

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 841 Crime Stoppers Trust Fund

SPONSOR(S): Broxson and others

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 978

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Criminal Justice Subcommittee	11 Y, 0 N	Jones	Cunningham
2) Justice Appropriations Subcommittee			
3) Judiciary Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Crime Stoppers programs are citizen-run non-profit corporations that operate on the principle that “someone other than the criminal has information that can solve a crime.” Crime Stoppers programs allow citizens to anonymously provide information to law enforcement about crimes. Typically, a cash reward is given if the information leads to an arrest.

In 1991, the Legislature created s. 16.555, F.S., which required the Department of Legal Affairs (Department) to establish a Crime Stoppers Trust Fund. At the time, the Crime Stoppers Trust Fund was solely funded through federal, state, private grants awarded to the Department.

In 1998, the Legislature added a funding source by imposing a \$20 court cost on persons convicted of any criminal offense. The proceeds from the \$20 court cost are deposited in a separate account within the Crime Stoppers Trust Fund and designated according to the judicial circuit from which they were collected. Counties may apply to the Department for a grant from the funds collected by their judicial circuit. However, grants may only be awarded to counties that are served by an official member of the Florida Association of Crime Stoppers, Inc. and used only to support Crime Stoppers and their crime fighting programs.

The bill permits a county which is awarded funds under s. 16.555, F.S., to use the funds to purchase and distribute promotional items to increase public awareness and educate the public about Crime Stoppers. The bill does not appear to have any impact on state or local governments revenues or expenditures.

The bill is effective July 1, 2014.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Crime Stoppers Programs

Crime Stoppers programs are citizen run non-profit corporations that operate on the principle that “someone other than the criminal has information that can solve a crime.”¹ Crime Stoppers allow citizens to anonymously provide information to law enforcement about crimes.² Typically, a cash reward is given if the information leads to an arrest.³

The Crime Stoppers concept originated in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1976 when a detective asked local media to broadcast a reenactment of an unsolved murder he was investigating.⁴ Local media publicized the reenactment as the “Crime of the Week” and provided a phone number to call if anyone had information.⁵ The broadcast promised anonymity for anyone who called with information and a cash reward if the information led to persons involved in the crime.⁶

The first Crime Stoppers program in Florida formed in 1977. Subsequently, the Florida Association of Crime Stoppers, Inc. (Association) was established to facilitate the flow of information and spread the Crime Stoppers program throughout the state.⁷ The Association, which currently has 32 programs, also provides trainings for Crime Stoppers programs throughout Florida.⁸

Crime Stoppers Funding

In 1991, the Legislature created s. 16.555, F.S., which required the Department of Legal Affairs (Department) to establish a Crime Stoppers Trust Fund.⁹ At the time, the Crime Stoppers Trust Fund was solely funded through federal, state, private grants awarded to the Department.¹⁰

In 1998, the Legislature added a funding source by imposing a \$20 court cost on persons convicted of any criminal offense.¹¹ The proceeds from the \$20 court cost are deposited in a separate account within the Crime Stoppers Trust Fund and designated according to the judicial circuit from which they were collected.¹² Counties may apply to the Department for a grant from the funds collected by their judicial circuit. However, grants may only be awarded to counties that are served by an official member of the Association and used only to support Crime Stoppers and their crime fighting programs.¹³

Effect of the Bill

The bill amends s. 16.555, F.S., to allow a county which is awarded grant funds to use the funds to purchase and distribute promotional items to increase public awareness and educate the public about Crime Stoppers.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

¹ Big Bend Crime Stoppers, <http://www.bbcsi.org/about-2> (last visited on March 5, 2014).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ Florida Association of Crime Stoppers, <http://www.floridacrimestoppers.com/pages/where> (last visited on March 5, 2014).

⁵ Crime Stoppers USA, <http://www.crimestoppersusa.com/profile.htm> (last visited on March 5, 2014).

⁶ Florida Association of Crime Stoppers, <http://www.floridacrimestoppers.com/pages/where> (last visited on March 5, 2014).

⁷ *Id.* The association’s original name was the “Florida Association of Crimelines Anonymous, Inc.,” it was changed in September 1991.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Chapter 1991-205, L.O.F.

¹⁰ Section 16.555(4)(a), F.S., requires the department to apply for all federal and state or private grants which meet the purposes of advancing Crime Stoppers in the State of Florida. Upon securing such grants, the funds must be deposited in the “Crime Stoppers Trust Fund.”

¹¹ Chapter 1998-319, L.O.F.; Section 938.06(2), F.S., requires the clerk of the court to collect the court costs, forward the costs to the Crime Stoppers Trust Fund and assess a \$3.00 service charge.

¹² Section 16.555(4)(b), F.S.

¹³ Section 16.555(5)(b), F.S.

Section 1. Amends s. 16.555, F.S., relating to Crime Stoppers Trust Fund; rulemaking.

Section 2. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2014.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

The bill does not appear to have any impact on state revenues.

2. Expenditures:

The bill does not appear to have any impact on state expenditures.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

The bill does not appear to have any impact on local government revenues.

2. Expenditures:

The bill does not appear to have any impact on local government expenditures.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

The bill does not appear to require counties or municipalities to take action requiring the expenditure of funds, reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenue in the aggregate, nor reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

Section 16.555(6), F.S., requires the Department to adopt and enforce rules to implement the provisions of s. 16.555, F.S., and specifies what such rules must include (e.g., criteria for local governments to apply for funding from the "Crime Stoppers Trust Fund" in order to aid in local law enforcement). The bill does not appear to create a need for additional rulemaking or rulemaking authority.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES