

HB 66 -- PRETRIAL WITNESS PROTECTION SERVICES

This bill creates the "Pretrial Witness Protection Services Fund".

The bill authorizes the Department of Public Safety to disburse money from the Pretrial Witness Protection Services Fund to law enforcement agencies for the purposes of providing for the security of witnesses, potential witnesses, and their immediate families in criminal proceedings or investigations. Funds are subject to appropriations from the General Assembly.

A law enforcement agency must submit an application to the Department of Public Safety with the following information:

- (1) A statement of conditions that qualify persons for protection;
- (2) Precise methods the agency will use to provide protection;
- (3) A statement of projected costs over a specified period of time; and
- (4) If the requesting agency expects the person to provide evidence in any court of jurisdiction.

The application is a closed record, not subject to a Sunshine request, and any information that could reveal the location or address of anyone qualified for these services shall not be disclosed by any entity.

This bill contains an emergency clause.