

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Session 2005

Legislative Fiscal Note



BILL NUMBER: House Bill 1221 (First Edition)

SHORT TITLE: Parenting Coordinator Established.

SPONSOR(S): Representative Hackney

FISCAL IMPACT					
	Yes ()	No ()	No Estimate Available (x)		
	<u>FY 2005-06</u>	<u>FY 2006-07</u>	<u>FY 2007-08</u>	<u>FY 2008-09</u>	<u>FY 2009-10</u>
REVENUES:					
EXPENDITURES:					
POSITIONS (cumulative):					
PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT(S) & PROGRAM(S) AFFECTED: Administrative Office of the Courts					
EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2005					

BILL SUMMARY:

Enacts new Article 5 of GS Chapter 50 to provide for the appointment of parenting coordinators to assist parties in resolving issues related to parenting and other family issues. Authorizes court to appoint parenting coordinator upon entry of a custody order or parenting agreement and allows appointment in any divorce, child custody, or child support case where minor children are involved, upon motion of the court or motion or agreement of the parties unless any party objects. Provides that role of parenting coordinator is to assist parents in implementing custody and visitation orders; reduce conflict between parents; facilitate parents' relationship with the children; resolve any issues in implementation of parenting plan until further court orders are entered; and empower parents to successfully resolve conflicts over their children on their own. Specifies educational and experience qualifications for appointment as a parenting coordinator. Provides that coordinator is entitled to reasonable compensation for services to be paid by parties in accordance with court's order and requires fee to be paid before coordinator begins duties. Requires parties to abide by any decision of parenting coordinator resolving disagreement until matter is reviewed by court. Requires coordinator to notify court, parties, and attorneys in writing if he or she determines that existing custody order is not in best interests of the child or there exist issues in the case that

the parenting coordinator is not qualified to address or resolve. Requires coordinator to provide attorneys and parties with any written summaries of developments that are made following every meeting. Specifies how court may terminate or modify parenting coordinator order and immunity of coordinator. Effective October 1, 2005

Source: Bill Digest H.B. 1221 (04/14/0200).

ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY: This bill creates the role of Parenting Coordinator in cases in District Court involving child custody matters. This coordinator would work with parents on a fee-for-service basis to develop plans to maintain custody of their children; the parties must pay the fee, rather than the state. Cases of this type are often very contentious in the courtroom setting. Since the role of the coordinator removes some of the most contentious components of developing custody agreements from the courtroom, cost savings can be projected from this bill, but the Administrative Office of the Courts cannot predict how often judges will make use of these coordinators.

SOURCES OF DATA: Administrative Office of the Courts, Research and Planning Section.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS: None

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