

**SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
FISCAL NOTE**

BILL NO. Senate Bill 397

PRINTER NO. 305

AMOUNT

No Fiscal Impact

FUND

General Fund

DATE INTRODUCED

January 30, 2014

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Alloway

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF BILL

Senate Bill 397 Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) to provide further regulation of the bail bondsman industry in Pennsylvania.

SB 397 would streamline and modernize the licensing of bail bondsmen by discontinuing separate licensure for professional and surety bondsmen. The bill requires every bondsman to be licensed as an insurance producer with a casualty line of authority and to issue bonds only under a power of authority granted by a qualified insurance company that has satisfied the minimum capital and surplus requirement necessary for licensure. Licensure will also require all bail bondsmen to pass an approved 24 credit hour pre-examination course; be subjected to fingerprinting by the Pennsylvania Insurance Department; pass a licensing examination; complete 24 credit hours of continuing education for each two-year license period; adhere to Pennsylvania Insurance Department approved premium rates; and requires bondsmen to maintain an office in the Commonwealth to provide consumer protection.

This bill strengthens the tools and resources of county officials to enforce and collect unpaid bail forfeitures. It also permits law enforcement personnel to assist bail bondsmen in fugitive recovery provided it is done on their own time, they are separately compensated, and they are neither "in uniform" nor show their badge when engaging in this activity.

This act shall take effect in 120 days.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Senate Bill 397 will have no impact to the Commonwealth.