

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

DCF 1/29/2024

LRB Number	23-5429/1	Introduction Number	AB-1000	Estimate Type	Original
Description adopting gender-neutral terminology and incorporating gender-neutral marriage and parentage rights					

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

This bill recognizes same-sex marriage by making references in the statutes to spouses gender-neutral, with the intent of harmonizing the Wisconsin Statutes with the holding of the U.S. Supreme Court in Obergefell v. Hodges (2015), which recognizes that same-sex couples have a fundamental constitutional right to marriage. The bill also recognizes legal parentage for same-sex couples under certain circumstances and adopts gender-neutral parentage terminology.

The primary Department of Children and Families programs impacted by the bill include child welfare (including adoption) governed by the Children's Code under Chapter 48, as well as establishing paternity and child support orders in family court under Chapter 767. DCF's child care programs may also be affected as their forms and policies may need to be updated to adopt gender-neutral parentage terminology.

Overall, the fiscal effect of language in the bill making spousal references gender neutral is indeterminate. It is unknown at this time the degree to which current department information technology systems (e.g., eWISACWIS and KIDS), forms, and other materials used in program administration would need to be changed as a result of the bill. The department will be more likely to be able to absorb costs associated with changing forms or other program materials. The degree to which the department will be able to absorb costs relating to information technology systems changes will depend on the number of hours required in each system to change references for spouses to be gender neutral.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications