

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH  
OVERSIGHT DIVISION

**FISCAL NOTE**

L.R. No.: 3563H.011  
Bill No.: HB 2109  
Subject: Estates, Wills and Trusts; Guardians; Children and Minors; Disabilities  
Type: Original  
Date: January 29, 2024

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Bill Summary: This proposal establishes and modifies provisions relating to the probate code.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON GENERAL REVENUE FUND</b>			
<b>FUND AFFECTED</b>	<b>FY 2025</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>
<b>Total Estimated Net Effect on General Revenue</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

<b>ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON OTHER STATE FUNDS</b>			
<b>FUND AFFECTED</b>	<b>FY 2025</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>
<b>Total Estimated Net Effect on <u>Other</u> State Funds</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

Numbers within parentheses: () indicate costs or losses.

<b>ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON FEDERAL FUNDS</b>			
<b>FUND AFFECTED</b>	<b>FY 2025</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>
<b>Total Estimated Net Effect on <u>All</u> Federal Funds</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

<b>ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>			
<b>FUND AFFECTED</b>	<b>FY 2025</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>
<b>Total Estimated Net Effect on FTE</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

- Estimated Net Effect (expenditures or reduced revenues) expected to exceed \$250,000 in any of the three fiscal years after implementation of the act or at full implementation of the act.
- Estimated Net Effect (savings or increased revenues) expected to exceed \$250,000 in any of the three fiscal years after implementation of the act or at full implementation of the act.

<b>ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON LOCAL FUNDS</b>			
<b>FUND AFFECTED</b>	<b>FY 2025</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>
<b>Local Government</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

## FISCAL ANALYSIS

### ASSUMPTION

§§474.540, 474.542, 474.544, 474.546, 474.548, 474.550, 474.552, 474.554, 474.556, 474.558, 474.560, 474.562, 474.564, 474.600 – Electronic Estate Planning Documents

In response to similar legislation from 2023, HCS for HB 881, officials from the **Office of the State Courts Administrator** assumed the proposal will have no fiscal impact on their organization. **Oversight** does not have any information to the contrary. Therefore, Oversight will reflect a zero impact in the fiscal note.

**Oversight** notes that according to <https://trustandwill.com/learn/e-will>, electronic wills are only accepted in a few states currently. Some states have updated their statutes to allow e-wills. Electronic wills are now legal in Nevada, Florida, Indiana, and Arizona. Utah and Colorado have also recently adopted the Uniform Electronic Wills Act, which is a model law created by the Uniform Laws Commission. In other instances, some state courts have accepted e-wills on a case-by-case basis. COVID-19 also caused some courts to temporarily allow remote witnessing as an emergency measure.

§§475.010, 475.045, 475.050, 475.063 & 488.2300 – Guardianships/Conservatorships & the Family Services and Justice Fund

In response to similar legislation from 2023, HCS for HB 881, officials from the **Office of State Courts Administrator (OSCA)** stated there may be some impact but there is no way to quantify that currently. Any significant changes will be reflected in future budget requests.

**Oversight** notes §475.063 specifies what assistance a court clerk must provide or make available for a petitioner filing for emergency or full orders regarding a minor entering adult guardianship or conservatorship. The duties of the court clerk will be performed without cost to the petitioner. No filing fees, court costs, or bond will be assessed to the petitioner as well. The clerk may be reimbursed from the Family Services and Justice Fund for expenses incurred under §488.2300.

**Oversight** notes §488.2300 allows fees incurred for guardianship or conservatorship proceedings by court-appointed attorneys, physicians, or other professionals, as well as fees incurred by court clerks providing assistance, to be given priority for payment from the "Family Services and Justice Fund". This section also doesn't prohibit the appropriation of funds by the general assembly to the various county family services and justice funds of the family courts of the counties.

**Oversight** assumes the various county circuits are provided with core funding to handle a certain amount of activity each year. Oversight assumes the county circuits could absorb the costs related to this proposal. If multiple bills pass which require additional staffing and duties at

substantial costs, then the county circuits could request funding through the appropriation process. Therefore, Oversight will reflect a \$0 fiscal impact for this proposal.

Responses regarding the proposed legislation as a whole

Officials from the **Attorney General’s Office**, the **Department of Commerce and Insurance**, the **Department of Economic Development**, the **Department of Health and Senior Services**, the **Department of Mental Health**, the **Department of Social Services** and the **Joint Committee on Administrative Rules** each assume the proposal will have no fiscal impact on their respective organizations. **Oversight** does not have any information to the contrary. Therefore, Oversight will reflect a zero impact in the fiscal note for these agencies.

Officials from the **Office of the Secretary of State (SOS)** note many bills considered by the General Assembly include provisions allowing or requiring agencies to submit rules and regulations to implement the act. The SOS is provided with core funding to handle a certain amount of normal activity resulting from each year's legislative session. The fiscal impact for this fiscal note to the SOS for Administrative Rules is less than \$5,000. The SOS recognizes that this is a small amount and does not expect that additional funding would be required to meet these costs. However, the SOS also recognizes that many such bills may be passed by the General Assembly in a given year and that collectively the costs may be in excess of what the office can sustain with its core budget. Therefore, the SOS reserves the right to request funding for the cost of supporting administrative rules requirements should the need arise based on a review of the finally approved bills signed by the governor.

<u>FISCAL IMPACT – State Government</u>	FY 2025 (10 Mo.)	FY 2026	FY 2027
	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>

<u>FISCAL IMPACT – Local Government</u>	FY 2025 (10 Mo.)	FY 2026	FY 2027
	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>

FISCAL IMPACT – Small Business

There could be a direct fiscal impact to small businesses who sell software for electronic wills and estate planning as a result of this proposal.

## FISCAL DESCRIPTION

This bill establishes the "Missouri Electronic Wills and Electronic Estate Planning Documents Act", which specifies that an electronic will is considered a will for all purposes of the law of this state and that any written estate planning document may be executed electronically. An "electronic will" is defined in the bill as a record that is readable as text at the time of signing, is signed by the testator or another individual in the testator's name, and is signed in the physical or electronic presence of the testator by at least two individuals after witnessing the signing of the will or the testator's acknowledgment of the signing of the will or acknowledgment of the will itself. Types of estate planning documents include a power of attorney or durable power of attorney, an advance directive, an irrevocable trust, and a beneficiary deed, as well as other types of documents. The bill establishes a process by which an electronic will may be made self-proved as well as how all or part of an electronic will may be revoked.

If there is evidence that a testator signed an electronic will and neither an electronic will nor a certified paper copy of the electronic will can be found after the testator's death, there will be a presumption that the testator revoked the electronic will even if no instrument or later will revoking the electronic will can be located. A person may create a certified paper copy of an electronic will or an electronic estate planning document by affirming under penalty of perjury that a paper copy of the electronic will is a complete, true, and accurate copy of the electronic will or the estate planning document.

The provisions of this bill apply to the will of a decedent who dies on or after August 28, 2024, and to each other written estate planning document signed or remotely witnessed on or after August 28, 2024.

The bill also specifies that certain estate planning documents that were executed during the period between April 6, 2020, and December 31, 2021, during which a state of emergency existed due to COVID-19 and there was a temporary suspension of physical appearance requirements, will be deemed to have satisfied the physical presence requirements if certain requirements, specified in the bill, were met.

The bill adds a person acting as a parent of a minor entering adult guardianship or conservatorship to the list of those persons who must, except in certain circumstances, be appointed as guardians or conservators of minors, as well as to the hierarchy of those who must be considered for appointment to serve as guardian for an incapacitated person or conservator for a disabled person. The bill also excludes persons acting as parents from the requirement that persons seeking guardianship complete a background screening at their own expense.

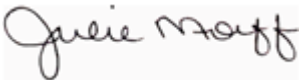
The bill specifies what assistance a court clerk must provide or make available for a petitioner filing for emergency or full orders regarding a minor entering adult guardianship or conservatorship.

Finally, the bill allows fees incurred for guardianship or conservatorship proceedings by court-appointed attorneys, physicians, or other professionals, as well as fees incurred by court clerks providing assistance, to be given priority for payment from the "Family Services and Justice Fund".

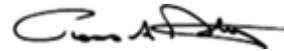
This legislation is not federally mandated, would not duplicate any other program and would not require additional capital improvements or rental space.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Office of the State Courts Administrator  
Attorney General's Office  
Department of Commerce and Insurance  
Department of Economic Development  
Department of Health and Senior Services  
Department of Mental Health  
Department of Social Services  
Joint Committee on Administrative Rules  
Office of the Secretary of State



Julie Morff  
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January 29, 2024



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January 29, 2024