

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

DOT 2/28/2011

LRB Number	11-1140/1	Introduction Number	AB-0018	Estimate Type	Original
Description Collection and analysis of motor vehicle traffic stop information and law enforcement training standards					

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

This bill repeals the requirement that law enforcement officers collect certain racial data for individuals involved in a motor vehicle traffic stop. This change is not expected to have any fiscal impact at the state level, as the requirement was simply absorbed by existing staff at the time of implementation. The impact to local law enforcement is indeterminate, as staffing decisions are entirely the decision of each local agency. However, the expected savings to all law enforcement is assumed to be staff time.

State Patrol:

There are no precise figures for the number of traffic stops made each year, but State Patrol issued approximately 445,000 citations and warnings in 2010. Multiple citations/warnings can be issued to a single offender at a single traffic stop, but it is estimated that this occurs less than 10% of the time. For our purposes, a reasonable estimate of total traffic stops by State Patrol is 400,000 per year.

State Patrol Troopers complete the reporting requirement at issue using the computerized Badger TraCS system, a process that takes approximately 30 seconds. Repealing this requirement would therefore result in an estimated savings of 3,334 officer hours (~1.5 FTE) each year.

Nonetheless, this is not expected to translate to a fiscal savings, as the time saved per officer, per shift, is very small. Accordingly, this time savings cannot be assumed to translate to an actionable reduction in staffing demands. The practical effect would be that officers, able to devote less time per traffic stop, would be able to conduct more traffic stops.

Local law enforcement:

As with State Patrol, there are no precise figures for the number of traffic stops made by local law enforcement statewide each year. There are approximately 750,000 traffic convictions each year, and it is estimated that 75% of all traffic citations result in a conviction. Thus, an estimated 1 million citations are issued each year. Accounting for the possibility of multiple citations being issues to a single offender, a reasonable estimate of total traffic stops resulting in a citation is 900,000.

Not all traffic stops result in a citation, and warnings are not formally recorded by the vast majority of local law enforcement agencies. State Patrol generally averages two written warnings for each citation issued. If this ratio is assumed to be representative of the state as a whole, a reasonable estimate of total traffic stops is 2.7 million per year. Deducting the 400,000 traffic stops conducted by State Patrol, an estimated 2.3 million traffic stops are conducted by local law enforcement each year.

The time taken to complete the additional report varies widely between agencies. Some agencies also use the Badger TraCS system and can complete the form with the same speed as State Patrol. Other agencies must complete a print version of the form, a process that reportedly takes as much as three minutes. There is a further time burden on law enforcement agencies that did not previously record all traffic stops, but began doing so to comply with this reporting requirement.

An accurate estimate of the time saved by local law enforcement agencies would require information that simply is not available: total traffic stops, average time per traffic stop, figures relating to method of reporting, etc.

For purposes of making a broad estimate, it can be assumed that this reporting requirement adds an average of two minutes to each traffic stop conducted by a local law enforcement officer. Repealing this requirement would result in an estimated savings of 76,668 officer hours statewide each year. Nonetheless, this is not expected to translate to a fiscal savings, as the time saved per officer, per shift, is very small. Accordingly, that statewide time savings cannot be assumed to translate to an actionable reduction in staffing demands.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications

None.