

HCS HB 192 -- GUARDIAN AD LITEM FUND

SPONSOR: Franz

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Family Services by a vote of 8 to 0.

This substitute creates the Guardian Ad Litem Fund for the purpose of compensating court-appointed guardians ad litem. It will be funded from a surcharge ranging from \$25 to \$100 assessed to anyone bringing a probate proceeding under Chapters 473, 474, or 475, RSMo. For each domestic relations case filed, an additional surcharge not to exceed \$30 may be assessed by any circuit court that does not have a family court or a family court division.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that guardians ad litem play a crucial role in protecting children and their civil rights; and the insufficient funding is a deterrent to recruiting experienced lawyers that are willing to act as guardians ad litem for children in need of legal representation.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Franz; Honorable Don Henry, 37th Judicial Circuit; and Honorable Ralph Haslag, 25th Judicial Circuit.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.