

## **SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

### **HB 5014 Department of Justice**

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To:           Ways and Means Full Committee  
From:        Public Safety Subcommittee  
Carrier:      Senator Hansell

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HB 5014 is the budget bill for the Department of Justice. DOJ is responsible for the general legal counsel and supervision of all legal actions in which the state is a party or has an interest. DOJ is also responsible for several other programs including child support enforcement, crime victims' compensation, consumer protection, regulation of charitable organizations, and supporting the law enforcement community.

The budget is \$704.5 million total funds, including: \$137 million General Fund, \$381.4 million Other Funds and \$186.1 million Federal Funds. It includes 1,467 positions for 1,451.56 FTE. The budget is a decrease of 0.4% from the 2019-21 legislatively approved budget. The decrease is primarily due to the elimination of federal grant and Coronavirus Relief Act funding and the completion of the Child Support Enforcement Automated System information technology project.

The budget includes General Fund investments to backfill a revenue shortfall in punitive damage awards for the Crime Victims and Survivor Services Division and a revenue shortfall in the recovery of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families in the Division of Child Support. There is also a General Fund backfill due to the loss of a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area grant for the Criminal Justice Division. General Fund support is provided to maintain the Child Support Enforcement Automated System and to support the forecasted caseload for the Defense of Criminal Convictions. The Environmental Crimes and Cultural Resources Enforcement Unit is now directly supported with General Fund.

Other Fund investments include support for caseload changes in the various legal divisions, centralized administrative support positions, and the Legal Tools Replacement information technology project.

Federal Fund investments include the continuation of a Victims of Crime Act grant, a Human Trafficking grant, and matching Federal Funds for the Division of Child Support.

The budget report includes the unscheduling of General and Other Funds related to the most recent U.S. Supreme Court's Ramos v. Louisiana decision until the decision can be better understood and a report made to the Legislative Fiscal Office.

The hourly legal rate charged by DOJ to client agencies is established as part of the legislative budget process. The hourly rate for the 2021-23 biennium is set at \$242. The rate is a \$28 increase over the current biennium's rate of \$214 and represents a 13.1% increase. The recommended rate is estimated to generate \$272 million total funds.

The budget report includes five budget notes relating to the reporting on the activities of the Environmental Crimes and Cultural Resources Enforcement Unit, prior biennia crime victim investments and outcomes, the Legal Tools Replacement project, legal support for high risk agencies, and the agency's internal audit function.

The Subcommittee approved updated key performance measures and targets, with instructions that the department continue with its review and updating of KPMs and report back to the Legislature in 2022.

The Public Safety Subcommittee recommends HB 5014 be amended by the -1 amendment and be reported out do pass, as amended.