

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS**

200 W. Washington, Suite 301
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 233-0696
<http://www.in.gov/legislative>

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 6495

BILL NUMBER: SB 143

NOTE PREPARED: Dec 8, 2004

BILL AMENDED:

SUBJECT: Postmortem Radiographs.

FIRST AUTHOR: Sen. Simpson

BILL STATUS: As Introduced

FIRST SPONSOR:

FUNDS AFFECTED: **GENERAL**
 DEDICATED
 FEDERAL

IMPACT: Local

Summary of Legislation: This bill requires a coroner to perform a radiograph on a child who is at least one week and not more than three years of age and dies under certain circumstances. The bill requires the coroner to employ a physician who meets certain qualifications to perform the radiograph.

Effective Date: July 1, 2005.

Explanation of State Expenditures:

Explanation of State Revenues:

Explanation of Local Expenditures: *Summary:* Depending upon individual circumstances, this bill could have a statewide fiscal impact ranging from negligible to \$41,000, depending upon the number of children that die under circumstances that would require an autopsy and who would not have otherwise been x-rayed as part of the current autopsy procedure.

Background: This bill would require that the autopsy procedure for children under the age of 3 years must include x-rays. The bill requires that the coroner must order the x-rays and the county must pay for the procedure. (Current law, passed in P.L.179-2003, Sec. 5, requires the autopsy of a child under the age of 3 years unless specific circumstances, witness, and physician certifications are made. Mortality statistics for 2003 are not yet available.)

Because the bill requires the coroner to order the x-rays regardless of the existence of similar information or

x-rays that may already be in the deceased's medical record, and the extent that x-rays may typically be ordered as part of current autopsy procedures is unknown, the additional cost to counties cannot be precisely determined.

The State Department of Health reports that 90 children in CY 2001 and 92 children in CY 2002 who were under the age of 3 years died of external causes. Deaths that are not natural causes are classified as 'external causes' and include accidents, suicide, homicide, events of undetermined intent, legal intervention, and complications of medical and surgical care. Not all of the 'external causes' of death would necessarily require a coroner's autopsy. Autopsies are reported to cost an average of \$1,000 to \$1,600. The cost of post-mortem x-rays is estimated to be approximately \$600. Currently, there is no way to determine how many children that have died under suspicious or unknown circumstances, and that subsequently had an autopsy performed, were not x-rayed as part of the forensic investigation or if the pathologist used x-rays included in the deceased's medical record.

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected:

Local Agencies Affected: County Coroner's Offices.

Information Sources: Indiana State Department of Health, Epidemiology Resource Center.

Fiscal Analyst: Kathy Norris, 317-234-1360.