

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 556  
Judiciary

Delegate Shriver, et al.)

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Child Support Payments - Enforcement - Suspension or Denial of Recreational  
Licenses

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This bill authorizes the Child Support Enforcement Administration (CSEA) to request that a “licensing authority” suspend or deny an individual’s license to engage in a regulated recreational activity, including hunting, fishing, and boating, if: (1) the individual is more than 120 days in arrears in paying child support; and (2) CSEA has accepted an assignment of child support; the recipient of support payments has filed an application for support enforcement services with CSEA; or the individual has failed to comply with a subpoena issued by CSEA.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2001.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill’s changes could be handled within existing budgeted resources. Potential minimal increase in general fund revenues from increased child support collections.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** CSEA has the authority to request that a licensing authority suspend or deny an individual’s license to engage in a particular business, occupation, or profession if: (1) the individual is more than 120 days in arrears in paying child support; and (2)

CSEA has accepted an assignment of child support; the recipient of support payments has filed an application for support enforcement services with CSEA; or the individual has failed to comply with a subpoena issued by the CSEA.

**Background:** The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) advises that there are approximately 540,000 recreational hunting, fishing, and crabbing license holders in Maryland. The threat of license suspension for failure to pay child support has proven to be extremely effective in Maryland. The CSEA's Driver's License Suspension Program is a national model for other states, collecting \$162,000,000 since 1996. Maryland law also permits suspension of work-related licenses as a child support enforcement tool. The professional license suspension program was only recently implemented, however, and the CSEA reports that it does not yet have results to determine the effectiveness of the program. States that have implemented this remedy report that the risk of losing a license is an effective means of bringing a delinquent child support obligor into compliance.

The provisions of this bill are federally mandated by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA). The majority of PRWORA requirements were enacted in 1997; this is one of the remaining changes requisite for full compliance with federal law.

**State Revenues:** General fund revenues could increase marginally beginning in fiscal 2002. Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) recipients must assign their support rights to the State and federal governments to reimburse them for TCA payments made on behalf of the children of the obligor; as a result, TCA child support collections are distributed 50% to the State and 50% to the federal government. Any increase cannot be reliably quantified at this time.

As a result of federal welfare reform, failure to enact a provision for suspending recreational licenses for delinquent obligors could result in the withholding of federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families funds.

**State Expenditures:** CSEA estimates that any expenditure required to create a computer interface with DNR will be minimal and absorbable within existing resources. The Office of Administrative Hearings advises that the expected increase in the number of hearings resulting from the bill is low and could be handled with existing resources. DNR advises that it could also handle the bill's requirements with existing budgeted resources.

## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** A similar bill was introduced in 1997 as HB 853, and received an unfavorable report from the House Judiciary Committee.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Human Resources, Department of Natural Resources, Office of Administrative Hearings, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader – February 15, 2001  
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