

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 610
Ways and Means

(Delegate Pena-Melnyk, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Task Force on the Preservation of Heritage Language Skills in Maryland

This bill establishes a task force to study methods for advancing and preserving heritage language skills in Maryland and to consider innovative and cost-effective ways to facilitate heritage language learning while encouraging new U.S. citizens to learn and master English. A final report with findings and recommendations is due from the task force by January 1, 2009. The Maryland State Department of Education must provide staff support for the task force.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2008 and terminates June 30, 2009.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for MSDE are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Background: In May 2007, the United Nations General Assembly, “recognizing that genuine multilingualism promotes unity in diversity and international understanding,” proclaimed 2008 to be the International Year of Languages. The preamble to this bill notes that the ability to speak and understand foreign languages has become increasingly

important for national security and in the global economy. The preamble also states that public school students in Maryland speak at least 150 different languages.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 506 (Senator Rosapepe, *et al.*) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 14, 2008
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