



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: H.B. 151 of the 131st G.A.

Date: April 20, 2016

Status: As Enacted

Sponsor: Rep. Anielski

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Contents: Offenses of menacing by stalking and telecommunications harassment

State Fiscal Highlights

- The bill may result in a few additional offenders being sentenced to a state prison or juvenile correctional facility. The fiscal effect would be a no more than minimal annual increase in the GRF institutional operating expenses of the departments of Rehabilitation and Correction and Youth Services.
- There may be a negligible annual gain in the amount of revenue from court costs that is apportioned between the Indigent Defense Support Fund (Fund 5DY0) and the Victims of Crime/Reparations Fund (Fund 4020).

Local Fiscal Highlights

- The bill may have a minimal net annual fiscal effect on local criminal and juvenile justice systems. A relatively small number of new cases requiring adjudication may arise or shift subject matter jurisdictions. The result may be a small increase or decrease in the annual operating costs and revenues generated by these systems.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

The bill expands the offenses of menacing by stalking and telecommunications harassment by: (1) specifying additional prohibited conduct and (2) extending the possible victims of the prohibited conduct to include a person's family or household member. Under existing law, unchanged by the bill, the offenses of menacing by stalking and telecommunications harassment generally are a misdemeanor of the first degree, and in certain specified circumstances, including prior convictions, the offense may be a felony of the fourth or fifth degree.¹

By expanding menacing and harassment offenses, certain conduct that may or may not be illegal, or more difficult to prosecute, under current law will become somewhat easier to prosecute. The result could be a small increase in the number of offenders charged, prosecuted, and convicted of menacing or harassment.

State fiscal effects

Incarceration expenditures

As a result of the bill's penalty changes additional offenders could be sentenced to a state prison or juvenile correctional facility.

Relative to the size of the state's prison population (approximately 50,700) and the number of offenders sentenced to prison annually (around 20,000), the number of offenders that could be sentenced to prison is likely to be relatively small and the associated incarceration costs minimal. The average marginal cost for the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to incarcerate a few additional offenders is around \$3,600 per offender per year.

The Department of Youth Services' (DYS) average daily population is around 470. The marginal cost to add a juvenile to that population is close to \$30 per day, or about \$10,000 or so per year. This suggests that adding a relatively small number of juveniles to that population in any given year will result in no more than a minimal increase in DYS's annual institutional care and custody costs.

Court cost revenue

A few additional felony and misdemeanor convictions stemming from the bill may generate a negligible annual amount of state court cost revenue that is collected locally and forwarded for deposit in the state treasury to the credit of the Indigent Defense Support Fund (Fund 5DY0) and the Victims of Crime/Reparations Fund (Fund 4020). The state court costs total \$60 for a felony and \$29 for a misdemeanor. The \$60 felony amount is divided as follows: \$30 to Fund 5DY0 and \$30 to Fund 4020. The \$29 misdemeanor amount is divided as follows: \$20 to Fund 5DY0 and \$9 to Fund 4020.

¹ The offense of telecommunications harassment is a felony of the third degree if the violation results in economic harm of \$150,000 or more.

It is also important to note that collecting court costs and fines from certain offenders can be problematic, especially in light of the fact that many are unable or unwilling to pay.

Local criminal and juvenile justice systems

Menacing and telecommunications harassment

Any additional annual costs for local criminal and juvenile justice systems to prosecute, adjudicate, and sanction a few additional offenders that might be convicted as a result of the bill's expanded prohibitions are not expected to exceed minimal. Subsequent to a conviction, the court generally imposes local court costs, fees, and a fine to be paid by the offender, and if collected, deposited in the county treasury. Given the relatively small number of likely convictions, the amount of additional revenue that counties and municipalities may actually collect annually will be no more than minimal. Also of note is that courts rarely impose the maximum permissible fine.

Sentences and fines for certain offenses generally

The table below summarizes current law's sentences and fines generally for felonies of the fourth and fifth degree and a misdemeanor of the first degree.

Sentences and Fines for Certain Offenses Generally		
Offense Level	Fine	Possible Term of Incarceration
4th Degree Felony	Up to \$5,000	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, or 18-month prison term
5th Degree Felony	Up to \$2,500	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, or 12-month prison term
1st Degree Misdemeanor	Up to \$1,000	Not more than 180-day jail term