

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 914 (Delegate Buckel, *et al.*)  
Health and Government Operations

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Task Force to Study the Maryland Orphans' Courts

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This bill establishes a Task Force to Study the Maryland Orphans' Courts. The task force must examine the composition and purpose of the orphans' courts and make recommendations about how to modernize them. By January 1, 2020, the task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2019, and terminates June 30, 2020.**

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Fiscal Summary

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

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The Administrative Office of the Courts must provide staff for the task force; the Governor must designate the chair. A member of the task force may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

**Current Law/Background:** Under the Maryland Constitution, each county elects, for a term of four years, three judges to the orphans' court of their respective jurisdictions, with the exception of Montgomery and Harford counties, where a circuit court judge sits as the

orphans' court. The orphans' courts are the State's probate courts. The courts supervise the handling of estates and also have certain jurisdiction over the guardianship of minors and their property.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 22, 2019  
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