



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE
Joint Fiscal Office

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Fiscal Note

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S.109 – An act relating to miscellaneous judiciary procedures

Senate Proposal of Amendment to the House Proposal of Amendment¹

Bill Summary

This bill contains numerous technical corrections and miscellaneous provisions related to the Judiciary. As proposed, the bill would create two task forces or working groups, though only one would be entitled to per diem compensation and expense reimbursement. The bill would also stipulate additional criteria for the Court Administrator when evaluating capital funding requests for county courthouses, and require the Department of Corrections to establish the Family Support Program.

Fiscal Impact

The Firearm Surrender Order Compliance Working Group created in Section 24 would cost the Office of the Attorney General approximately \$1,500 for per diem compensation and expense reimbursement. The bill contains no appropriation for this cost.

The Family Support Program established in Sections 31-34 represents a cost to the Department of Corrections' (DOC) budget. While the bill does not contain a corresponding appropriation, it could increase future costs to DOC, depending on the amount of funds required to sustain and expand Program implementation in the future.

Background and Details

The following sections of the bill have a fiscal impact or pertain to fiscal matters:

Section 24: Firearm Surrender Order Compliance Working Group

This section would require the Office of the Attorney General to convene a Firearm Surrender Order Compliance Working Group to develop a uniform process to ensure compliance with court orders to surrender firearms. The Working Group would be charged with examining the statutory or policy changes necessary to create a uniform process to monitor compliance, support entities charged with storing and returning surrendered firearms pursuant to court orders, and identify a stable and reliable funding source for any additional resources needed to monitor compliance. The Working Group would be comprised of 10 members:

1. the Attorney General or designee, who shall be the chair;
2. the Chief Superior Court Judge or designee;
3. the Defender General or designee;

¹ The Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) is a nonpartisan legislative office dedicated to producing unbiased fiscal analysis – this fiscal note is meant to provide information for legislative consideration, not to provide policy recommendations.

4. one State’s Attorney or designee, appointed by the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs;
5. a member appointed by the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence;
6. a member of the Vermont State Police, appointed by the Commissioner of Public Safety;
7. a police chief, appointed by the Vermont Association of Chiefs of Police;
8. a federal firearms licensee, appointed by the Attorney General;
9. the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services; and
10. the Vermont Council on Domestic Violence.

The Working Group would be required to consult with specific stakeholders and report its recommendations on or before November 15, 2025, to the House and Senate Committees on Judiciary and to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee.

The Working Group would be authorized to meet not more than six times. Members who are not State employees or who are not otherwise compensated or reimbursed for their attendance would be entitled to per diem compensation and expense reimbursement pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010. Assuming that two members of the Working Group qualify for compensation, this would result in a cost of approximately \$1,500 to the Office of the Attorney General. Actual costs will vary based on meeting attendance, mileage reimbursement claimed, etc.

Section 29: County Courthouse Capital Budget Requests

Section 29 pertains to capital funding requests for county courthouses but has no direct fiscal impact.

Effective July 1, 2026, Section 29 would require the Court Administrator to evaluate capital budget requests for courthouses from counties based on several additional criteria:

- whether the funding request is consistent with a capital program developed pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 133(e)(3);
- whether the project that is the subject of the request has been included in the list of capital projects in the county’s budget pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 133(e)(1), and, if so, the description of the project included in the budget; and
- whether the county has established a capital reserve fund pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 133(e)(3), and, if so, the amount of annual contributions the county has made to the fund.

Sections 31-34: Establishing the Family Support Program

Section 33 of the bill would direct the Department of Corrections (DOC) to establish the Family Support Program, which would provide free parenting and family support services to incarcerated parents and guardians in Vermont correctional facilities. The bill would authorize DOC to support Program operation through grants to or contracts with nonprofit entities, and require DOC to report annually on Program implementation to the committees of jurisdiction. Section 34 of the bill would direct DOC to first implement the Family Support Program at the Chittenden Regional Correctional and Northern State Correctional Facilities, and Section 31 establishes legislative intent that the Program be expanded in a phased manner to all Vermont correctional facilities by 2028.

While the bill does not contain a corresponding appropriation, it could increase future costs to DOC, depending on the amount of funds required to sustain and expand Program implementation in the future. For a sense of scale, a prior bill on this topic (H.219, as introduced) appropriated \$383,579 from the General Fund to DOC for this program - \$115,424 for implementation at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility, and \$268,155 for implementation at the Northern State Correctional Facility. Those appropriations were subsequently removed from H.219, as DOC indicated that base funding was identified for this Program in fiscal year 2026.

ⁱ The full fiscal note history is available on the fiscal tab of the bill page on the General Assembly website and can be pulled up through a bill number search on the JFO page.