There may be an increase in expenditures from the local public defender district offices to the extent a private attorney applies to the district office for funds for an expert witness for any criminal case other than a capital case. For informational purposes, in CY 21, only 17 local district offices utilized expert witnesses expending a total of $72,015, or 0.12% of local district office expenditures.

While the language of the bill states persons may apply for funds to the district defender, it should also be noted that the Louisiana Public Defender Board also utilizes expert witnesses. In FY 21, LPDB spent $1 M in expert witness fees as follows: 1) $129,800 for experts in capital cases at the trial level; 2) $365,000 for experts in post-conviction cases; and 3) $121,511 for experts in Miller/Montgomery case sentencing hearings (juveniles receiving sentences of life in prison). These fees are paid out of the statutorily dedicated Louisiana Public Defender Fund (which is funded each year by SGF appropriation).

The proposed legislation does not provide an avenue for additional funding to support these expenditures. As this program has limited resources, any expenditures related to this legislation are likely to be minimal unless additional resources are identified.

REVENUE EXPLANATION
There is no anticipated direct material effect on governmental revenues as a result of this measure.