>Salary</i>	<i>Total*</i>	<i>Benefit</i>	<i>Total*</i>
Magistrates	2	\$ 60,578	\$ 121,156	PERS	\$ 35,995
Compliance Officer	1	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	Worker’s Comp	\$ 63,755
Family Court Services Evaluator	2	\$ 33,120	\$ 66,240	Medicare	\$ 38,518
Receptionist/Clerk	1	\$ 25,427	\$ 25,427	Insurance	\$ 6,000
Judicial Secretary	1	\$ 22,821	\$ 22,821	Magistrate Liability Insurance	\$ 1,280
Total: \$ 265,646				Total: \$ 145,549	
Total Annual Salary & Benefits: \$ 411,195					

*Totals may vary due to rounding.

The transfer of jurisdiction will also result in some savings for the Summit County Common Pleas Court. In the current system, the Juvenile Division spends approximately \$175,000 annually for court appointed attorneys in the cases that would be transferred to the Domestic Relations Division as a result of the bill. The Domestic Relations Division is not required to appoint attorneys in the types of cases that will be transferred to its jurisdiction under the bill. Some of these cases will require a guardian ad litem (GAL) to protect the interest of juveniles involved with the case. Under the rules of the Domestic Relations Division, the petitioners would pay the entire \$700 fee for the GAL. In cases involving extreme poverty, pro-bono GALs are appointed. It would be extremely rare for the court to pay this cost.

Despite the transfer of jurisdiction, the Juvenile Division does not plan to eliminate any positions or employees. The court administrator for the Juvenile Division anticipates that the workload will be redistributed among existing personnel so as to expedite case processing and promote greater efficiency.

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