
Judiciary Committee

HB 2674

Title: An act relating to filing fee surcharges for funding dispute resolution centers.

Brief Description: Concerning filing fee surcharges for funding dispute resolution centers.

Sponsors: Representatives Jinkins, Rodne, Kilduff, Reykdal and Fey.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows county legislative authorities to impose a \$20 surcharge on filing fees in Superior Court, and raise surcharges on civil filing fees in District and filing fees in Small Claims Court to \$20, for the purpose of funding Dispute Resolution Centers.
- Provides that the fee levels may be adjusted annually up to the state's fiscal growth factor.

Hearing Date: 1/27/16

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195).

Background:

The creation of Dispute Resolution Centers (DRCs) was first authorized in statute as part of the 1984 Court Improvement Act in order to provide forums in which persons may voluntarily participate in the resolution of disputes in an informal and less adversarial atmosphere than a judicial setting. A DRC may be created and operated by a city or county, or by a nonprofit corporation.

Participation by all parties is voluntary, and services offered by a DRC must be provided without charge to the participants or for a fee which is based upon the participant's ability to pay. Typical cases handled by DRCs involve:

- landlords and tenants;
- consumers and merchants;

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- neighbors;
- citizens and agencies;
- employees and employers;
- families; and
- divorcing and divorced couples.

County legislative authorities may impose a surcharge of up to \$10 on each civil filing fee in District Court, and a surcharge of up to \$15 on each filing fee for small claims actions for the purpose of funding DRCs. Surcharges are collected by the clerk of the court and remitted to the county treasurer for deposit in a separate account used solely for DRCs.

Summary of Bill:

A county legislative authority may impose a surcharge of up to \$20 on each filing fee in Superior Court for the purpose of funding DRCs. The maximum amount of a DRC surcharge that may be imposed in district or small claims courts is raised as follows:

- In District Court, the maximum surcharge on each civil filing fee is raised from \$10 to \$20.
- In Small Claims Court, the maximum on each filing fee is raised from \$15 to \$20.

These flat fee levels may be adjusted annually up to the state's fiscal growth factor. "Fiscal growth factor" means the average growth in state personal income for the prior ten fiscal years.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/21/16.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.