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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

**ORIGINAL DATE** 01/30/12  
**LAST UPDATED** 02/08/12    **HB** \_\_\_\_\_

**SPONSOR**    Sanchez, M.

**SHORT TITLE**    13<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Pilot Program    **SB** 238/aSJC

**ANALYST** Jorgensen

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY12	FY13		
	\$75.0	Nonrecurring	General

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of SJC Amendment

The Senate Judiciary Committee amendment will result in the appropriation of \$75 thousand to the Administrative Office of the Courts for the purpose of funding a pilot program to improve the quality of legal representation and case management in abuse and neglect cases in the 13<sup>th</sup> judicial district court. The amendment will require the AOC, rather than the 13<sup>th</sup> judicial district court to manage the funds appropriated.

#### Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Bill 238 appropriates \$75 thousand from the general fund to the thirteenth judicial district court for the purpose of improving the quality of legal representation and case management in abuse and neglect cases.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$75 thousand contained in this bill is a nonrecurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 13 shall revert to the general fund.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

The 13<sup>th</sup> judicial district has experienced a 31% increase in abuse and neglect filings and a 10% increase in mental health and guardianship cases involving children during the last year. The additional funds will be used to contract with attorneys appointed by the court as guardian ad litem to represent the child guardianship proceedings. The guardian ad litem will investigate/ensure that the temporary guardian provides a safe environment for the child pending court hearings.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The Administrative Office of the Courts currently manages the contracts for court appointed attorneys in abuse and neglect, mental health, and select guardianship proceedings. Attorneys submit their billing statements directly to the AOC and are paid from the Court Appointed Attorneys Fees Fund (CAAFF). Allocating funds directly to the Thirteenth Judicial District may require the 13<sup>th</sup> to invest staff time in managing both the funds and the contracts for the two additional attorneys.

**WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

Status quo.

CJ/svb:lj