

HCS HB 427 -- BASIC CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FUND

SPONSOR: Byrd

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 18 to 0.

This substitute creates the Basic Civil Legal Services Fund. The fund will increase the public money available for civil legal services for low-income persons, as defined by the federal Legal Services Corporation Income Eligibility Guidelines. To fund the program, a \$20 fee will be assessed upon the filing of every civil or criminal proceeding in circuit court and any appellate court; a \$10 fee will be assessed upon filings in associate circuit court. The Missouri Supreme Court or its designee will administer the fund.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Net Effect on Basic Civil Legal Services Fund of \$0 in FY 2004, FY 2005, and FY 2006.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that it is vitally necessary to establish a reliable and consistent source of funding for the state's legal aid services.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Byrd; Missouri Bar Board of Governors; Missouri's Legal Aid Offices; and Missouri Supreme Court.

OPPOSITION: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Julie Jinkens McNitt, Legislative Analyst