

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 244

(Delegate Kaiser, *et al.*) (Joint Committee on Children,  
Youth, and Families)

Ways and Means

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families - Repeal of Sunset

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This bill repeals the termination date for the Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2009.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Extending the joint committee's statutory authorization does not affect State finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** The joint committee is charged with identifying State policies and actions that promote conditions of well-being for Maryland's children, youth, and families. The joint committee must report on its work and any recommendations to the General Assembly by December 1 of each year. The joint committee is scheduled to terminate on June 30, 2009.

**Background:** Chapters 362 and 363 of 1999 created the joint committee and Chapter 491 of 2002 extended its termination date from May 31, 2002 to June 30, 2009. Child abuse and neglect, juvenile arrests, domestic violence, infant mortality, child

immunizations, child substance abuse, quality of childcare, early childhood education, school safety, and access to health care are among the issues regularly considered by the joint committee. The Department of Legislative Services provides staff support to the joint committee.

During the 2008 interim, the joint committee met three times to consider children and youth issues, including Children Entering School Ready to Learn and Children Safe in Their Families and Communities, two of the eight results the State uses to measure child well-being. The meetings were held as follows:

- June 24 – Hearing: Presentation on Children Entering School Ready to Learn;
- September 23 – Hearing: Maryland’s Progress on Children Safe in Their Families and Communities (child abuse or neglect, child deaths due to injury, juvenile violent offense arrests, juvenile serious nonviolent offense arrests, and domestic violence); and
- November 20 – Hearing: Updates on Maryland’s Progress on Babies Born Healthy, Healthy Children, Children Entering School Ready to Learn, and the Student Summit for School Safety Solutions.

At the June meeting, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) briefed the joint committee on Children Entering School Ready to Learn. The presentation included a history of this result of child well-being, as well as the latest data from the kindergarten assessment.

At the September meeting, the Children’s Cabinet briefed the joint committee on the State’s progress on reducing child abuse and neglect, child deaths due to injury, juvenile violent offense arrests, juvenile serious nonviolent offense arrests, and domestic violence. The Children’s Cabinet also provided the joint committee with potential steps that could improve the State’s progress in these areas.

At the November meeting, representatives from the Governor’s Office for Children and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene updated the joint committee on the State’s progress since the 2007 interim on Babies Born Healthy and Healthy Children, including the State’s progress with respect to infant mortality, low birth weight, births to adolescents, childhood immunizations, child injuries and deaths, and child substance abuse. Representatives from MSDE provided the joint committee with an update on developments in early childhood education, as well as a review of the Student Summit on School Safety Solutions.

## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** SB 413 (Senator King, *et al.*) (Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 6, 2009

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