

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

DOC 12/21/2007

LRB Number 07-2766/2	Introduction Number AB-0783	Estimate Type Original
Description Reporting deaths, death investigations and other duties of coroners and medical examiners, inquests, disposition of bodies, training and testing requirements for coroners and medical examiners, creating the Board on Medicolegal Investigations, requiring the exercise of rule-making authority, and providing a penalty		

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

This bill revises current law regulating the death reporting process, the types of deaths which must be reported to county coroners and medical examiners, penalties for violation of the reporting process, clarifies the jurisdiction of coroners pertaining to death investigations, revises the types of death which coroners are required to order autopsies for, enhances record-keeping requirements of coroners, creates a Board on Medicolegal Investigations, and enhances the authority of the attorney general to order an inquest or represent the state regarding an inquest.

Under current law, the determination of which deaths require reporting to county coroners or medical examiners is based upon the circumstances of the death, not the location of the death. Current law also requires a coroner or medical examiner to order an autopsy on any person who dies while confined in a correctional facility in this state.

As it relates to the Department of Corrections and local jails, this bill expands the definition of deaths which must be reported to county coroners or medical examiners and the circumstances in which coroners and medical examiners are required to order the performance of autopsies.

It is standard practice and current law for a coroner to order an autopsy on any person who dies in a state correctional facility. Because of this, the Department of Corrections would incur no additional cost due to the expanded definition of deaths which must be reported to a coroner or the expanded definition of deaths for which an autopsy is required.

As these definitions pertain to local jails, jail officials generally notify the respective county coroner or medical examiner when deaths occur in local jails. The expanded definition of deaths which must be reported to coroners or medical examiners likely would not create additional costs for local jails. At this time, it is possible autopsies are not performed on every person that dies in local jails. As a result, it is possible increased costs will be incurred as a result of requiring coroners to order the performance of autopsies upon persons dying in these facilities. It is not possible at this time to determine the extent of the possible cost increase.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications