

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the Legislature. LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR	<u>Cervantes</u>	LAST UPDATED	<u>2/26/2025</u>
		ORIGINAL DATE	<u>2/20/2025</u>
		BILL	<u>Senate Bill</u>
SHORT TITLE	<u>Permanent Courts & Justice Committee</u>	NUMBER	<u>456/aSRC</u>
		ANALYST	<u>Leger</u>

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT*

(dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Legislative Branch		\$50.0 to \$80.0	\$50.0 to \$80.0	\$100.0 to \$160.0	Recurring	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Relates to House Joint Memorial 2

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Because of the short timeframe between the introduction of this bill and its first hearing, LFC has yet to receive analysis from state, education, or judicial agencies. This analysis could be updated if that analysis is received.

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SRC Amendment to Senate Bill 456

The Senate Rules Committee amendment to Senate Bill 456 (SB456) modifies the number of joint interim Courts and Justice Committee members from eight to 10. The Legislative Council will appoint five members from the House of Representatives and five members from the Senate.

Synopsis of Senate Bill 456

Senate Bill 456 (SB 456) creates a permanent Joint Interim Courts and Justice Committee. The committee will be composed of eight members appointed by the Legislative Council to include four members from the House of Representatives and four members from the Senate.

The committee is directed to continuously study the programs, agencies, policies, issues and needs relating to courts and justice, including review and study of the statutes, constitutional provisions, rules, and court decisions governing such statutes, programs, agencies issues, and needs. A study of the full continuum of programs and services available and needed for people who are involved in or otherwise affected by the justice systems is to be completed. The committee will have the power to conduct hearings and administer oaths and subpoena attendance of witnesses and production of documents.

A report and recommendations, including any necessary legislation, shall be made available to

the Legislative Council on or before December 15 preceding each session. Staff for the committee shall be provided by the Legislative Council Service (LCS).

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns if enacted, or June 20, 2025.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SB456 does not include an appropriation to cover estimated mileage and per diem costs for 10 committee members or to hire staff. LCS will have to absorb all costs associated with this bill. If sufficient funding is not available within LCS budget, they may request funding in the 2026 legislative session. A cost estimate for staffing is not included because LCS may use its current budget and absorb the cost of one staff member for the committee.

It is estimated the cost of mileage and per diem for meetings over the course of one fiscal year will cost between \$50 thousand and \$80 thousand. Costs will vary depending on the frequency and duration of the committee's meetings.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Courts, Corrections and Justice Committee (CCJ) is an interim committee created by the Legislative Council on March 25, 2024.

Hiring of additional legislative staff may pose an issue. Currently, the space for year-round full-time staff housed within the state capitol and Capitol North is inadequate. Sharing offices, creating landing spots, and occupying committee rooms during the interim have allowed for temporary relief. Should the Secretary of State vacate the capitol, the space will likely accommodate only the current staff and not any new staff.

RELATIONSHIP

House Joint Memorial 2 (HJM2) requests the Legislative Council to study combining standing interim committee into committees that function during the legislative session and the interim.

HJM2 requests the study include how standing and interim committees could be combined into year-round committees, the staffing needs of combined committees, administration and funding of the combined committees, the legislation needed to combine the committees, the number of combined committees needed, and each committee's area of subject matter to be implemented in 2027.

ALTERNATIVES

The interim CCJ committee may prioritize duties listed in SB456 and include them in its yearly work plan.

JL/rl/hg/sgs/SR