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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Sedillo Lopez ORIGINAL DATE 03/08/21  
LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_  
SHORT TITLE Parenting Coordinators SB 355  
ANALYST Dick-Peddie

### **ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)**

|              | FY21 | FY22 | FY23 | 3 Year<br>Total Cost | Recurring or<br>Nonrecurring | Fund<br>Affected |
|--------------|------|------|------|----------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Total</b> | NFI  | NFI  | NFI  |                      |                              |                  |

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### **SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

### **SUMMARY**

#### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 355 authorizes the appointment of parent coordinators in child custody cases. The bill defines the term “parent coordinator,” and allows parent coordinators to act as an arbitrator regarding disputes between parents if both parents agree to the parent coordinator having arbitration authority. The proposed legislation grants parent coordinators protection as an arm of the court (thus limiting personal liability) to act in the best interests of the child(ren) in the case, and provides that payment of a parent coordinator by the parties, pursuant to an order of the court.

There is no effective date of this bill. It is assumed that the effective date is 90 days following adjournment of the Legislature.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

State courts or the Administrative Office of the Courts would be required to develop court rules and additional administrative forms to certify parent coordinators to meet the requirements of Senate Bill 355. However, these costs would likely be minimal, and easily absorbed by the current budget of the Administrative Office of the Courts, therefore the bill has no fiscal impact

on the state.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

Parent coordinators are currently already appointed by courts, even though there is no specific statutory authority for such coordinators, resulting in inconsistencies in the scope and authority of such coordinators throughout the state. This legislation would provide structure regarding what a parent coordinator is, what they can and cannot do in their role, and protect parent coordinators who are necessarily working in high-conflict custody cases.

ADP/al