

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1384 (Delegate Rosenberg, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

Baltimore City - Registration of Volunteer Rescue Squads

This bill requires the Baltimore City Fire Department to develop a means for a private nonprofit ambulance company with a base of operations in the city to register and operate as a volunteer rescue company by January 1, 2017. The Baltimore City Fire Department must register a nonprofit ambulance company that is qualified as tax exempt under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as a volunteer rescue company.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Potential increase in Baltimore City revenues and expenditures depending on the type of registration and licensing procedures established by the city government. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Baltimore City Fire Department provides fire protection and prevention and emergency medical services (EMS) within Baltimore City. Baltimore City EMS provides 24/7 assessment, treatment, and hospital transport of trauma and medical patients. The EMS units provide approximately 87,000 transports per year and represent approximately 83% of the calls to the Baltimore City Fire Department. The city government's fiscal 2016 budget includes \$38.9 million in funding (\$21.6 million in general funds) to support EMS operations. This funding will support 20 advance life

support (24-hour) units, 12 basic life support (peak time) units, and 4 basic life support (24-hour) units.

Background: Hatzalah of Baltimore is an independent, nonprofit volunteer emergency medical services organization that has been providing services to areas of Northwest Baltimore since 2007. The organization encompasses an all-volunteer force of 30 emergency medical responders (EMTs and paramedics) and 15 dispatchers. The organization is currently considered a commercial ambulance company and, as a result, is ineligible for certain funding, including Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems and Federal Emergency Management Agency grants.

Local Fiscal Effect: The Baltimore City Fire Department indicates that no volunteer rescue company currently operates within the city and that only one private, nonprofit ambulance company operates within the city. This ambulance company is Hatzalah of Baltimore. The fire department reports that registering Hatzalah to operate as a volunteer rescue company will not pose any operational or fiscal issues for the city in the short term. Hatzalah will be required to apply to the department and pay a registration fee. However, to the extent more nonprofit ambulance companies begin operating in the future and request to become a volunteer rescue company, the department's operations may be affected.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City, Hatzalah of Baltimore, Department of Legislative Services

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min/hlb

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