

Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office

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FISCAL NOTE

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H.515 An Act Relating to Executive Branch and Judiciary Fees

Senate Finance Committee Proposal of Amendment

Sec. 1-3 Judiciary Fees

These sections establish or clarify fees impacting the Judiciary branch. Section 1 would set a fee for requests to “modify” child custody determinations issued by courts in other States. This section would also add language to statute establishing that a fee will be charged for motions to reopen existing cases in the Probate division of the Superior Court. Section 2 adds language clarifying when a fee will be charged for annual accounts on decedents’ estates, establishes a fee structure for motions to reopen estates when an asset is discovered, and establishes fees for small estate affidavit procedures and for requests for findings regarding motor vehicle titles. Section 3 would establish a fee for exemplified certificates.

The Judiciary has testified that in many of these cases, courts are already charging some sort of fee for the services named above. The intent is simply to codify one standard fee for the services rendered. **The Judiciary estimates that any revenue changes will be very small or negligible because the services apply to a very small cohort.**

Sec. 4 Worker’s Compensation Administration

The Legislature is required by statute to set the Worker’s Compensation Fund contribution rate for employers and for self-insured individuals. If the rates are not set in a given year then they automatically revert to rates that are in statute under 21 VSA §711(a). Typically, the rates are set in session law notwithstanding the statutory rates. The existing rate for employers, set yearly in session law since 2013, is 1.45%. This bill proposes to alter the statutory rate of contribution for employers from 1.75% to 1.4%. The contribution rate for self-insured individuals will remain at 1.0%. **The rate change will reduce revenues to the Worker’s Compensation Administration Fund by approximately \$506,000 in FY18.**

Sec. 5 Food and Lodging Establishments (SFC)

This section is a re-write of 18 VSA Ch. 85. None of the existing fees are increased in this section. **No FY18 fiscal impact.**

Sec. 6 Short-Term Rentals (SFC)

This section would require anyone operating or maintaining a “short-term rental” to register annually with the Dept. of Health and to meet all applicable safety and tax requirements. An annual fee of \$130 per registrant would be required. There are multiple online platforms for short-term rentals and the same rental unit may be on multiple platforms. Additionally, some lodging establishments also utilize short-term rental platforms. There were approximately 3,000 short-term rentals on the AirBnB rental platform in 2016, and currently there are 3,882 rentals listed on the platform HomeAway. However, it is unclear at this time exactly how many unique short-term rentals there are across Vermont that are not duplicated between platforms and are not already registered as lodging establishments.

This sub-chapter would go into effect on January 1, 2019.

No FY18 fiscal impact. Fiscal impact in FY19 and forward is unknown at this time.