

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL OFFICE
Fiscal Note



Fiscal Note On: **HB 454** HLS 26RS 907
 Bill Text Version: **ORIGINAL**
 Opp. Chamb. Action:
 Proposed Amd.:
 Sub. Bill For.:

Date: April 21, 2026 6:43 PM	Author: BUTLER
Dept./Agy.: Louisiana Department of Health/Parish Coroners Offices	Analyst: Anthony Shamis
Subject: Enacts the Gracey Claire Rushing Act (Human Remains)	

HUMAN REMAINS OR INCREASE LF EX See Note Page 1 of 1
 Enacts the Gracey Claire Rushing Act which provides for the chain of custody for human remains and internal organs

Proposed law creates the Gracey Claire Rushing Act. Proposed law establishes a mandatory chain of custody protocol for the handling, examination, and return of human remains and internal organs during autopsies and forensic investigations in Louisiana. Proposed law requires the coroner or forensic pathologist to notify the decedent's next of kin or legal representative in writing within 48 hours of any organ retention, including the reason, expected timeline for return, and contact information for inquiries. Proposed law requires the coroner's office to maintain all chain-of-custody reports and inventories as public records for a minimum of 10 years. Failure to comply with this protocol may result in disciplinary actions, including fines, suspension of licensure, or referral to relevant authorities. Proposed law requires the Louisiana Department of Health to promulgate rules and regulations for the implementation of this bill, including standardized forms for chain-of-custody reports and organ inventories. Effective January 1, 2027.

EXPENDITURES	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	5 -YEAR TOTAL
State Gen. Fd.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Agy. Self-Gen.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ded./Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Funds	INCREASE	INCREASE	INCREASE	INCREASE	INCREASE	
Annual Total						
REVENUES	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	5 -YEAR TOTAL
State Gen. Fd.	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	
Agy. Self-Gen.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ded./Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Funds	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	
Annual Total						

EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION

Proposed law is anticipated to increase local governmental expenditures by an indeterminable but significant amount beginning in FY 27 due to additional requirements for parish coroners related to chain-of-custody provisions under the Gracey Claire Rushing Act.

For informational purposes, the Louisiana Coroner's Association (LCA) indicates that provisions of this measure would significantly increase the workload for parish coroner offices, primarily due to additional manpower and transportation costs. In some cases, bodies are not located within the parish where the autopsy is performed and would need to be transported to the coroner to initiate and document the chain of custody. Additionally, most parishes lack adequate space to conduct examinations and store bodies, and many do not have the necessary transportation vehicles or staff to facilitate body transport. The LCA also notes a nationwide shortage of forensic pathologists, with only 11 currently practicing in Louisiana.

According to LCA estimates, the cost per autopsy could increase as follows:

- \$3,000 – Transportation costs
- \$1,500 – Staffing costs
- \$1,500 – Record-keeping costs
- \$2,000 – Storage fees
- \$6,000 – Increased autopsy costs
- Total projected increase per autopsy: \$14,000

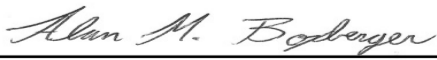
While the LCA is unable to provide a precise estimate of the total number of autopsies performed annually in the state, it estimates that the volume may range from approximately 3,333 to 5,000 autopsies statewide each year. Based on this estimate, costs may range from between \$46.7 M (\$14,000 x 3,000) to \$70 M (\$14,000 x 5,000) statewide.

Note: The LFO is unable to corroborate the cost estimates or estimated number of autopsies provided by the LCA. While the LFO acknowledges that the proposed law will result in increased costs to parish coroner offices throughout the state, actual costs per autopsy and the total number of autopsies may be lower or higher, and total expenditures would vary accordingly.

REVENUE EXPLANATION

Proposed law authorizes disciplinary action, including fines of up to \$5,000, for failure to comply with certain provisions. Fines would be incurred by local/parish governments. The number and total amount of such fines are unknown at this time and will depend on the frequency and severity of violations. The LFO cannot determine to which entity the fines would be paid, and assumes deposits to the SGF in this fiscal note. LCA reports that without a source of state funding to support the additional duties required by parish coroners, local governments would be required to identify, shift or create a financing mechanism to pay for increased costs.

<p><u>Senate</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S & H}</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S & H}</p>	<p><u>House</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6.8(F)(1) >= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H & S}</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6.8(G) >= \$500,000 Tax or Fee Increase or a Net Fee Decrease {S}</p>
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Alan M. Boxberger
Legislative Fiscal Officer