



## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #560

### **Elimination of the Research and Information Services Unit (Justice)**

[LFB 2001-03 Budget Summary: Page 435, #5]

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#### **CURRENT LAW**

The Attorney General (AG) has statutory authority to appoint, in the unclassified service, and to set the salary for, a director of research and information services.

The research and information services unit in the Department of Justice (DOJ) consists of two positions: (a) the unclassified director of research and information services; and (b) a program and planning analyst position.

#### **GOVERNOR**

Delete \$196,500 GPR and 2.0 GPR positions annually to eliminate the research and information services unit. Repeal statutory language providing that the AG may appoint in the unclassified service a director of research and information services and is authorized to set this position's salary.

#### **DISCUSSION POINTS**

1. The research and information services unit is responsible for: (a) developing large-scale policy initiatives; (b) researching and answering media, legislative and citizen inquiries about legal cases, opinions and investigations undertaken by DOJ; (c) preparing and editing news releases, articles, policy statements and position papers for DOJ; (d) writing and editing speeches and correspondence for the AG and other DOJ executives; (e) developing department-wide reports, brochures and pamphlets; and (f) coordinating and editing the content of DOJ's website.

2. Large state agencies generally have public information/communications officers and

policy directors/policy analysts. While large state agencies generally have such positions (although the exact duties of these positions vary to some degree from agency to agency), only the DOJ positions would be specifically deleted under the Governor's budget bill.

3. DOA indicated that in preparing the budget bill they reviewed state statutes, agency websites, the bluebook and their own understanding of agency operations to identify potential savings. DOA indicated that the director of research and information services in DOJ was identified as it, unlike other agencies' public information/communications positions, is statutorily provided. DOA officials indicated that the program and planning analyst position in the research and information services unit was also recommended for elimination.

4. According to DOJ, on an average day the director of research and information services fields two dozen media calls on a variety of issues from members of the national and state media. Such calls can request comment from the AG personally on issues of national attention, or they can be specific requests for information about a pending case or investigation at DOJ. The director also issues an average of two to three press releases per day regarding DOJ criminal investigative, law enforcement functions, and public service/information functions. In a recent week, for example, the director issued press releases regarding DOJ criminal prosecutions, environmental enforcement initiatives, and a case involving elder abuse.

5. According to DOJ, the program and planning analyst in the research and information services unit reviews and develops policy and program enhancements. Examples of recent issues developed by the analyst include: (a) methamphetamine prevention and control program planning and development; (b) the AG's School Safety and Peers in Education Addressing Conflict Effectively (PEACE) program; (c) proposals related to high capacity wells in coordination with DOJ environmental attorneys; (d) proposals to address the U.S. Supreme Court decision affecting wetlands regulations; and (e) various tobacco related initiatives. According to DOJ officials, the program and planning analyst also serves as the deputy public information director.

6. DOJ indicates that if these positions were eliminated, the work and responsibilities assigned to these positions would continue and be the responsibility of DOJ executive staff.

## ALTERNATIVES TO BASE

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to delete \$196,500 and 2.0 positions annually to eliminate the research and information services unit. Repeal statutory language providing that the AG may appoint in the unclassified service a director of research and information services and is authorized to set this position's salary.

<b>Alternative 1</b>	<b>GPR</b>
<b>2001-03 FUNDING</b> (Change to Base) <i>[Change to Bill]</i>	- \$393,000 \$0]
<b>2002-03 POSITIONS</b> (Change to Base) <i>[Change to Bill]</i>	- 2.00 0.00]

2. Modify the Governor's recommendation by any of the following:

a. Delete \$112,100 annually and 1.0 unclassified director of research and information services. Repeal statutory language providing that the AG may appoint, in the unclassified service, a director of research and information services and is authorized to set this position's salary.

<b>Alternative 2A</b>	<b>GPR</b>
<b>2001-03 FUNDING</b> (Change to Base) <i>[Change to Bill]</i>	- \$224,200 \$168,800
<b>2002-03 POSITIONS</b> (Change to Base) <i>[Change to Bill]</i>	- 1.00 1.00

b. Delete \$84,400 annually and 1.0 program and planning analyst position in the research and information services unit.

<b>Alternative 2B</b>	<b>GPR</b>
<b>2001-03 FUNDING</b> (Change to Base) <i>[Change to Bill]</i>	- \$168,800 \$224,200
<b>2002-03 POSITIONS</b> (Change to Base) <i>[Change to Bill]</i>	- 1.00 1.00

3. Maintain current law.

<b>Alternative 3</b>	<b>GPR</b>
<b>2001-03 FUNDING</b> (Change to Base) <i>[Change to Bill]</i>	\$0 \$393,000
<b>2002-03 POSITIONS</b> (Change to Base) <i>[Change to Bill]</i>	0.00 2.00

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