

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 117

(Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee)(By Request -
Departmental - Juvenile Services)

Judicial Proceedings

Juvenile Law - Commitment - Placement Visits

This departmental bill allows the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to use video conferencing in specified circumstances to satisfy mandatory visitation requirements. Video conferencing may be used if a child's placement is in a facility operated by DJS and at least one visit every three months is conducted in person.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. Any potential minimal decrease in transportation expenditures and improved operational efficiency for DJS does not materially affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: DJS has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Current Law: At disposition, the juvenile court may place a child under supervision in the child's own home or in the custody or under the guardianship of a relative or other fit person. A child may also be committed to the custody or guardianship of DJS or other agency on terms that the court considers appropriate.

Once a child has been committed to an individual or to a public or private agency or institution, a juvenile counselor must visit the child at the child's placement no less than

once every month if the placement is in the State. The court may order the juvenile counselor to visit the child more frequently if the court deems it to be in the child's best interests. The court may require the custodian to file periodic written progress reports, with recommendations for further supervision, treatment, or rehabilitation.

Background: DJS advises that this change provides case managers with additional time to devote to ensuring that juveniles are appropriately supervised in the community and to make certain that juveniles receive aftercare planning when returning to their home communities. Facilities operated by DJS have video-conferencing capabilities and at least one office in each DJS region is also capable of supporting video-conferencing. Utilizing this technology may allow for more efficient case management by reducing the time case managers spend traveling to State-operated facilities, which are often not within close proximity to other DJS offices. In fiscal 2013, the average daily population of juveniles committed to a DJS-operated facility was 230.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 246 of 2013, a similar bill, received an unfavorable report from the House Judiciary Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Juvenile Services, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 7, 2014
ns/kdm

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TITLE OF BILL: Juvenile Law –Commitment – Placement Visits

BILL NUMBER: SB 117

PREPARED BY: Department of Juvenile Services

PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL
BUSINESS

OR

WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL
BUSINESSES

PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS