

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 107 (Delegate Ali, *et al.*)  
Rules and Executive Nominations

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Legislative Voting Sunshine Act

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This bill requires that the results of roll call votes taken by standing committees of the General Assembly on any bill, amendment, or motion relating to a bill be made available on the General Assembly web site when a committee's report on a bill is posted on the web site. The posted results must include how each member voted and which members made and seconded each motion.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Assuming a consistent volume of committee votes on an annual basis, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) can carry out the bill's requirements with existing budgeted resources. If the volume of committee votes increases significantly, general fund expenditures increase by \$20,000 annually for clerical support. Over time, the volume of voting tallies posted on the web site may require additional electronic storage capacity for DLS.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law/Background:** There are 10 standing committees in the General Assembly responsible for hearing and acting on bills: 6 in the House of Delegates and 4 in the Senate. Under Rule 38 of both the Rules of the House of Delegates and the Rules of the Senate, final standing committee votes on bills are recorded by individual member. Any member of a standing committee may also request that results of any other votes taken by

a standing committee (*e.g.*, amendments or motions) be recorded by individual member, but generally those votes are not recorded. Under the rule, every recorded committee vote is forwarded to DLS as part of the permanent public record. Usually within 24 hours of a standing committee's final action on a bill, notice of that action is posted on the General Assembly web site. Upon request, committee voting records are available to the public from the DLS information desk.

Beginning with the 2010 legislative session, copies of recorded committee votes for final action on bills are posted on the General Assembly web site, generally within 24 hours of the committee's vote. The committee's voting sheet is electronically scanned and then posted along with other information on the status of the bill. Other votes (motions and amendments) are not posted.

Roll call vote tallies taken on bills, amendments, or motions made on the floor of either chamber are posted on the web site in real time, but individual members' votes are available after about 24 hours. However, roll call votes taken on the floor of either chamber are recorded electronically through a system that is linked to the General Assembly's web site. By contrast, committee votes are recorded manually by committee staff because none of the standing committee hearing rooms are equipped with an electronic voting system.

**State Fiscal Effect:** Posting of committee voting sheets during the 2010 legislative session was carried out at the direction of the Presiding Officers in both houses, and DLS implemented that mandate with existing resources. Expanding that practice to include all procedural and amendment votes requires committee staff to record more votes than they currently do. That requirement may slow down and extend committee deliberations by requiring roll call instead of voice votes on each motion and amendment. It also requires the DLS library and information desk to scan and post more voting records on the General Assembly web site. Those tasks can be carried out with existing budgeted resources. Over time, however, the volume of voting records scanned and posted may require additional electronic storage capacity for DLS.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 25, 2010  
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