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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for S.B. 3's Bill Analysis](#)

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Primary Sponsors: Sens. Eklund and O'Brien

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

Trafficking and possession

- The Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC) can expect up to 2,700 fewer offenders being sentenced to prison annually for a drug possession offense. The estimated annual cost savings to DRC is up to \$82.5 million. The annual savings is likely to be reduced to the degree that the facts surrounding certain drug possession cases still result in a felony conviction and the imposition of a prison term. The bill's effect on the sentencing of drug trafficking offenders to prison, including the amount of time to be served, is indeterminate.
- The requirements for drug treatment in lieu of incarceration and mental health treatment for certain offenders may generate significant annual cost increases for local trial courts.
- Medicaid costs for treatment services are likely to increase under the bill, the magnitude of which will depend on the number of individuals receiving treatment, as well as its type and duration. In addition, any treatment costs not covered under Medicaid or other health insurance may instead be paid for by local alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services boards, courts, or hospitals.
- There is likely to be a minimal at most loss in state court cost revenues that otherwise may have been collected from certain drug offenders and apportioned annually between the Indigent Defense Support Fund (Fund 5DY0) and the Victims of Crime/Reparations Fund (Fund 4020).
- An indeterminate number of additional persons will be eligible to apply for record sealing. This creates additional work for local and state criminal justice agencies, with

the associated operating costs offset to some degree by the collection of application fee revenue.

Criminal Sentencing Commission

- The work and related annual operating costs of the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission's expanded duties under the bill can be absorbed utilizing its existing staff and appropriated resources.

Restraint prohibition

- The restraint prohibition will affect to some degree the operations of secure, county-operated facilities. There is likely to be some cost to develop and implement an appropriate policy, including employee training and health care professional contact protocols, but presumably should not be fiscally problematic to maintain once established.
- The filing of criminal and/or civil actions for violating the bill's restraint prohibition are likely to be relatively infrequent, with no discernible ongoing costs to the state and local governments.
- The one-time cost for the Attorney General to develop and distribute the required training materials regarding restraining or confining a child or woman to state and local officials is likely to be no more than minimal, and potentially absorbed using existing personnel and appropriated resources.

Immunity from prosecution

- The bill may produce a slight reduction in the number of persons prosecuted and sanctioned for drug paraphernalia offenses, creating a potential expenditure savings and related revenue loss for municipalities and counties with jurisdiction over such matters. The net annual fiscal effect will be minimal.
- Because of the bill's immunity provisions, it is possible that additional individuals will receive treatment in government-owned hospitals for drug-related medical emergencies. Thus, these hospitals could realize an indirect increase in treatment costs. It is also possible that some reimbursements or payments could be received for individuals with insurance coverage or those enrolled in the Medicaid Program.

Court computerization fees

- The bill raises, from \$10 to \$20, the maximum permissible amount a municipal court or county court may impose as an extra filing fee for use in computerizing the office of the court's clerk. This provision potentially doubles the amount of money that a court generates annually from the imposition of the extra filing fee.

Detailed Analysis

Trafficking and possession offenses

The bill:

- Replaces the current controlled substance trafficking and controlled substance possession offenses with new offenses located in six Revised Code sections; and

- Redesignates the offenses as aggravated trafficking offenses, major trafficking in drugs, trafficking offenses, possession of a controlled substance, possession of marihuana, possession of hashish, possession of a controlled substance trace amount, and possession of a trace amount of marihuana or hashish.

Generally, the bill increases the controlled substance threshold amounts necessary to qualify for the same penalty as under current law for a violation of a drug trafficking or possession offense, and prioritizes treatment over conviction for possession.¹

Trafficking offenses

Table 1 below shows the minimum amounts of each controlled substance necessary to qualify for felony-level penalties under the bill's trafficking offenses. (See the LSC bill analysis for full details on substances and offense levels.)

- Aggravated trafficking is, depending on the circumstances present, either a felony of the second or first degree, and includes mandatory prison terms within the range specified for those levels of offense.²
- Major trafficking is generally a third degree felony and elevates to a first or second degree felony depending on the circumstances present.
- Trafficking, depending on the circumstances present, is either a felony of the fifth, fourth, or third degree.

Controlled Substance	Aggravated Trafficking	Major Trafficking	Trafficking
Schedule I or II	≥ 50 times bulk	≥ bulk amount	≥ 0.025 g
Schedule III, IV, or V	N/A	≥ 5 times bulk	≥ 0.025 g
Marihuana	≥ 20 kg	≥ 1 kg	≥ 0.025 g*
Cocaine	≥ 20 g	≥ 10 g	≥ 0.025 g
LSD (solid)	≥ 250 unit doses	≥ 50 unit doses	≥ 0.25 unit doses
LSD (liquid)	≥ 25 g	≥ 5 g	≥ 0.025 g

¹ The bill's trafficking and possession offense provisions apply to conduct which occurs after the bill's effective date, but apply to charges involving conduct committed before the bill's effective date if the charges are pending on the bill's effective date, or the offender has not yet been sentenced as of that date and the bill's provisions result in a reduction in the penalty that would otherwise be imposed.

² For aggravated trafficking in cocaine involving 20-50 grams of the drug, aggravated trafficking in heroin involving between 100 unit doses or 10 grams and 300 unit doses or 30 grams of the drug, and major trafficking involving an unclassified schedule I or II drug in an amount that equals or exceeds five times the bulk amount, the bill eliminates the mandatory prison term.

Table 1. Minimum Threshold Amounts for the Bill's Trafficking Offenses

Controlled Substance	Aggravated Trafficking	Major Trafficking	Trafficking
Heroin	≥ 10 g or 100 unit doses	≥ 5 g or 50 unit doses	≥ 0.025 g or 0.25 unit doses
Hashish	≥ 1 kg	≥ 50 g	≥ 0.025 g
Controlled substance analog	≥ 30 g	≥ 20 g	≥ 0.025 g
Schedule I or II sexual assault-enabling drug	≥ 50 times bulk	≥ bulk amount	≥ 0.025 g
Schedule III, IV, or V sexual assault-enabling drug	N/A	≥ 5 times bulk	≥ 0.025 g
Fentanyl-related compound	≥ 10 g or 100 unit doses	≥ 5 g or 50 unit doses	≥ 0.025 g or 0.25 unit doses

*Gifts of marihuana ≤ 20 g are generally a minor misdemeanor under the bill.

Possession offenses

The amounts of each controlled substance necessary to qualify for misdemeanor penalties under the bill's possession offenses generally mirror the range for the bill's trafficking offenses as highlighted in the table above, and include penalties for trace amounts below the minimums for possession. Under current law, violations of these offenses range from misdemeanors to fourth or fifth degree felonies.³ Under the bill, a violation of a possession offense is generally an unclassified misdemeanor with felony elevations for subsequent violations and for sexual assault-enabling drugs and fentanyl-related compounds. (See the LSC bill analysis for full details on substances and offense levels.) An attempted possession offense under the bill is a first degree misdemeanor and the court sentencing the offender has available any sentencing alternative that would be available for the unclassified misdemeanor if it had been committed.

Because of the bill, certain offenders who would have been sentenced to the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC) under current law will be sanctioned locally.⁴ The number of such offenders is not known, but the result will be an increase in

³ The bill specifies that the provisions of the existing laws governing the period of limitations for felonies, the application of the speedy trial time limits for felonies, and the application of the forfeiture law regarding felonies will apply with respect to a violation of the current drug possession law committed prior to the bill's effective date that currently is a felony and that the bill converts to a misdemeanor.

⁴ When an offender is convicted of possession of a controlled substance and the offense is an unclassified misdemeanor, the offense would have been a felony under current law, and the offender is

sanctioning costs for local criminal justice systems – generally through treatment as described below – and a decrease in costs for DRC.

For local criminal justice systems, in addition to increased costs described above, additional misdemeanor-level offenders will be sentenced to treatment who otherwise would have been sentenced to a jail term. The number of such offenders will vary by jurisdiction, as will costs for treatment versus incarceration locally, therefore any cost increase or savings associated with such individual offenders is indeterminate.

The reclassification of certain offenses from felonies to misdemeanors will also lead to an annual loss in locally collected state court cost revenue apportioned between the Indigent Defense Support Fund (Fund 5DY0) and the Victims of Crime/Reparations Fund (Fund 4020). This is because the total amount of state court costs imposed on an offender and apportioned between Fund 5DY0 and Fund 4020 is higher for a felony (\$60) than it is for a misdemeanor (\$29). From FY 2014 through FY 2018, an average of approximately 3,000 offenders were sentenced to DRC for possession offenses each year. This suggests that the potential total annual loss in state court cost revenues that otherwise may have been collected and apportioned between those two state funds could be minimal at most.

Under the bill, if a person commits a reclassified misdemeanor drug possession offense within the territory of a municipal court or county court, the charges must be filed in the court of common pleas, as they would be under current law.⁵

Unclassified misdemeanants

The bill permits the court to sentence an offender convicted of an unclassified misdemeanor for possession of a controlled substance to whom the presumption of treatment does not apply:

- To any sanction under the Misdemeanor Sentencing Law; or
- To a special authorized sanction of a jail or prison term of up to 364 days, a fine of up to \$1,000, or a term of up to six months in a community-based correctional facility or halfway house.

sentenced to treatment or other community control sanctions, the bill designates: (1) the county probation department that serves the court, (2) the Adult Parole Authority (APA) when there is no department of probation in the county and the court has entered an agreement with the APA under continuing law, or (3) another entity that provides probation services by contract under existing law as the supervisory entity for the offender.

⁵ For purposes of this provision, a reclassified misdemeanor drug possession offense means any violation of a prohibition under any of the possession offenses under the bill committed on or after the bill's effective date, or of a prohibition under the current possession offenses that was committed prior to the bill's effective date, and to which all of the following apply: (1) prior to the bill's effective date, the violation was a felony under the current possession offenses, (2) on the bill's effective date, the offense classification of the felony violation was reduced to a misdemeanor under one of the possession offenses under the bill, and (3) if the offense is a violation of a prohibition under the current possession offenses and was committed prior to that date, the penalty, forfeiture, or punishment for that violation has not been imposed as of the bill's effective date.

If, at the time of the sentencing, DRC has certified to the court that the county in which the person is being sentenced is unable to house the defendant in a facility that is operating at or under 90% of the facility's capacity, the term must be a prison term. This provision will, to some degree, decrease the cost savings to DRC as described above.

Treatment

With exceptions, the bill requires that an offender sentenced for an unclassified misdemeanor offense of possession and misdemeanor possession of marihuana or hashish (except minor misdemeanors) be ordered into treatment. The bill allows the court to hold a criminal proceeding in abeyance while an alleged offender undergoes treatment without requiring a guilty plea and allows an alleged offender to apply for intervention in lieu of conviction if it appears that the person is eligible. If the person successfully completes a drug treatment program as ordered by the court, the court is required to dismiss the proceedings without an adjudication of guilt. It is not a criminal conviction for any purposes of any disqualification or disability generally imposed by law upon a conviction of a crime, and the court may order the record to be sealed.

If an offender has health insurance that will cover the type of treatment ordered by the court, the offender and his or her insurance company will pay for the treatment, however this applies to only a small percentage of cases. Generally, treatment costs are either borne by the court or, if the offender is eligible, by Medicaid. Cost per offender varies based on type and duration of treatment ordered by the court, however, it is likely to be significant for both the local courts and Ohio's Medicaid Program.

Under the bill, a county participating in the Targeting Community Alternatives to Prison (T-CAP) Program can use related state funding for the cost of sanctions imposed on an offender for an unclassified misdemeanor drug possession offense.

Possession of marihuana or hashish

The bill enacts new offenses for the possession of marihuana and hashish. The amounts of each controlled substance necessary to qualify for misdemeanor penalties for the bill's possession offenses mirror the range for the bill's trafficking offenses as highlighted in Table 2. Unlike possession offenses generally, as described above, penalties for violations of the prohibitions range from a minor misdemeanor to a first degree misdemeanor.

Drug	Amount	Offense Level
Marihuana	≥ 0.025 g and < 200 g	Minor misdemeanor
	≥ 200 g and < 400 g	4 th degree misdemeanor
	≥ 400 g and < 1 kg	1 st degree misdemeanor
Hashish	≥ 0.025 g and < 10 g	Minor misdemeanor
	≥ 10 g and < 20 g	4 th degree misdemeanor
	≥ 20 g and < 50 g	1 st degree misdemeanor

Under the bill, an arrest or a conviction for a minor misdemeanor violation of either prohibition does not constitute a criminal record and need not be reported by the person so arrested or found guilty in response to any inquiries about the person’s criminal record.

Having weapons while under disability

Existing law prohibits certain persons from knowingly acquiring, having, carrying, or using any firearm or dangerous ordnance. The bill expands the list of those so prohibited to include any person who is charged, has been convicted of, or had been adjudicated a delinquent child for committing any unclassified misdemeanor offense involving the illegal possession of a controlled substance under the bill. A violation of the prohibition is the offense of “having weapons while under a disability,” unchanged by the bill, a third degree felony punishable by up to 36 months in prison, a fine of up to \$10,000, or both. In CY 2019, 834 people were committed to DRC with a violation of this prohibition as their most serious offense.

A person may apply to the court of common pleas of the county in which the person resides for relief from the prohibition and the court, if it makes specified findings, may grant the requested relief.

The bill is likely to increase the number of persons who violate this prohibition as well as the number of those seeking relief from the disability in the courts of common pleas. Any increase in state incarceration expenses are likely to be offset by the bill’s overall savings effect for DRC as described below.

Any increase in relief-related workload in the courts of common pleas may be offset somewhat by costs assessed to the applicant. Certain offenses under the bill would have been felonies under current law, and, therefore, subject to the disability in the absence of the bill.

State incarceration cost savings

The overall effect of the changes to the trafficking and possession offenses will be a decrease in the number of offenders sentenced to a prison term. Table 3 below shows the number of offenders committed to DRC from CYs 2015 through 2019 for drug possession and drug trafficking offenses. For the five-year period, an average of 2,694 offenders were committed for drug possession offenses annually, and an average of 1,808 were committed for drug trafficking offenses.

Table 3. Number of Offenders Committed to DRC for Drug Possession or Trafficking, CYs 2015-2019		
Calendar Year	Drug Possession	Drug Trafficking
2019	2,608	1,736
2018	2,469	1,850
2017	2,738	1,687
2016	2,926	1,834

Table 3. Number of Offenders Committed to DRC for Drug Possession or Trafficking, CYs 2015-2019

Calendar Year	Drug Possession	Drug Trafficking
2015	2,728	1,931
Average	2,694	1,808

Note: Based on DRC Annual Commitment Reports

Under the bill, DRC can expect up to 2,700 fewer offenders being sentenced to prison annually for a drug possession offense. The estimated annual cost savings to DRC is up to \$82.5 million (FY 2020 average cost per inmate of \$30,558 x 2,700 offenders). The annual savings is likely to be reduced to the degree that the facts surrounding certain drug possession cases still result in a felony conviction and the imposition of a prison term or an offender sentenced to prison as an unclassified misdemeanor in certain circumstances. The bill's effect on the sentencing of drug trafficking offenders to prison, including the amount of time to be served, is indeterminate. Table 4 below shows the average time served for felony drug offenses in CY 2016.

Table 4. Average Time Served for Drug Offenses, CY 2016

Felony Level	Total Offenders	Average Time Served (in years)
Felony 1	315	5.65
Felony 2	612	3.49
Felony 3	940	1.84
Felony 4	840	1.14
Felony 5	2,363	0.69
All Drug Offenses	5,070	1.62

Note: Based on DRC Average Time Served Report

Involuntary treatment

The bill modifies the criteria governing applications for, granting of, and treatment under a mechanism providing for a probate court order requiring involuntary treatment for a person suffering from alcohol or other drug abuse. These modifications are likely to increase the number of petitions and subsequent hearings in probate courts to initiate orders for involuntary treatment, while at the same time reducing the courts' revenue from filing fees.

It is possible that this could increase the number of people who will receive treatment, which would increase treatment costs. The amount of any increase is uncertain, but will depend

on the following factors: the number of individuals affected, whether the individual has health insurance, and whether the services rendered are reimbursable by the individual's health insurance. If an individual is enrolled in Medicaid, it is possible that Medicaid will realize an increase in treatment costs. If the individual is uninsured, it is possible that costs could increase for local alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services boards, courts, or hospitals.

Record sealing

On and after the bill's effective date, any conviction of a violation of R.C. 2925.11 that, prior to that date, was a felony and that is a reclassified misdemeanor drug possession offense on and after that date must be considered and treated for purposes of the Conviction Record Sealing Law as if it were, and always had been, a conviction of a misdemeanor. Additionally, the bill clarifies current law to ensure that record sealing provisions apply to a person who was charged with the bill's possession offenses, had the charge held in abeyance, successfully completed the court-imposed treatment or intervention, and, as a result, had the charges dismissed.

Under the bill, an unknown number of additional persons will be eligible to apply for record sealing. Applicants for sealing of a record of dismissal are not charged a fee. Applicants for sealing of a record of conviction, unless indigent, are required to pay a \$50 fee. The \$50 application fee is divided between the state GRF (\$30) and the county or municipality (\$20). Related application fee revenue will offset to some degree related operating costs of local and state criminal justice agencies.

Community control

Community control sanctions and nonresidential sanctions

The bill makes several changes regarding the general terms and conditions of community control sanctions as follows:

- Requires that the length and intensity of supervision or monitoring as a nonresidential sanction be determined by the results of a risk and needs assessment;
- Allows a court to order drug testing of an offender as part of the terms of nonresidential sanctions generally, rather than only allowing for random drug testing;
- Allows a court to require an offender to complete a cognitive behavioral intervention designed to address dynamic criminogenic risk factors, as a nonresidential sanction for a felony offense;
- Allows a supervisory entity to take appropriate action upon violation of a term of a community control sanction as determined by the seriousness of the violation and risk presented by the offender; and
- Allows, rather than requires, the supervisory entity to report the violation to the sentencing court according to a graduated response policy adopted by the supervisory entity.

For misdemeanants, the bill: (1) specifies that, if an offender violates a condition, the sentencing court may not punish the offender again for the offense for which the community control sanction was imposed and that any penalty imposed for the violation must be

commensurate with the seriousness of the violation in light of the offender's history of crimes and violations, (2) prohibits a court from imposing a term in a drug treatment program as a sanction for a misdemeanor until after considering an assessment by a properly credentialed treatment professional, if available, and (3) eliminates the authority for a misdemeanor to make a financial contribution in lieu of previously imposed community service.

The fiscal effects of these provisions on courts and local criminal justice systems will depend on current sentencing and supervision practices and implementation of these provisions upon the enactment of the bill.

Recovery sentencing

Under current law, a court is permitted to impose treatment and recovery support services as a community control sanction for a person who has been assessed by a credentialed professional and found to be drug addicted. The bill expands this to include offenders assessed to have a mental illness and generally requires the court to impose on an offender with an addiction or mental illness a community control sanction with treatment to be known as "recovery sentencing."

As with court-ordered treatment generally, if an offender has health insurance that will cover the type of treatment ordered by the court, the offender and his or her insurance company will pay for the treatment, however this applies to only a small percentage of cases. If an individual is enrolled in Medicaid or is Medicaid eligible, it is possible that Medicaid will realize an increase in treatment costs. If the individual is uninsured, it is possible that costs could increase for local alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services boards, courts, or hospitals.

Community control violations

With respect to the prison term that a court may impose for a violation of a community control sanction or for a violation of a law or leaving the state without the permission of the court or the offender's probation officer, the bill specifies that:

- If the remaining period of the offender's community control, or the remaining period of the offender's suspended prison sentence, is less than 90 or 180 days, the prison term may not exceed the length of the remaining period of community control or the remaining period of the offender's suspended prison sentence; and
- The time the offender spends in prison under the term must be credited against the offender's community control sanction or the offender's suspended prison sentence that was being served at the time of the violation.

Under the bill, a court is not limited in the number of times it may sentence an offender to a prison term under existing law and the bill for a violation of the conditions of a community control sanction or for a violation of a law or leaving the state without the permission of the court or the offender's probation officer.

Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission

According to staff of the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission, the work and related annual operating costs of its expanded duties under the bill can be absorbed utilizing existing staff and appropriated resources.⁶ Those expanded duties:

- Designate the Commission a criminal justice agency and specifies that it is authorized to apply for access to the computerized databases of the National Crime Information Center or the Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS) in Ohio, and to certain other computerized criminal justice information databases; and
- Require the Commission to study the impact of sections relevant to the bill on an ongoing basis and to make biennial reports, commencing not later than December 31, 2020, to the General Assembly and the Governor regarding the results of the study described above and recommendations.

Use of restraints

Prohibition against restraints

The bill: (1) generally prohibits a law enforcement, court, or corrections official from knowingly restraining or confining a pregnant charged or adjudicated child or pregnant criminal offender during the child's or woman's pregnancy, hospital transport, labor, delivery, or postpartum recovery (up to six weeks), and (2) subjects the use of restraints to contacting, or being notified by, certain specified health care professionals. If an emergency circumstance exists, the official may contact a health care professional once the child or woman has been restrained and let them know the type of restraint and expected duration. In all other cases, the notification must occur prior to restraining the child or woman.

These provisions will not likely have a discernible impact on the departments of Rehabilitation and Correction or Youth Services, as both departments currently have policies in place dealing with the use of restraints on a child or woman as described above. These provisions are also unlikely to have a discernible impact on courts, as the Ohio Judicial Conference reports that it is extremely uncommon for judges to order a child or woman as described above be restrained.

The prohibition is likely to affect to some degree local, mostly county, law enforcement and corrections agencies operating residential facilities. This includes jails, juvenile detention centers, community-based correctional facilities (CCBFs), and community corrections facilities (CCFs).

County sheriffs are responsible for transporting persons being held in a county jail to court. Some counties are able to use video conferencing, but for those that do not have those capabilities, the county sheriff's office would be responsible for contacting a health care

⁶ The Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission is an affiliated office of the Supreme Court of Ohio that, among other things, studies Ohio's criminal laws, sentencing patterns, and juvenile offender dispositions, and recommends comprehensive plans to the General Assembly that encourage public safety, proportionality, uniformity, certainty, judicial discretion, deterrence, fairness, simplification, additional sentencing options, victims' rights, and other reasonable goals.

professional who is treating a child or woman as described above prior to the use of restraints, should the need arise.

According to the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association, leg shackles, handcuffs, and waist belts are common everyday restraints used when transporting anyone under arrest or those who are incarcerated and are exiting the security perimeter of the jail, regardless of pregnancy status. A pregnant child or woman also may require frequent trips to a physician outside of the facility for prenatal care.

It is possible that these provisions will result in delays for both court proceedings and medical attention if the county sheriff first needs to contact the appropriate health care professional before using restraints. The potential cost of such delays is not readily quantifiable. Presumably, a sheriff will implement a policy that prospectively addresses the potential for delays and minimizes any related costs.

Penalty and civil remedy

The bill provides that a violation of the restraint prohibition is a violation of the existing offense of "interfering with civil rights." A violation is a first degree misdemeanor, which is punishable by a jail stay of no more than 180 days, a fine of up to \$1,000, or both. As state and local officials are expected to incorporate the bill's requirements into their daily operations, including ensuring that employees are trained, it is likely that violations will be infrequent. This suggests that, for county and municipal criminal justice systems that process misdemeanor cases and sanction violators, there will be no discernible ongoing costs, and occasional revenue (court costs and fees, and fines) generated for distribution between local governments and the state, as applicable.

The bill also permits a child or woman as described above to file a civil action for damages against the official who committed the violation, the official's employing agency or court, or both. Depending on the circumstances of the violation, the action would be filed in one of the following: a common pleas, municipal, or county court, or the state's Court of Claims. If, as described in the immediately preceding paragraph, violations are infrequent, then it is likely that the filing of civil actions will be relatively infrequent as well. The state and local governments may incur occasional costs to defend and adjudicate such matters. The timing and magnitude of any damage payments that the state or a local government may incur is indeterminate.

Attorney General training materials

The bill requires the Attorney General to provide training materials to law enforcement, court, and corrections officials to train employees on the proper implementation of the requirements regarding restraining or confining a child or woman as described above. The one-time cost for the Attorney General to develop and distribute the required training materials to state and local officials is likely to be no more than minimal and potentially absorbed using existing personnel and appropriated resources.

Immunity from prosecution

The bill provides a person, subject to certain qualifying conditions, immunity from arrest, charges, prosecution, conviction, or penalty for certain offenses involving drug paraphernalia to a person who seeks or obtains medical assistance for a drug overdose. Similar

immunity currently exists for a minor drug possession offense when a person seeks or obtains medical assistance for an overdose.

This immunity provision may reduce the number of persons, who because of seeking medical assistance, otherwise might have been arrested, charged, prosecuted, and sanctioned for drug paraphernalia offenses. For counties and municipalities with jurisdiction over such matters, this could mean some decrease in cases requiring adjudication, thus creating a potential expenditure savings and related revenue loss (fines, fees, and court costs generally imposed on an offender by the court).

Anecdotal information suggests the number of instances in which a person is, under current law and practice, prosecuted subsequent to seeking medical assistance is relatively small, especially in the context of the total number of criminal and juvenile cases handled by counties and municipalities annually. Thus, the net annual fiscal effect of any expenditure savings and revenue loss is likely to be minimal. For the state, there may be a related negligible annual loss in court costs that otherwise might have been collected for deposit in the state treasury and divided between the Indigent Defense Support Fund (Fund 5DY0) and the Victims of Crime/Reparations Fund (Fund 4020).

Possible indirect fiscal effects

Because of the bill, it is possible that additional individuals will receive treatment in public hospitals for drug-related medical emergencies. Thus, government-owned hospitals could indirectly realize an increase in treatment costs. The increase would depend on the number of individuals receiving treatment, the services rendered, and the insurance status of the individual. Government-owned hospitals might receive reimbursements or payments for individuals who have insurance coverage or who are enrolled in the Medicaid Program.

Additionally, it is possible that some individuals receiving treatment will be eligible for Medicaid at the time treatment was rendered, but not actually enrolled in the program. In such cases, those individuals could then be enrolled in Medicaid and the program could retroactively pay for treatment rendered in the three months prior to enrollment. Thus, the Medicaid Program could also experience an indirect increase in costs for treatment relating to the medical emergency and possibly for substance abuse treatment if the individual seeks such treatment after release from the hospital.

Computerization fees

Under continuing law, a municipal or county court is permitted to charge a fee on the filing of each cause of action or appeal; on the filing, docketing, and endorsing of each certificate of judgment; or on the docketing and indexing of each aid in execution or petition to vacate, revive, or modify certain judgments. The fee is for use in computerizing the office of the court's clerk. The bill increases the maximum amount of the fee from \$10 to \$20. This provision potentially doubles the amount of money that a court generates annually from the imposition of the extra filing fee.