

Legislative Analysis



INCREASE MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT FOR JURORS

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House Bill 5551

Sponsor: Rep. Nancy E. Jenkins

House Bill 5552

Sponsor: Rep. Eileen Kowall

Committee: Judiciary

Complete to 8-13-12

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILLS 5551 AND 5552 AS INTRODUCED 4-24-12

Together, the bills would increase the minimum rate for which a juror is reimbursed for travel expenses from 10 cents per mile to 22 cents per mile, and require information related to the expense incurred by the funding unit of a court due to the increased mileage reimbursement rate to be included in the semi-annual report the funding unit submits to the state court administrator.

House Bill 5551 would amend the Revised Judicature Act (MCL 600.1344) to increase the minimum amount a juror could be reimbursed for traveling expenses from his or her residence to the place of holding court. Currently, whether for a whole or a half day, the minimum reimbursement rate is 10 cents per mile. The bill would increase the amount to 22 cents per mile. The bill would also delete an obsolete provision.

House Bill 5552 would amend a different section of the same act (MCL 600.151e). Currently, each court funding unit must submit a report semi-annually to the state court administrator, for each court under its administration, giving the total amount of the expense incurred during the fiscal year by that funding unit due to the increase in the statutory minimum compensation rate for jurors that took effect October 1, 2003. In addition, if any of the juror compensation payments made by that court funding unit were in excess of the statutory minimum amount, the report must also include the total amount paid to jurors in excess of that statutory minimum.

House Bill 5552 would similarly require that the funding unit include in that report the total amount of the expense incurred during the fiscal year by that funding unit due to the increase in the statutory minimum reimbursement rate for traveling expenses for jurors that took effect under the rate increase proposed by House Bill 5551, as well as the total amount paid to jurors in excess of the statutory minimum.

House Bill 5552 is tie-barred to House Bill 5551, so that it could not go into effect unless House Bill 5551 were also enacted into law.

(Public Act 739 of 2002, which took effect October 1, 2003, increased the minimum compensation rate for jurors from \$15 per day and \$7.50 for a half day to the current minimum rate of \$25 for a full day and \$12.50 for a half day for the first day of actual attendance. The rate then increases for each subsequent day to not less than \$40 per day and \$20 per half day.)

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bills would increase costs for the state, which would be paid through the Juror Compensation Reimbursement Fund (JCRF). This fund collects revenue from jury demand fees and driver license clearance fees. The JCRF currently collects more revenue than it distributes, resulting in a surplus that is carried over from year to year. The fund held a balance of \$2.3 million after all expenditures and transfers in FY 2010-11.

According to the State Court Administrative Office, the JCRF is expected to collect an estimated \$4.2 million in revenue in FY 2011-12 and distribute \$3.2 million under current compensation rates. Increasing mileage reimbursement rates by 12 cents would increase expenditures by approximately \$780,000, leaving a remaining surplus of \$220,000. Future costs would depend on the amount of mileage reimbursed in future years.

The additional reporting requirements in House Bill 5552 may result in an indeterminate (but likely negligible) cost due to an increase in administrative workload for local courts and the State Court Administrative Office.

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