



Office of Representative John E. Barnes, Jr.

Thank you, Chair Ginter, Vice Chair LaTourette, Ranking Member Boyd, and my esteemed colleagues on the Community and Family Advancement Committee for the opportunity to give sponsor testimony on House Bill 681, which will create the Community Outreach Grant Program Fund.

This bill will create the Community Outreach Grant Program Fund in the state treasury. The stated purpose of the Fund is to provide grants to political subdivisions for community-police outreach programs, diversity outreach programs, and public education concerning the ongoing opioid epidemic. The Attorney General is required to administer the Fund.

A political subdivision or group of political subdivisions may apply to the Attorney General to receive a community outreach grant. An application must identify the proposed use of the grant, which must be one or both of the following:

- Community-police outreach programs and diversity outreach programs which include one or more events to educate the public concerning community-police relations and to help the public meet the community's police and public service personnel;
- Education programs within the political subdivision or subdivisions that pertain to the ongoing opioid epidemic and its effect on the political subdivision or subdivisions and the state in general.

The Attorney General must adopt rules under the Administrative Procedure Act prescribing application procedures and procedures for receiving grants. Upon receiving an application, the Attorney General may award a grant from the Fund to a political subdivision or group of political subdivisions for either or both of the proposed uses listed above. Each political subdivision is permitted to receive only one grant of up to \$5,000 from the Fund. Any grant awarded may not exceed the amount remaining in the Fund that is attributable to amounts collected by a court with territorial jurisdiction that includes the political subdivision. The Attorney General must distribute any grant made under the bill on or before June 30, 2021.

To fund the Community Outreach Grant Program Fund, the bill temporarily diverts 25% of amounts that, under current law, would be paid into the Crime Victims Reparations Fund. For the period beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, 25% of all of the following amounts that would otherwise be paid to the Reparations Fund must be paid to the Community Outreach Grant Program Fund under the bill:

- \$30 or \$9 in court costs in felony and misdemeanor cases, respectively;
- Fees for license reinstatement after certain OVI offenses;
- A portion of the proceeds of the sale of a vehicle subject to criminal forfeiture.

The bill does not affect amounts reimbursed to the Reparations Fund through subrogation or payments collected by the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and paid into the Reparations Fund from prisoners who voluntarily participate in an approved work and training program under continuing law. For purposes of determining the amounts available for grants to political subdivisions, the Attorney General must create a separate account in the Community Outreach Grant Program Fund for each court that deposits money into the Fund. All amounts remaining in the Fund after the deadline for grants on July 1, 2021, must be transferred into the Reparations Fund.

The bill requires the Attorney General to collect information from each political subdivision that receives a grant from the Fund to determine whether the rate of crime decreased in those areas as a result of the education or outreach made possible by the grant and to investigate alternative means of funding the Fund after the temporary funding provided in the bill has expired. The Attorney General must compile this information into a report and submit the report to the General Assembly no later than December 31, 2021.

Thank you again for this opportunity, I would be happy to answer any questions.