



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS



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Senate Bill 530 (Substitute S-3 as reported)
Sponsor: Senator Bruce Caswell
Committee: Families, Seniors and Human Services

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Friend of the Court Act to do the following:

- Delete provisions that require an Office of the Friend of the Court to receive payments and service fees.
- Require the Office of Child Support, rather than the Friend of the Court, to report arrearage amounts to consumer reporting agencies and determine what support information should be provided to consumer reporting agencies.
- Require an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) plan that was approved by the chief judge and the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) to include an option for domestic relations mediation.
- Require a Friend of the Court to include in its ADR plan a screening process for domestic violence, a personal protection order between the parties, child abuse or neglect, and other safety concerns, and a method to address those concerns.
- Allow a court to order a party to meet with a person conducting ADR.
- Delete provisions that establish minimum qualifications for a domestic relations mediator who performs mediation under a plan approved by the chief judge and the SCAO.
- Require Friend of the Court employees who conducted forms of ADR not included in the bill to have the qualifications to conduct a joint meeting under the Support and Parenting Time Enforcement Act.
- Refer to "domestic relations mediation" instead of "alternative dispute resolution" in provisions relating to Friend of the Court cases.
- Require an attorney who was appointed to assist the Friend of the Court to be compensated in the same manner as Friend of the Court employees.
- Require that each Friend of the Court submit grievance reports annually, instead of biannually, to the SCAO.
- Delete a requirement that each Friend of the Court provide public access to the report of grievances prepared by the State Friend of the Court Bureau.

MCL 552.509 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Glenn Steffens

FISCAL IMPACT

The Department of Human Services (DHS) does not anticipate that the provisions in the bills would result in any costs or savings to the State or local units of government, as the changes are technical in nature. While the bill would strike language in the Act that refers to a 14-day standard of promptness for disbursement of child support payments, the DHS is required to comply with the Federal standard of promptness, which requires received payments to be disbursed within two business days. Therefore, the elimination of the 14-day standard would not affect the State's eligibility for Federal Title IV-D funding incentives.

Date Completed: 11-8-13

Fiscal Analyst: Frances Carley