



## Senate

General Assembly

February Session, 2000

**File No. 184**

Senate Bill No. 514

*Senate, March 22, 2000*

The Committee on Judiciary reported through SEN. WILLIAMS of the 29<sup>th</sup> Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

### ***An Act Concerning Small Claims Cases.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Subsection (d) of section 51-15 of the general statutes is repealed  
2 and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

3 (d) The procedure for the hearing and determination of small claims  
4 as the same may be prescribed, from time to time, by the judges of the  
5 Superior Court shall be used in all small claims sessions of the court.  
6 The small claims procedure shall be applicable to all actions, except  
7 actions of libel and slander, claiming money damages not in excess of  
8 [two] three thousand five hundred dollars, and to no other actions. If a  
9 motion is filed to transfer a small claims matter to the regular docket in  
10 the court, the moving party shall pay the fee prescribed by section 52-  
11 259. The Attorney General or an assistant attorney general, or the head  
12 of any state agency or his authorized representative, while acting in his  
13 official capacity shall not be required to pay any small claims court fee.  
14 There shall be no charge for copies of service on defendants in small

15 claims matters.

**JUD Committee Vote:** Yea 38 Nay 1 JF

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

---

**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** Potential Cost

**Affected Agencies:** Judicial Department

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation****State Impact:**

The bill could result in cost to the Judicial Department by raising the threshold on damages sought in small claims cases from \$2,500 to \$3,500. These costs relate to a net increase in cases brought before the court. Although some cases would be transferred from the regular docket to the small claims docket, other cases that may not have been filed in the regular docket could now be filed in a less restrictive small claims docket. Although the extent to which the number of small claims cases may be affected is uncertain, the impact is anticipated to be absorbable within normal budgetary resources.

About 67,000 cases are filed in small claims court per year. The department currently operates four regional small claims dockets (Manchester, Waterbury, New Haven and Bridgeport) that handle about half of these cases.

---

**OLR Bill Analysis**

SB 514

***AN ACT CONCERNING SMALL CLAIMS CASES.***

**SUMMARY:**

This bill increases, from \$2,500 to \$3,500, the maximum amount of damages that may be claimed in small claims court actions. Small claims court has jurisdiction over all matters, except libel or slander, involving money damages up to the statutory maximum.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2000

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable Report

Yea 38    Nay 1