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# OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research  
and Drafting

Legislative Budget  
Office

**H.B. 531**  
**136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly**

## **Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement**

[Click here for H.B. 521's Bill Analysis](#)

**Version:** As Introduced

**Primary Sponsors:** Reps. Newman and Ritter

**Local Impact Statement Procedure Required:** No

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### **Highlights**

- The annual cost for the Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation to perform criminal background checks may increase to some degree, and may be more or less offset by the fees charged to conduct a criminal records check.
- The State Board of Education may incur a minimal increase in costs for the Retained Applicant Fingerprint Database (RAPBACK) continuous criminal record monitoring service due to the enrollment of volunteer chaplains.
- The bill likely has little, if any, fiscal effect on school districts and other public schools that opt to accept volunteer chaplain services.
- The Department of Education and Workforce's administrative workload will minimally increase to maintain a registry of chaplains volunteering in districts and schools.

### **Detailed Analysis**

The bill permits school districts, community schools, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) schools to accept a chaplain as a volunteer to provide support, services, and programs for students. Under the bill, volunteer chaplains will not be required to apply for a license or certification with the State Board of Education, but they must register with and submit a criminal background check to the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW). The bill requires each school district board or governing authority of a school to vote at a public meeting, no later than December 1, 2026, on whether to authorize its schools to accept a volunteer chaplain beginning in the 2026-2027 school year. Chaplain services may be offered in addition to, but not instead of, school counselor services. Furthermore, the bill permits each district or school, if they elect to accept a volunteer chaplain, to establish requirements and

procedures as necessary for the implementation of a volunteer chaplain, as well as the chaplain's offered programs or services.

The annual cost for the Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) to conduct criminal background check activities and services may increase to the extent that districts and schools accept chaplains. These costs will be more or less offset by the fees charged to conduct a background check. BCI administers state-only background checks as well as federal background checks through the FBI, for which it charges base fees of \$22 and \$25.25, respectively. All of the fees are credited to the General Reimbursement Fund (Fund 1060), with \$23.25 of the FBI background check fee subsequently disbursed to the FBI. Whether schools or applicants themselves pay for a criminal background check is a local decision. Otherwise, the bill likely has little, if any, fiscal effect on districts and schools that opt to accept chaplain services.

Volunteer chaplains probably will be enrolled in the Retained Applicant Fingerprint Database (RAPBACK), a continuous criminal record monitoring service operated by the Attorney General's Office that provides participating entities notice that an individual they have enrolled in the database has been arrested or convicted of a criminal offense. BCI also charges participating agencies an initial fee for each individual entered in RAPBACK and an ongoing annual fee per individual, both of which are \$5 and deposited into Fund 1060. Accordingly, the State Board of Education's costs for RAPBACK enrollment may minimally increase. The State Board's budget is mainly funded by license fees and other revenues that are deposited into the Occupational Licensing and Regulatory Fund (Fund 4K90). Lastly, DEW may see a minimal increase in administrative workload to register volunteer chaplains.