

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

SPD 2/6/2018

LRB Number	17-3780/1	Introduction Number	AB-0567	Estimate Type	Original
Description a Public Defender Board student loan payment pilot program and making an appropriation					

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

The State Public Defender (SPD) is statutorily authorized and required to appoint attorneys to represent indigent defendants in criminal and certain commitment proceedings. The SPD plays a critical role in ensuring that the Wisconsin justice system complies with the right to counsel provided by both the state and federal constitutions. Any legislation has the potential to increase SPD costs if it creates a new criminal offense, expands the definition of an existing criminal offense, or increases the penalties for an existing offense.

The bill creates a pilot loan assistance program to provide tuition reimbursement to certified assigned counsel attorneys who accept appointed cases from the SPD in certain counties. The attorney would be required to accept at least 50 appointments in a county which has either 25,000 or fewer residents or a population density of 55 persons per square mile or less. If they meet certain eligibility criteria, the attorney would be eligible for up to \$20,000 in loan assistance.

The bill provides total funding of \$250,000. At the maximum amount, 12.5 attorneys statewide would qualify for participation in the pilot program. SPD does not require additional funding to operate the program and distribute the funding.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications