

Subject Judiciary finance omnibus bill

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Overview

The Judiciary omnibus bill provides funding for the courts, civil legal services, Guardian ad Litem Board, Tax Court, Uniform Laws Commission, Board on Judicial Standards, Board of Public Defense, and Human Rights Department. The bill establishes the Statewide Office of Appellate Counsel and Training, eliminates the fee charged for uncertified copies of court records, adjusts the disposition of fines for offenses committed in Ramsey County, and directs the commissioner of human rights to collect certain information on incidents committed based on another's race, religion, sex, or other protected category.

Article 1: Appropriations

This article provides funding for the courts, civil legal services, Guardian ad Litem Board, Tax Court, Uniform Laws Commission, Board on Judicial Standards, Board of Public Defense, and Human Rights Department. The article further provides funding for the new Statewide Office of Appellate Counsel and Training and supplemental funding for the Department of Human Services.

Section Description – Article 1: Appropriations

- 1 **Appropriations.**
Summarizes direct appropriations by fund.
- 2 **Supreme court.**
 - Subd. 1. Total appropriation.** Appropriates a total of \$73,666,000 in FY24 and \$91,516,000 in FY25 to the supreme court.
 - Subd. 2. Supreme court operations.** Appropriates \$44,943,000 in FY24 and \$46,703,000 in FY25 for supreme court operations.
 - (a) Contingent account.** Specifies that \$5,000 each year is for a contingent account for which no other reimbursement is provided.

Section Description – Article 1: Appropriations

(b) Justices' compensation. Specifies that justices' compensation is increased by four percent each year.

Subd. 3. Civil legal services. Appropriates \$28,763,000 in FY24 and \$44,813,000 in FY25 to civil legal services to provide legal representation to low-income clients. \$1,017,000 in FY22 and FY23 is to improve access in family law matters. The base appropriation for civil legal services is \$44,960,000 in FY26 and \$45,714,000 in FY27.

3 Court of appeals.

Appropriates \$14,205,000 in FY24 and \$14,762,000 in FY25 for the court of appeals.

(a) Judges' compensation. Specifies that judges' compensation is increased by four percent each year.

(b) Law clerk salaries. Specifies that \$134,300 each year is to increase the compensation of court of appeals law clerk salaries. **[H.F. 1580]**

4 District courts.

Appropriates \$371,931,000 in FY24 and \$370,311,000 in FY25 for trial courts.

(a) Judges' compensation. Specifies that judges' compensation is increased by four percent each year.

(b) Law clerk salaries. Specifies that \$4,413,000 each year is to increase the compensation of district court law clerk salaries. **[H.F. 1580]**

(c) Juror reimbursement. Specifies that \$2,625,000 each year is to increase the rate of juror reimbursement to \$50 a day. **[H.F. 1580]**

5 Guardian ad Litem Board.

Appropriates \$24,358,000 in FY24 and \$25,620,000 in FY25 to the Guardian ad Litem Board.

6 Tax Court.

Appropriates \$2,173,000 in FY24 and \$2,308,000 in FY25 to the Tax Court.

Law clerk salaries. Specifies that \$40,000 each year is to increase the compensation of tax court law clerk salaries.

7 Uniform Laws Commission.

Appropriates \$115,000 in FY24 and \$115,000 in FY25 to the Uniform Laws Commission.

Section Description – Article 1: Appropriations

- 8 **Board on Judicial Standards.**
Appropriates \$655,000 in FY24 and \$645,000 in FY25 to the Board on Judicial Standards. Provides that \$125,000 each year is for special investigative and hearing costs.
- 9 **Board of Public Defense.**
Appropriates \$154,134,000 and \$164,360 in FY25 to the Board of Public Defense.
- 10 **Human Rights.**
Appropriates \$8,431,000 in FY24 and \$8,823,000 in FY25 to the Department of Human Rights. Specifies that \$20,000 each year is to fund payments to mediators. Establishes a base of \$9,303,000 in FY26 and beyond.
- 11 **Office of Appellate Counsel and Training.**
Appropriates \$659,000 in FY24 and \$1,560,000 in FY25 for costs associated with establishing and operating the Office of Appellate Counsel and Training. **[H.F. 922]**
- 12 **Department of Human Services.**
Appropriates \$1,500,000 in FY24 for a grant to First Witness Child Advocacy Center to acquire and improve properties for use as a training center and child advocacy center. **[H.F. 774]**

Article 2: Judiciary Policy with Fiscal Cost

This article contains provisions creating the Statewide Office of Appellate Counsel and Training, eliminating the fee charged for uncertified copies of court records, adjusting the disposition of fines for offenses committed in Ramsey County, and directing the commissioner of human rights to collect certain information on incidents committed based on another’s race, religion, sex, or other protected category.

Section Description – Article 2: Judiciary Policy with Fiscal Cost

- 1 **Statewide Office of Appellate Counsel and Training.**
Subd. 1. Definitions. Defines terms including “juvenile protection matter.”
Subd. 2. Statewide Office of Appellate Counsel and Training; establishment. Establishes the Statewide Office of Appellate Counsel and Training to establish and maintain a system for providing appellate counsel for parents in juvenile protection matters, provide training to parent attorneys, and collaborate with

Section Description – Article 2: Judiciary Policy with Fiscal Cost

the Department of Human Services to coordinate federal funds. Provides that the office must be governed by a board.

Subd. 3. State Board of Appellate Counsel and Training; structure; membership.

Establishes the State Board of Appellate Counsel and Training. Establishes that the board consists of seven members including four public members appointed by the governor and three members appointed by the supreme court, at least one of whom has experience representing parents in juvenile court and at least one of whom is a public member. Prohibits appointment of certain members including judges, guardians ad litem, attorneys currently providing representation for parents, or current city or county attorneys. Requires that the members reflect geographic and other diversity and have familiarity with the relevant laws.

Subd. 4. Head appellate counsel for parents; assistant and contracted attorneys. Requires the board to appoint a head appellate counsel for parents to be in charge of appellate services. Provides that the head appellate counsel for parents serves a four-year term and may only be removed for cause. Requires the head appellate counsel for parents to be a licensed attorney and prohibits that person from the general practice of law. Directs the board to establish compensation for the person. Directs the head appellate counsel to employ or hire a managing attorney, two staff attorneys, one director of training, a program administrator, and an office administrator. Permits the head appellate counsel for parents to employ assistants or hire independent contractors to provide counsel for parents. Requires assistant or contracted attorneys to be licensed to practice law and, if practicing in Tribal court, licensed to practice in Tribal court. Permits the general practice of law if the assistants or contracted attorneys are not hired or contracted to provide full-time services.

Subd. 5. Duties and responsibilities. Establishes the duties of the board and requires the board to create and administer a statewide, independent appellate counsel program to represent indigent parents on appeal in juvenile protection matters. Specific duties include approving a budget, establishing program standards, and establishing employee or contractor standards. Permits the board to propose statutory changes to the legislature.

Subd. 6. Limitation. Prohibits the board from interfering with the manner in which individual attorneys represent clients.

Subd. 7. Budget; county and Tribe mandatory use. Provides that the office and its employees or contractors must be funded by the state. Permits counties and Tribes to utilize the program instead of providing counsel from the county's budget.

Section Description – Article 2: Judiciary Policy with Fiscal Cost

Subd. 8. Collection of costs; appropriation. Provides that, if the costs of providing counsel are assessed and collected or otherwise reimbursed from any source, that money is credited to the board and available until spent.

2 Fee amounts.

Eliminates the existing \$8 fee for uncertified copies of any instrument in a civil or criminal proceeding and expressly prohibits charging a fee for such uncertified copies. **[H.F. 305]**

3 Formulation of policies.

Directs the commissioner of human rights to solicit, receive, and compile reports from community organizations, schools, and individuals regarding incidents that members of the community believe are motivated by bias. **[H.F. 181]**

4 Disposition of fines, fees, and other money; accounts; Ramsey County District Court.

Amends the distribution of fines, penalties, and forfeiture collected by the court administrator by providing that, as of July 1, 2023, every municipality or subdivision of government within Ramsey County shall receive two-thirds of money with the balance going to the general fund. **[H.F. 1414]**

5 Appellate Counsel for Parents; support for establishment.

Directs the Management Analysis and Development Division of Management and Budget to provide technical support for establishment of the Statewide Office of Appellate Counsel and Training. **[H.F. 922]**



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