



H.B. No. 64
Main Operating Appropriations Bill
FY2016 – 2017

Senate Finance:
Corrections Subcommittee

Senators

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Mark H. Reed
Clerk of the Court
April 30, 2015

Chair Uecker and Members of the Committee:

I am Mark Reed, Clerk of the Ohio Court of Claims. On behalf of Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor and the justices of the Supreme Court, I thank you for providing me this opportunity to testify in support of this proposed budget for the Court of Claims. Also here with me today is Jennie Parks, Director of Operations for the Court of Claims and the court's chief fiscal officer.

The Court of Claims is the only statutory trial court with statewide jurisdiction. Prior to its creation, there was no forum for civil actions filed against the state of Ohio. The Court of Claims' principle duties include:

1. Adjudicating civil actions filed against the state;
2. Hearing appeals from decisions made by the Attorney General on claims allowed under the Victims of Crime Law; and
3. Acting as the state's fiduciary agent for processing claims of wrongful imprisonment.

For FY2016 the Court is requesting a total appropriation of \$2,990,143 (an increase of 2.5% from FY2015) and a FY2017 total appropriation of \$2,970,438 (an increase of 1.8% from FY2015). The increases are attributable to increased healthcare and payroll charges, as payroll accounts for 85% of our court's total spending.

I would note for the Committee that our GRF request was reduced by the House Finance Committee in correlation with the elimination of the judges' market adjustment language. Should this Committee restore that language, the Court would ask that you restore our GRF appropriation levels to the executive recommendations of \$2,568,582 for FY2016 and \$2,609,680 for FY2017.

Since the last budget, the Court successfully achieved several important goals including the following:

- Launched a new website in January 2015 geared toward the pro se filer and general public;
- Eliminated a level of appellate review of crime victim's appeals;

- Overhauled the administrative process for claims of \$10,000 or less;
- Completed a comprehensive process workflow documentation & analysis project to identify and implement areas for improvement; and
- Live-streamed our first trial via the web.

This budget will support the following key and/or new initiatives:

- Continued enhancements to our court case management system and website;
- Implementation of e-Filing & e-Payment; and
- Replacement of aging courtroom technology equipment.

We believe we will be fully able to implement these new initiatives within our proposed budget by continuing to scrutinize and selectively fill positions as vacancies occur, by offering early retirement incentives and by continuing to look for savings opportunities as business practices are streamlined.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.