

Court of Claims of Ohio

Sub. H.B. 153
Main Operating Appropriations Bill
FY2012 - 2013

Senate Finance Committee

Senators

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Miles C. Durfey
Clerk of the Court
May 4, 2011

Chairman Widener and Members of the Committee, I am Miles Durfey, Clerk of the Court of Claims.

General Revenue Fund

For the upcoming biennium, the Court is proposing a *reduction* in FY2012 funding of 7.4% from the FY2011 appropriation; we are proposing a *further reduction* of 2.8% for FY2013. The two figures combined (10.2%) meet the 10% in cuts endorsed by the Ohio Supreme Court for Ohio's judiciary.

This ability to control personnel costs has always had a significant impact on the Court's budget, inasmuch as 90% of the GRF pays for the salaries of our judges, attorneys/magistrates, clerks and administrative staff. The remaining 10% pays for court reporters, equipment, and maintenance and supplies.

There were 1,231 civil cases filed in our Court last calendar year. We held 123 trials and 1,446 conferences, all of which were accomplished by only 1.4 full-time equivalent judges and 23.5 full-time equivalent staff.

Current cost-cutting measures include:

- No planned salary increases either for judges appointed by the Supreme Court, or for outside magistrates, or for court staff;
- No new hires;
- Reduced travel related to trials at penal institutions by using videoconferencing; and

- No large equipment purchases.

Court of Claims Victims of Crime Fund

The operating costs of hearing appeals in victims cases are funded by the Court's 5K20 (SSR) fund and include:

- the compensation of judges and commissioners appointed by the Supreme Court;
- court personnel; and
- administrative expenses of hearing and determining appeals.

In each fiscal year of the upcoming biennium, the Court is requesting flat-funding for our Victims Division. Current and future spending will be restrained by the same measures applied to our GRF expenditures (noted above).

85% of the Court's Victims budget pays the salaries of our judges, commissioners, and other personnel. The remaining 15% pays for those same costs related to our GRF budget.

Conclusion

There are no major initiatives planned for the next biennium, and there have been no major legislative developments that have impacted Court operations.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee. At this time I will try to answer any questions that you may have.