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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/26/08

SPONSOR Morales LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE 6th District Restorative Justice Services SB 254

ANALYST C. Sanchez

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$270.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

This Courts, Corrections and Justice Committee-sponsored bill would appropriate \$270,000 from the General Fund to the 6th Judicial District court for expenditure in FY 2009 to provide juvenile and adult offender restorative justice services in the 6th Judicial District, including mediation, community conferencing and justice circles. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY 2009 shall revert to the General Fund.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$270,000 is to hire an employee (.5 FTE) to support this project. The remaining funds (contractual) will be used for the design and implementation of restorative justice practices and research and evaluation to incorporate best practices and monitor and demonstrate effectiveness. Community volunteers and donations will provide additional support.

The total amount of \$270,000 is recurring expenses and increases the budget of the 6th Judicial District court.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The 6th Judicial District was successful in securing funding from the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council (JJAC) to implement a Restorative Justice Program in Grant County in 2004. The Grant County Restorative Justice Program has been successful, with positive results for the local judiciary, schools, and law enforcement. This appropriation would allow for the expansion of the model, and make it possible to offer the services of restorative justice district-wide. It will provide restorative justice services that repair the harm done in crime, provide closure for victims, hold offenders accountable, contribute to public safety, and build a stronger sense of community.

Restorative justice is an emerging approach in modern criminal justice that has roots in traditional community values. It is a set of practices grounded in the following values and principles:

- Crime is an act that harms people and affects the community. It is not just about breaking the law.
- Victims of crime should have the opportunity to face the person who caused them harm.
- The offender is accountable to the victim and community for the harm he or she has caused.
- Effort must be made to repair the harm and restore all parties affected to the extent possible.
- Effective response to crime includes building offender competency.
- Building offender competency/skills serves to reduce the need for further criminal justice intervention.

Restorative justice provides the following benefits:

- Victims are provided an opportunity to face the offender, ask questions only the offender can answer, and express the impact of the crime on themselves and their family.
- The community has a meaningful voice in the cause and effect of crime in their neighborhoods.
- Studies consistently show a reduction in repeat offenses by offenders after participating in restorative justice. Offenders realize that it is about more than just breaking the law, and that they have affected others. They are in turn supported in repairing the harm in a meaningful way.
- Participants indicate high satisfaction for the process.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

A portion of the funding will be used to evaluate the program, incorporate best practices and monitor and demonstrate the effectiveness of the program.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

The 6th Judicial District will not be able to provide restorative justice services.