



OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
Fiscal Note

Fiscal Note On: HB 1206 HLS 14RS 2420
Bill Text Version: ENGROSSED
Opp. Chamb. Action:
Proposed Amd.:
Sub. Bill For.:

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COURTS EG SEE FISC NOTE LF See Note Page 1 of 1
Provides for the consolidation of the New Orleans Traffic and Municipal Courts

Purpose of Bill: This measure provides for the consolidation of the New Orleans Traffic Court and the New Orleans Municipal Court. For the consolidated court, there shall be one clerk of court and one judicial administrator. The measure further provides for the technical changes necessary to consolidate the courts, which would become effective January 1, 2017. The measure also creates the New Orleans Municipal and Traffic Court Task Force, which is charged with studying and establishing the methods and procedures to effectuate the consolidation of the New Orleans Traffic Court and the New Orleans Municipal Court. The members of the task force shall serve without compensation or per diem. The task force shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations prior to the start of the 2015 Regular Session of the Legislature.

In addition, this measure provides that if there is a vacancy in any of the 8 judgeships of the two courts, no special election shall be held to fill the vacancy until the task force has submitted its report.

Table with 7 columns: EXPENDITURES, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 5-YEAR TOTAL. Rows include State Gen. Fd., Agy. Self-Gen., Ded./Other, Federal Funds, Local Funds, and Annual Total.

Table with 7 columns: REVENUES, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 5-YEAR TOTAL. Rows include State Gen. Fd., Agy. Self-Gen., Ded./Other, Federal Funds, Local Funds, and Annual Total.

EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION

There may be a decrease in local government expenditures of approximately \$102,000 in fiscal year 2017 and \$204,000 annually in fiscal years 2018 and 2019.

Staffing. When the courts are consolidated, one clerk of court and one judicial administrator will be eliminated, which will result in a decrease in local government expenditures in fiscal year 2017 of approximately \$102,000 (including benefits). This is due to the law becoming effective halfway through fiscal year 2017. In fiscal years 2018 and 2019, there will be a decrease of approximately \$204,000 annually.

Further changes in staffing expenditures are indeterminable at this time. Such changes depend on the methods and procedures recommended by the task force regarding the consolidation of the courts.

Administrative Expenditures. If the courts are consolidated, there may be an increase in expenditures necessary to modify the court's case management systems and make other administrative adjustments as necessary. One of our contacts informed us that expenditures to consolidate computer systems may be as much as \$300,000 initially and \$60,000 to \$120,000 in maintenance thereafter. However, the actual costs will be dependent on the recommendations of the task force.

REVENUE EXPLANATION

If this bill is providing for new fees, there may be an increase in local government revenues. However, if the bill is allowing the consolidated court to collect fees that are currently in law, there will be no impact on revenues.

The measure may provide for additional court costs of \$45 for traffic cases and \$35 for municipal cases. Using the approximate number of cases for each court (35,000 for traffic court and 25,000 for municipal court, and assuming that only 40% of municipal court costs will be collected), this may increase local government revenues by approximately \$962,500 in fiscal year 2017 and \$1,925,000 annually beginning in fiscal year 2018.

However, another interpretation of the measure may suggest that the bill provides that the court will continue to charge the court costs each is currently charging and the provisions of the measure merely serve to consolidate the cost statutes for each court.

According to an official with the New Orleans Traffic Court, this measure may increase local government revenues as the bill will allow the court to collect additional court costs. According to an official with the New Orleans Municipal Court, the court costs provided in this measure are merely allowing the consolidated court to collect what is currently being charged to defendants.

- Senate Dual Referral Rules House
13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S&H}
13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S&H}
6.8(F)(1) >= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H & S}
6.8(F)(2) >= \$500,000 State Rev. Reduc. {H & S}
6.8(G) >= \$500,000 Tax or Fee Increase or a Net Fee Decrease {S}

Signature of Michael G. Battle
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