

FISCAL NOTE TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 1181

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JULY 5, 1996

Senate Bill No.1181 (1R) of 1996 increases a number of fees imposed for the filing of various documents with the Law Division of the Superior Court in civil actions and increases the number of Superior Court judges from 406 to 416.

The bill specifies that an amount equal to 95 percent of the additional revenue representing the increase in the fees is to be appropriated annually to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for a grant to Legal Services of New Jersey to provide legal assistance for poor persons in civil matters, and to the Judiciary to pay the salaries, fringe benefits and staff costs of 10 additional judges.

An amount equal to the remaining 5 percent of the additional revenue is to be appropriated annually to the Department of State for allocation in equal amounts to the three law schools in the State (Rutgers-Newark Law School, Rutgers-Camden Law School and Seton Hall Law School) for clinical programs that provide free legal representation for poor persons.

The Administrative Office of the Courts states that assuming that the number of filings will not decrease as a result of the increased fees proposed in the bill, the State will collect approximately \$11.5 million in revenue during the first year after its implementation, and \$11 million during each of the second and third year after its implementation.

The AOC notes that the cost of providing the salaries, fringe benefits and staff costs for 10 additional judges would be about \$3 million annually. The remaining collections would be made available to the Department of Community Affairs and the three New Jersey law schools for legal services. Under the bill DCA would receive about \$8 million annually, while the law schools would receive about \$190,000 each.

The AOC further notes that it would incur a one-time cost of about \$20,000 to reprogram its data processing equipment, as well as an ongoing expense of \$13,000 to fund the services of a part-time Principal Clerk/Bookkeeper to monitor reports and allocate fees.

The Office of Legislative Services concurs.

This fiscal note has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67.