



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT

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This fiscal impact statement is produced in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws and House and Senate rules. The focus of the analysis is on governmental expenditure and revenue impacts and may not provide a comprehensive summary of the legislation.

Bill Number: H. 4511 Introduced on May 6, 2025
Subject: Probate, Notice to Creditors
Requestor: House Judiciary
RFA Analyst(s): Vesely
Impact Date: February 10, 2026

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill allows a party to serve an unknown party by publication in either a print or online version of a newspaper of general circulation, rather than only in the print version. Additionally, the publication of a notice to creditors may be online at the centralized website for probate court or in a newspaper of general circulation. The probate court may assess a reasonable one-time fee for publication from the decedent's estate that must be used for the cost of constructing and maintaining the centralized online statewide platform.

The Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (RFA) contacted all forty-six counties and Judicial to determine the local impact of this bill and received responses from the counties of Charleston, Florence, and Lancaster. Lancaster County indicates this bill may impact fees for publication and notes the county currently has a searchable database. Florence County and Charleston County indicate that this bill will have no fiscal impact to their respective counties. Further, it is unclear who will be responsible for the construction and maintenance of the centralized online platform that will serve all counties. This bill may impact county expenses due to establishment of an official centralized website for the South Carolina Probate Court.

This bill permits the probate court to assess a reasonable one-time fee from the decedent's estate for publication of a notice to creditors that must be used for the cost of constructing and maintaining the centralized online statewide platform. Currently, fees collected in probate court are deposited into the county general fund. This bill may impact local revenue depending upon the amount of any fee the probate court may set for the publication of notice to creditors.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Introduced on May 6, 2025

State Expenditure

N/A

State Revenue

N/A

Local Expenditure

This bill allows a party to serve an unknown party by publication in either a print or online version of a newspaper of general circulation, rather than only in the print version. Additionally,

the publication of a notice to creditors may be online at the centralized website for probate court or in a newspaper of general circulation. The probate court may assess a reasonable one-time fee for publication from the decedent's estate that must be used for the cost of constructing and maintaining the centralized online statewide platform.

RFA contacted all forty-six counties and Judicial to determine the local impact of this bill and received responses from the counties of Charleston, Florence, and Lancaster. Additionally, Florence County notes that notices to creditors are currently published online by the Florence County Probate Court by scanning it as it is filed by the personal representative of the state. Charleston County notes that notices to creditors are paid by private parties or estates to publishers and are not county costs. Therefore, both Florence and Charleston County indicate that this bill will have no fiscal impact on their respective counties. Lancaster County indicates that the cost of a notice to creditors is currently \$105, paid directly to The Lancaster News. Lancaster County additionally notes that the probate court currently has a searchable database and no fees are charged for access this database. The cost to the county to host this database is \$800 in calendar year 2026 and \$840 in calendar year 2027. Further, it is unclear who will be responsible for the construction and maintenance of the centralized online platform that will serve all counties. This bill may impact county expenses due to establishment of an official centralized website for the South Carolina Probate Court.

Local Revenue

This bill permits the probate court to assess a reasonable one-time fee from the decedent's estate for publication of a notice to creditors that must be used for the cost of constructing and maintaining the centralized online statewide platform. Currently, fees collected in probate court are deposited into the county general fund. This bill may impact local revenue depending upon the amount of any fee the probate court may set for the publication of notice to creditors.



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director