

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 359 (Senator Forehand)

Judicial Proceedings

Commerce and Government Matters

Motor Vehicle Laws - Child Booster Seats

This bill expands the definition of a child automobile safety seat to include a child booster seat and requires a child 8 years old and younger weighing 80 pounds or less to be secured in a child safety seat when traveling in a motor vehicle.

The bill further provides that for the first six months it is in effect, the bill may be enforced only by the issuance of a warning that informs the offender of the bill's requirements. Citations may not be issued before April 1, 2003.

This bill takes effect October 1, 2002.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal increase in general fund revenues beginning in FY 2003 from increased fine collections. Enforcement could be handled with existing budgeted resources of the State Police and the Judiciary.

Local Effect: Enforcement could be handled with existing budgeted resources of local law enforcement agencies.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: A "child safety seat" means a device that is manufactured in accordance with the 1981 Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and is used to restrain, seat, or

position a child who is transported in a motor vehicle. A child safety seat does not mean a seat belt or combination seat belt-shoulder harness.

A person transporting a child shall secure the child in a child safety seat in accordance with the child safety seat and vehicle manufacturers' instructions if the child is under the age of 4 years, regardless of the child's weight; or weighs 40 pounds or less regardless of the child's age.

There is a \$25 fine for violating this provision, which may be waived under certain circumstances.

State Fiscal Effect: The Department of Transportation advises that approximately 5,000 citations were issued in fiscal 2000 for violation of child safety seat requirements. The amount of the fine revenue collected as a result of these citations is unknown, but would have been a maximum of \$125,000 (5,000 x \$25). The increase in fine revenues that would result from the bill cannot be reliably estimated, but it is assumed to be relatively minimal.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 700 (Delegate Bronrott, *et al.*) – Commerce and Government Matters.

Information Source(s): Department of State Police, Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader – February 8, 2001
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