HB 157 - AS INTRODUCED

2025 SESSION

25-0674
09/05

HOUSE BILL ***157***

AN ACT establishing a study committee to examine ways to improve the usefulness of fiscal notes.

SPONSORS: Rep. Muns, Rock. 29; Rep. Almy, Graf. 17; Rep. Wallner, Merr. 19; Rep. Janigian, Rock. 25; Rep. Ulery, Hills. 13; Rep. Vose, Rock. 5; Sen. Altschiller, Dist 24; Sen. Perkins Kwoka, Dist 21

COMMITTEE: Legislative Administration

ANALYSIS

This bill establishes a study committee to examine ways to improve the usefulness of fiscal notes and assigns duties to the committee.

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Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics.***
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~]
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five

AN ACT establishing a study committee to examine ways to improve the usefulness of fiscal notes.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 Statement of Findings and Purpose.

I. Members of the general court have the constitutional duty to consider and enact laws "as they may judge for the benefit and welfare of this state" (part 2, article 5 of the New Hampshire constitution). In order do so members of the general court must understand the costs and benefits any such proposed law may have on the welfare of the state and its citizens.

II. RSA 14:44 requires that all bills and resolutions having an effect on the revenues, expenditures, or fiscal liability of the state, city, town, or county which have a total fiscal impact of $10,000 or more in each fiscal year over the period covered by a fiscal note shall be accompanied by a fiscal note which sets forth the estimated fiscal impact thereof.

III. RSA 14:46, III requires fiscal notes to include various calculations but does not include any requirement to identify or quantify the economic benefits that might accrue to the state, city, town, or county if the proposed legislation is implemented.

IV. RSA 14:31-b, I(b) assigns responsibility for preparing the fiscal notes to the office of legislative budget assistant and RSA 14:46, I further requires that all fiscal notes shall be prepared by the legislative budget assistant with such assistance and data as he or she may require from any state agency, political subdivision, or any other source of data which he or she deems reliable, including, but not limited to, private individuals, corporations, and associations located within or without the state.

V. The office of legislative budget assistant employs 7 full-time staff and has limited funds to contract with and retain private individuals who have specialized expertise to evaluate the fiscal impact of bills as requested by members of the New Hampshire general court.

VI. There are almost 2,000 bills introduced during a 2-year legislative session, of which over half can require fiscal notes. Due to house and senate committee deadlines, the office of legislative budget assistant needs to prepare fiscal notes promptly to fit within these deadlines, which places a considerable burden on the office of legislative budget assistant and any state agency or political subdivision requested to provide assistance in the preparation of those fiscal impact notes. This further makes it extremely difficult to contract with private individuals with specialized expertise to assist in preparing specific fiscal impact notes.

2 Committee Established. There is established a committee to examine ways to improve the usefulness of fiscal notes in helping members of the New Hampshire general court fulfill their

constitutional duty to consider and enact laws that benefit the state and enhance the general welfare.

3 Membership and Compensation.

I. The members of the committee shall be as follows:

(a) Five members of the house of representatives, which shall include:

(1) One member of the house finance committee from each political party, appointed by the chairperson of that committee.

(2) One member of the house ways and means committee from each political party, appointed by the chairperson of that committee.

(3) One member of the house, appointed by the speaker.

(b) Three members of the senate, which shall include:

(1) One member of the senate finance committee appointed by the chairperson of that committee.

(2) One member of the senate ways and means committee, appointed by the chairperson of that committee.

(3) One member of the senate, appointed by the senate president.

II. Members of the committee shall receive mileage at the legislative rate when attending to the duties of the committee.

4 Duties. The committee's study shall include, but not be limited to:

I. Review and recommend any changes to requirements in current statute for when a fiscal note is required.

II. Review and recommend any changes to requirements in current statute for what a fiscal note should include; specifically:

(a) How feasible is it to include not only the estimated costs of a proposed new law but also the estimated economic benefits as well.

(b) Guidelines or thresholds on when a detailed cost/benefit analysis should or should not be completed.

(c) What additional resources would the office of legislative budget assistant and/or affected state agencies need in order to complete such cost/benefit analyses.

III. Determine whether the current requirement that a fiscal note is required if the estimated fiscal impact is $10,000 or more should be increased.

IV. Review and recommend any changes to the current guidelines for preparing fiscal notes developed by the office of legislative assistant and distributed to affected state agencies.

V. Review and recommend any changes to current house and senate rules to determine if changes in the filing period for legislative service requests could/should be modified in order to provide more time for the office of legislative budget assistant and affected state agencies to complete their mandated work.

VI. Evaluate whether the current staffing and budget of the office of legislative budget assistant is sufficient to process the number of fiscal notes the office is required to provide and whether resources are in line with similar offices in other states.

VII. Evaluate whether state agencies have the staffing and resources they need to provide the office of legislative budget assistant with the detailed analysis and input that it requires for the fiscal notes it is required to complete. Focus should be given to the state's largest agencies, such as the department of health and human services and department of education.

5 Chairperson; Quorum. The members of the study committee shall elect a chairperson from among the members. The first meeting of the committee shall be called by the first-named house member. The first meeting of the committee shall be held within 45 days of the effective date of this section. Five members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

6 Report. The committee shall report its findings and any recommendations for proposed legislation to the speaker of the house of representatives, the president of the senate, the house clerk, the senate clerk, the governor, and the state library on or before September 1, 2026.

7 Effective Date. This act shall take effect upon its passage.