

**132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE****LD 1796****LR 2473(02)****An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services to Clarify the Types of Cases for Which the Commission Is Responsible for Providing Counsel****Fiscal Note for Bill as Amended by Committee Amendment " "****Committee: Judiciary****Fiscal Note Required: Yes**

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**Fiscal Note**

|                                   | <b>FY 2025-26</b> | <b>FY 2026-27</b> | <b>Projections<br/>FY 2027-28</b> | <b>Projections<br/>FY 2028-29</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Net Cost (Savings)</b>         |                   |                   |                                   |                                   |
| General Fund                      | \$59,826          | \$59,826          | \$59,826                          | \$59,826                          |
| <b>Appropriations/Allocations</b> |                   |                   |                                   |                                   |
| General Fund                      | \$59,826          | \$59,826          | \$59,826                          | \$59,826                          |

**Fiscal Detail and Notes**

The Judicial Branch will require ongoing General Fund appropriations of \$159,826 in fiscal year 2025-26 and \$159,826 in fiscal year 2026-27 to implement the recommendations outlined in the bill. The Judicial Branch will be responsible for paying reasonable compensation to and reimbursing the reasonable expenses of an attorney if a court appoints an attorney to represent a party who has a right to counsel at public expense, a minor or an indigent party in a proceeding under the Maine Uniform Probate Code. The average number of adoption, guardianship and termination of parental rights cases where counsel was court-appointed between 2020 and 2024 was 52.8 cases per year.

The bill includes General Fund deappropriations to the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services of \$100,000 beginning in fiscal year 2025-26 for attorney's fees for certain court proceedings where the Judiciary will appoint counsel for indigent defendants.