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Testimony on Senate Bill 218
An Act concerning docket fees

Presented to the Senate Ways and Means Committee
By Willie Prescott, Special Assistant to the Attorney General

February 27, 2013

Mister Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for accepting this testimony regarding Senate Bill 218.

The Attorney General's Office is neutral on this legislation, however there are some concerns we would bring to your attention regarding the consequences this bill may have on the grant programs administered by our office.

If enacted, this bill would redirect proceeds from district court docket fees to a newly created "judicial branch docket fee fund." This would replace the current law, which distributes the funds by a formula to specific accounts. Among those accounts which receive part of that distribution are three grant program funds administered by our office: the crime victims assistance fund, the protection from abuse fund, and the child exchange and visitation centers fund.

As we have indicated in the fiscal note for this bill, if the funds to these grant programs were not back-filled through State General Fund appropriations, we would anticipate a combined loss of revenue of \$661,590 in Fiscal Year 2014 and \$625,202 in Fiscal Year 2015 to these three funds.

These funds are directly distributed through a pass-through grant process to victim service organizations throughout the state to provide support for victims of crime. These programs are necessary and worthwhile expenditures, and the current funding structure ensures that these costs are borne by the individuals using the court system rather than state taxpayers.

We ask that you keep these programs in mind as you consider this legislation.