

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS31325 / S1367

Prior to establishment of the Office of the State Public Defender in 2023, counties were responsible to pay for representation for indigent individuals. This legislation provides clarification that the Office of the State Public Defender now has responsibility to provide coverage and payment for representation for which counties had responsibility prior to the creation of the Office of the State Public Defender, as well as any statutorily required coverage. This bill also creates a fund to coordinate statewide payments for Guardian Ad Litem representation previously paid by individual counties. A separate account is necessary to ensure a delineation from any funds for representation of indigent individuals in other cases.

## FISCAL NOTE

Although the bill references funds, these dollars were already appropriated through creation of the Office of the Public Defender in 2023 and will be transferred into a new account. Because this is just clarifying responsibilities for the Office of the Public Defender, no general fund dollars are needed. Any additional funds needed for the Office of the Public Defender to carry out the statutorily required duties may be addressed in additional legislation.

### Contact:

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**DISCLAIMER:** This statement of purpose and fiscal note are a mere attachment to this bill and prepared by a proponent of the bill. It is neither intended as an expression of legislative intent nor intended for any use outside of the legislative process, including judicial review (Joint Rule 18).