



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 96**

February Session, 2008

Substitute House Bill No. 5030

*House of Representatives, March 20, 2008*

The Committee on General Law reported through REP. STONE of the 9th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## ***AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ELECTRONIC CITIZEN'S FORUM.***

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2008*) There shall be established an  
2 electronic Citizen's Forum for the purpose of receiving suggestions  
3 from citizens regarding ways to improve the services of state  
4 government. The Commissioner of Consumer Protection shall  
5 establish and maintain said forum on the Internet web site of the  
6 Department of Consumer Protection to ensure that it is easily available  
7 to the public at all times in an electronic location. Said forum shall  
8 include: (1) A means for citizens to provide, in electronic format, ideas  
9 or suggestions for improving the services of state government; (2) a  
10 mechanism that requires citizens to provide identifying contact  
11 information when providing such ideas or suggestions; and (3) a  
12 process to ensure citizen's suggestions are forwarded to the proper  
13 department, agency, board or commission. The commissioner shall  
14 report annually to the Governor and to the General Assembly on the  
15 operation of the forum, in such manner as the Governor and the

16 General Assembly may require.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2008</i>	New section

**GL**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

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 chamber thereof for any purpose:

### **OFA Fiscal Note**

#### **State Impact:**

<b>Agency Affected</b>	<b>Fund-Effect</b>	<b>FY 09 \$</b>	<b>FY 10 \$</b>
Consumer Protection, Dept.	GF - Cost	65,000 to 113,000	3,000 to 65,000

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

#### **Explanation**

The creation of a Citizen's Forum results in a cost to the Department of Consumer Protection of \$65,000 to \$113,000 in FY 09. This is based on the need for one program manager at a salary of approximately \$59,500<sup>1</sup> per year and development and maintenance costs that could be as high as \$53,500 in FY 09 with continued maintenance costs of \$3,000 per year thereafter. Development costs would be substantially less in FY 10 if already existing private sector proprietary forum software were utilized rather than in-house development of such software. Existing proprietary forum software with lifetime licensing can be purchased in some instances for less than \$1,000.

#### **The Out Years**

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

<sup>1</sup> The fringe benefit costs for state employees are budgeted centrally in the Miscellaneous Accounts administered by the Comptroller. The first year fringe benefit costs for new positions do not include pension costs. The estimated first year fringe benefit rate as a percentage of payroll is 25.36%. The state's pension contribution is based upon the prior year's certification by the actuary for the State Employees Retirement System (SERS). The SERS fringe benefit rate is 33.27%, which when combined with the rate for non-pension fringe benefits totals 58.63%.

**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 5030*****AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ELECTRONIC CITIZEN'S FORUM.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill establishes an electronic Citizen's Forum to receive citizen suggestions about ways to improve state services. It requires the consumer protection commissioner to establish the forum as part of his department's website.

The bill requires the forum to:

1. include a way for citizens to give ideas or suggestions about improving state services;
2. require citizens to provide identifying contact information when giving ideas or suggestions; and
3. include a process to make certain that they are forwarded to the appropriate department, agency, board, or commission.

The bill requires the commissioner to report annually to the General Assembly and the governor on the forum's operation in a way that they require.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2008

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

General Law Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/04/2008)