

HB 2391 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Judiciary

Action Date: 03/29/23

Action: Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference.
(Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 10-0-0-0

Yeas: 10 - Andersen, Bynum, Chaichi, Conrad, Kropf, Lewis, Morgan, Reynolds, Tran, Wallan

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 3/21, 3/29

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates to the Department of Justice (DOJ), for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, \$25,400,000. Directs DOJ to distribute moneys to fund victim assistance advocates (advocate) in county district attorney (DA) offices at a four-to-one ratio (for every four full-time DAs, one advocate), or, if a county has less than four full-time DAs, directs DOJ to fund one advocate. At the end of the biennium, unexpended moneys revert to the General Fund. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Costs have been slowly shifting from the state to the county for funding of DA operations
- Senate Bill 2308 (2023)
- Strengthen services to crime victims
- Range of services provided by victims' rights advocates
- Ratios of prosecutors to DAs
- Difficulty of victim advocate jobs; nature of tasks; caseloads
- Victims' advocates prioritized for the most serious types of cases

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces the measure.

BACKGROUND:

Victim advocates are typically assigned in felony and domestic violence cases. District attorney offices have trained advocates that work directly with crime victims to explain the criminal justice system, including what their rights are, accompany them to court, refer them to appropriate community services, and guide victims through the prosecution process.

House Bill 2391 A appropriates to the Department of Justice (DOJ) \$25.4 million from the General Fund to fund county victim assistance programs, and would fund at least one victim assistance advocate per county district attorney office.