

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

UWS 4/3/2006

LRB Number 05-4773/1	Introduction Number AB-1147	Estimate Type Updated
Description Permitting the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, the Technical College System Board, or a technical college district board to refuse to employ or to terminate from employment an unpardoned felon		

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

AB 1147 specifies that it is not employment discrimination for the UW System 1) to refuse to hire or 2) to fire convicted and unpardoned felons, regardless of whether the felony substantially relates to the circumstances of a particular job. Because AB 1147 does not require that a felony be substantially related to the circumstances of a particular job, it expands existing authority for the UW System to hire or terminate employment based on felony convictions. However, as proposed, AB 1147 does not immediately mandate that the UW System change its present manner of hiring or terminating employment and as such has not fiscal effect.

However, if hiring authorities choose to run background checks on all prospective hires, there would certainly be a fiscal impact to the proposed legislation. The costs of background checks vary dramatically depending on the extent of the check. Because there is no common reporting location for felony convictions and the data systems used to record convictions also vary, a background check might require separate searches of county, statewide and federal databases for a single employee. A web-review suggests costs ranging from \$12.95 to over \$50 per employee or potential employee checked, although institutions might be able to negotiate a more reasonable fee based on the number of checks and the specific type of background check conducted. Some with experience doing background checks suggest \$20 per check as a reasonable estimate. More detailed reviews, such as those that might be required for staff in particularly sensitive positions like police services, can routinely cost \$100 per check.

The costs associated with AB 1147 might be affected by the frequency of the background checks. Since background checks only reflect a criminal record at a particular point in time, some institutions might choose to do periodic checks of employees. The more frequently checks are completed, the more cost might be incurred.

The UW System cannot determine the local fiscal effect of this legislation.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications