# Department of Planning and Budget
## 2025 General Assembly Session
### State Fiscal Impact Statement

**PUBLISHED: 1/28/2025 10:13 AM** **ORIGINAL**

**Bill Number:** SB1277 **Patron:** Perry
**Bill Title:** Minor witnesses; appointment of guardian ad litem in circuit court.

**Bill Summary:** Authorizes a circuit court to appoint a guardian ad litem for a minor witness called to testify in a matter before the circuit court involving certain sex offenses. Under current law, a general district court may appoint a guardian ad litem for a minor witness called to testify in any proceeding and the circuit court may continue the appointment or appoint a new guardian ad litem for such matter on appeal.

**Budget Amendment Necessary:** Indeterminate **Items Impacted:** Indeterminate
**Explanation:** See below

**Fiscal Summary:** According to the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court (OES), this bill may have a fiscal impact on Courts. However, because the number of future additional guardian ad litem appointments cannot be known, the fiscal impact is indeterminate.

**General Fund Expenditure Impact:**

| Agency | FY2025 | FY2026 | FY2027 | FY2028 | FY2029 | FY2030 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Supreme Court | | Indeterminate | Indeterminate | Indeterminate | Indeterminate | Indeterminate |
| **TOTAL** | | **Indeterminate** | **Indeterminate** | **Indeterminate** | **Indeterminate** | **Indeterminate** |

**Fiscal Analysis:** The Supreme Court administers the guardian ad litem program and, as required by § 16.1-267 of the Code of Virginia (Compensation of appointed counsel), publishes a report on amounts paid for guardian ad litem purposes, amounts received by parents or guardians, and savings achieved on August 1 and January 1 each year. According to the report published on December 16, 2024, amounts paid for guardians ad litem totaled $9,346,128, amounts assessed against parents/specified parties totaled $2,237,591, and savings achieved totaled $1,059,041 from July 1, 2023, to November 30, 2023. Any additional guardian ad litem appointments beyond present levels will create the need for additional funding in the Courts under the Criminal Fund.

**Other:** None