



END OF SESSION — SF 374 — STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER OFFICE, GENERAL POLICY

Description: [Senate File 374](#) specifies that the State Public Defender must coordinate the representation of indigent persons under arrest or charged with a crime and facing the possibility of imprisonment under the applicable criminal statute or ordinance, and that this representation will be provided at public expense if necessary. The Act also requires the State Public Defender to seek reimbursement from the Indigent Defense Fund for compensation and expenses for the defense of an indigent person who violates a local ordinance and faces the possibility of imprisonment. The affected political subdivision of the State is required to reimburse the Office of the State Public Defender for these costs. The Act also amends the requirements for contracts with nonprofit organizations, allows for changes to the office computer networks, and extends the time period for reporting case expenses.

Fiscal Impact: The provision of this Act requiring reimbursement by a political subdivision to the Office of the State Public Defender will reduce costs to the Indigent Defense Fund and transfer indigent defense costs for certain municipal ordinance violations to the applicable local government. The cost to local governments is estimated to be relatively small. The total reimbursement from all of the affected local governments to the Indigent Defense Fund is estimated to be between \$30,000 and \$45,000 per year. The provision of the Act affecting political subdivisions does not go into effect until January 1, 2018.

Enactment Date: This Act was approved by the General Assembly on April 11, 2017, and signed by the Governor on April 21, 2017.

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