

HCS HB 756 -- COMPENSATION OF CIRCUIT CLERKS

SPONSOR: Pouche

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 10 to 1.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 756.

This bill amends the base salary structure for circuit clerks by increasing the base salaries, depending on classification of county, starting September 1, 2025. The bill also repeals a provision related to child support payments ordered by a judge in Marion County to be paid through the circuit clerk. The bill also requires a initial appropriation to fully fund the increase before the increase will go into effect.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this bill sets the salaries for the circuit clerks statewide to a uniform amount for the most part. It has not been addressed other than cost of living increases since 1995. The clerks' staff is experiencing a lot of compression between the clerks themselves and the staff, as the clerks feel that they are shouldering a lot more of the job duties and not receiving much more money than the staff earns. There are retention problems, too. Rural counties are having a hard time keeping experienced people in the jobs and they are losing them to the larger counties. In 2022, there were several clerks who did not seek reelection and, in years before that, some left before they even completed their terms. Additionally, exit interviews all showed that clerks believe compensation has not increased with all the changes made to the job duties. Clerks' duties have evolved dramatically, and they have to be knowledgeable about many areas, including expungement, and they have to be available at all hours for warrants. They need to have the most qualified people, but they are not being fairly compensated.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Pouche; Tiffany Phillips, Missouri Circuit Clerks Association; Eric Stallo.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the circuit clerk and the deputies in St. Charles are paid for by the county itself, and the clerks are paid handsomely. But the deputies do not make

enough money, to the point where some of them are on public assistance, and this is unfair to some counties.

Testifying in person against the bill was Arnie Dienoff.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.