



## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

### FISCAL NOTE

SENATE BILL NO. 334

PRINTERS NO. 1143

PRIME SPONSOR: Pileggi

#### COST / (SAVINGS)

FUND	FY 2012/13	FY 2013/14
General Fund	\$0	(\$311,000)

**SUMMARY:** Senate Bill 334 amends the Judicial Code concerning the Philadelphia Municipal Court. It would take effect immediately.

**ANALYSIS:** This legislation eliminates the Philadelphia Traffic Court in the Judicial Code and replaces it with a Traffic Division within the Philadelphia Municipal Court. Current, sitting Philadelphia Traffic Court judges will continue to serve in the Traffic Division of the Municipal Court until either their terms end or the Philadelphia Traffic Court is abolished by an amendment to the state constitution.

Under this legislation, the Philadelphia Municipal Court increases from 25 to 27 judges. The President Judge of the Philadelphia Municipal Court is permitted to appoint hearing officers. The president judge must also file an annual report with the General Assembly regarding the Traffic Division. The report would include how funding was allocated for the Traffic Division, the number of cases that came before the Traffic Division, and how the cases were resolved by the Traffic Division.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** It is estimated this legislation could save the Commonwealth approximately \$311,000 in fiscal year 2013-14. The elimination of the Philadelphia Traffic Court would save a projected \$926,000 from the state's General Fund budget in 2013-14. However, adding two judges to the Philadelphia Municipal Court would cost \$475,000 in 2013-14 for salaries and expenses, according to the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC). There are currently four judges elected to the Philadelphia Traffic Court (PTC), of which three are suspended without pay. The cost of maintaining the one remaining PTC judge in the Municipal Court would be approximately \$140,000, for a total cost of \$615,000 and a savings of \$311,000. A reinstatement of any of the suspended judges would reduce these savings.

It is not known at this time how many, if any, hearing officers would be appointed by the President Judge of the Philadelphia Municipal Court as a result of this legislation. However,

State General Fund appropriations for the Philadelphia Municipal Court are only for the salaries and expenses of judges. Any additional money necessary for hearing officers would come from local funds.

**PREPARED BY:** Jeff Miller  
House Appropriations Committee (R)

**DATE:** June 4, 2013

*Estimates are calculated using the best information available. Actual costs and revenue impact incurred may vary from estimates.*