

INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2015-006

1
2
3 REQUESTING THAT THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, AND LOCAL
4 AFFAIRS CONDUCT AN INTERIM STUDY REGARDING THE FINANCIAL
5 CONDITION OF THE DISTRICT COURT SYSTEM, SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO
6 THE CITIES AND COUNTIES SUPPORTING THOSE COURTS, INCLUDING
7 WITHOUT LIMITATION DISTRICT COURT FUNDING, OPERATIONAL COSTS,
8 COURT COSTS, FEES, FINES, AND THE LOCAL REVENUE STREAM TO THE
9 STATE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE FUND.

10
11 WHEREAS, with the passage of Amendment 80 to the Arkansas Constitution
12 municipal courts became obsolete and a new third tier to the state's court
13 system was created, becoming known as the "district court system"; and
14

15 WHEREAS, the district court system has gone through substantial changes
16 over the past decade, including without limitation increased jurisdiction,
17 many district court judges becoming state employees, and the establishment of
18 a district court judges' retirement system; and
19

20 WHEREAS, the establishment of uniform court costs as well as the
21 substantial increase in those costs over the years has primarily benefitted
22 many state agencies and departments while doing little to nothing to assist
23 local government; and
24

25 WHEREAS, additional fees and fines have also been put into effect that,
26 along with court costs, have had a crippling effect on local governments'
27 ability to collect fine revenue and operate the courts; and
28

29 WHEREAS, despite these many legislative changes local government
30 continues to be required to pay the vast majority of the operational costs of
31 district courts, including without limitation salaries, benefits, buildings,
32 computers, and utilities while suffering from a depleted revenue stream to
33 fund the courts,
34

35 NOW THEREFORE,
36

1 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, AND LOCAL AFFAIRS OF
2 THE NINETIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

3
4 THAT the Senate Committee on City, County, and Local Affairs conduct an
5 interim study regarding the financial condition of the district court system,
6 specifically related to the cities and counties supporting those courts,
7 including without limitation district court funding, operational costs, court
8 costs, fees, fines, and the local revenue stream to the State Administration
9 of Justice Fund.

10
11 Respectfully submitted,

12
13
14
15 Senator Missy Irvin
16 District 18

17
18
19 By: BPG/LNS
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36