

SCS SB 447, HCA 1 -- BASIC CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FUND

SPONSOR: Bartle (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 appellate courts; a \$10 fee in circuit courts; and an \$8 fee in associate circuit courts. The Missouri Supreme Court or its designee will administer the fund.

HCA 1 -- Requires the Supreme Court to report to the General Assembly every year on the moneys collected and disbursed pursuant to this law by judicial circuit; prohibits the extra fees from being collected in traffic violation cases; and extends the sunset provision by one year from December 31, 2006, to December 31, 2007.

FISCAL NOTE: Not available at time of printing.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the substitute is vitally important because so many low-income persons are effectively denied access to courts because they cannot retain legal counsel.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Bartle; Missouri Bar; and Legal Aid of Western Missouri.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Julie Jinkens McNitt, Legislative Analyst