

JUROR FUND: SURPLUS TO COURT EQUITY FUND

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Senate Bill 776

Sponsor: Sen. Cropsey

Committee: House Appropriations

Complete to November 4, 2009

A SUMMARY OF SENATE BILL 776 AS PASSED THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE November 4, 2009:

The juror compensation reimbursement fund was created on January 1, 2003, to reimburse trial courts for legislated increases in juror attendance compensation. Beginning on October 1, 2003, juror compensation rates were increased (See MCL 600.1344) and trial courts are able claim reimbursement from the Juror Compensation Reimbursement Fund for the increase in compensation paid to jurors.

Under the Revised Judicature Act, the unencumbered balance of the Juror Compensation Reimbursement Fund remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year remains in the fund and does not revert to the General Fund. SB 776 would amend the act to specify that \$1.35 million of the unencumbered balance in the juror compensation fund at the end of FY 2008-09 be transferred to the Court Equity Fund. At the close of FY 2007-08, the Juror Compensation Reimbursement Fund had an unencumbered balance of \$2.8 million. The judiciary projects a \$3.8 million balance at the close of FY 2008-09. Previous transfers have been made in both FY 2004-05 (\$4 million) and FY 2007-08 (\$2.25 million). Both transfers were made to the State's general fund.

The Court Equity Fund, established in 1996, provides limited funding for local trial court operations. The fund makes quarterly disbursements to county governments based on the caseload activity of the circuit and probate courts and the number of judgeships in each county.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would implement a \$1.35 million fund transfer assumed in the FY 2009-10 Judiciary budget to meet agreed upon general fund target reductions.

Fiscal Analyst: Ben Gielczyk

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