
Judiciary Committee

HB 1070

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 Jenkins, Appleton, Robinson, Kirby, Doglio and Fey.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows a county legislative authority to impose a surcharge of up to \$20 on each civil filing fee in superior court for the purpose of funding Dispute Resolution Centers (DRCs).
- Allows a county legislative authority to raise the maximum DRC surcharge on each civil filing fee in district court and small claims court from \$10 and \$15, respectively, to a maximum of \$20.

Hearing Date: 1/12/17

Staff: Audrey Frey (786-7289).

Background:

The creation of Dispute Resolution Centers (DRCs) was first authorized by the state Legislature in the 1984 Court Improvement Act for the purpose of providing forums in which persons could voluntarily resolve disputes in an atmosphere that was less costly, less complex, less formal, and less adversarial than the courtroom setting. A DRC may be created and operated by a city or county, or by a nonprofit corporation.

Services offered by a DRC must be provided without charge to a participant or for a fee that is based on a participant's ability to pay.

Typical cases handled by DRCs involve:

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- landlords and tenants;
- consumers and merchants;
- neighbors;
- citizens and agencies;
- employees and employers;
- families; and
- divorcing and divorced couples.

For the purpose of funding DRCs, a county legislative authority 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. 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:

For the purpose of funding DRCs, a county legislative authority may impose a surcharge on certain filing fees as follows:

- The maximum DRC surcharge that may be imposed on civil filing fees in district court is raised from \$10 to \$20.
- The maximum DRC surcharge that may be imposed on filing fees for small claims actions is raised from \$15 to \$20.
- The maximum DRC surcharge that may be imposed on civil filing fees in superior court is raised from none to \$20.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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