



OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Ben Rosenfield
Controller
Todd Rydstrom
Deputy Controller

Ms. Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

February 11, 2022

RE: File 220063 – Ordinance establishing an Office of Victim and Witness Rights and providing for legal counsel for domestic violence victims in civil proceedings.

Dear Ms. Calvillo,

The cost of the proposed ordinance, should it be approved by the voters, is dependent on decisions that will be made through the budget process, as an ordinance cannot bind future Mayors and Boards of Supervisors to provide funding for this or any other purpose. In my opinion, the cost of fully funding the programs created in the proposal, should future policymakers do so, is likely to be significant.

The proposed ordinance would establish a new City department, the Office of Victim and Witness Rights (the Office). The Office would be authorized to provide a variety of services to victims and witnesses of crime and to coordinate similar services being provided by other City agencies. The ordinance specifies that the Office survey and report on the quality and scope of services to clients, perform a needs analysis in this area and make recommendations on how to address unmet needs. One year after the Office is established it would be required to introduce an ordinance consolidating all services for victims and witnesses under its direction.

The proposed ordinance would establish a right to civil legal representation for victims of domestic violence in San Francisco and create a pilot program to provide such representation. The Office of Victim and Witness Rights would coordinate free legal services for this purpose, administer the pilot program, evaluate its effectiveness after one year, and propose an ordinance to establish the future of the program based on that evaluation.

The ordinance specifies a Department Head for the new Office, at a likely cost of approximately \$340,000 annually. The programs and coordination work specified by the ordinance will require staffing at an estimated minimum cost of approximately \$700,000. The ordinance specifies that only free legal services will be used for the pilot year of legal counsel for domestic violence victims, however in future years, should the City fund the program, the cost could be significant.

As stated above, an ordinance cannot bind future Mayors and Boards of Supervisors to provide funding for this or any other purpose. Under the City Charter, the ultimate cost of this proposal depends on decisions made in the City's annual budget process.

Sincerely,

Peg Stevenson

Ben Rosenfield
Controller

Note: This analysis reflects our understanding of the proposal as of the date shown. At times further information is provided to us which may result in revisions being made to this analysis before the final Controller's statement appears in the Voter Information Pamphlet.