

Executive Summary: Health Impact Review of HB 1169

Concerning legal financial obligations (2023 Legislative Session)

Evidence indicates that HB 1169 would likely reduce legal financial obligations (LFOs) for some people, which would likely improve health outcomes, reduce reincarceration, and decrease collateral consequences of conviction. It is unclear how the bill would impact equity.

BILL INFORMATION

Sponsors: Simmons, Taylor, Berry, Bateman, Goodman, Wylie, Santos, Ormsby

Summary of Bill:

- Eliminates currently mandatory Victim Penalty Assessment (VPA) ([RCW 7.68.035](#)) and DNA collection fee ([RCW 43.43.7541](#)).
- Requires the court, upon motion of the person with LFOs, to waive any VPA imposed prior to the bill's effective date.
- Requires the court, upon motion of the person with LFOs, to waive any DNA collection fee imposed prior to the bill's effective date.
- Creates the State Crime Victim and Witness Assistance Account in the State Treasury with funds appropriated by the Legislature for comprehensive crime victim and witness programs under RCW 7.68.035.
- Requires the Legislature to appropriate funds for deposit into the State DNA Database Account for operation and maintenance of the DNA database and for distribution to agencies responsible for collection of the biological sample.
- Sets an effective date of July 1, 2023.

HEALTH IMPACT REVIEW

Summary of Findings:

This Health Impact Review found the following evidence for provisions in HB 1169:

- **Informed assumption** that eliminating the VPA and DNA collection fee and requiring courts, upon motion of the person with LFOs, to waive any previously imposed VPAs and DNA collection fees would reduce LFO debt for some people. This assumption is based on provisions of the bill and information from key informants.
- **Very strong evidence** that reducing LFO debt for some people would improve health outcomes.
- **Strong evidence** that reducing LFO debt for some people may reduce reincarceration.
- **Very strong evidence** that decreased reincarceration would improve health outcomes.
- **Informed assumption** that reducing LFO debt for some people may decrease collateral consequences of conviction for some individuals. This informed assumption is based on a report from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and current Washington State laws.

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- **Very strong evidence** that reducing collateral consequences of conviction would likely improve access to employment opportunities, housing, and economic stability.
- **Very strong evidence** that improved access to employment opportunities, housing, and economic stability would improve health outcomes.
- **Unclear** evidence for how HB 1169 would impact inequities as it is unknown who would petition the court to waive their VPA and DNA collection fees and due to limited research on how reducing LFOs may impact different groups; the intersectionality of overlapping identities; and current inequities due to racism in the criminal legal system.
- “Other Considerations” includes potential impacts of LFOs being sent to collections.

FULL REVIEW

For review methods, logic model, strength-of-evidence analyses, and citations of empirical evidence refer to the full Health Impact Review at

<https://sboh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2023-01/HIR-2023-01-HB1169.pdf>

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