

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1229 (Delegate Lisanti)
Environment and Transportation

Public Ethics - Local Officials - Electronic Filing of Financial Disclosure
Statements

This bill requires financial disclosure provisions enacted by a county or municipal corporation to require that financial disclosure statements be filed in an electronic format. Similarly, the bill requires financial disclosure regulations adopted by a local school board to require the electronic filing of financial disclosure statements.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Local governments and local school boards can implement the bill's requirements with existing budgeted resources. Local revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Maryland Public Ethics Law requires local governments to enact provisions governing the public ethics of local officials, including provisions relating to financial disclosure by local officials. Financial disclosure provisions enacted by counties and municipalities generally must be similar to provisions of State law that apply to State and public officials; however, for *elected* local officials, provisions generally must be *equivalent to* or *exceed* financial disclosure requirements under State law for State and public officials.

Local officials must be required to file financial disclosure statements when the personal interest of the local official presents a potential conflict of interest in connection with an anticipated public action, and they must also be required to file statements at least annually to report on gifts. Elected local officials must be required to file statements by April 30 annually. Financial disclosure provisions applicable to a candidate must be consistent with the provisions applicable to an incumbent holding the office involved.

The Ethics Law similarly requires local school boards to adopt regulations governing financial disclosure by school board members and authorizes local school boards to adopt financial disclosure regulations applicable to officials and employees of the school system, as specified under § 5-817 of the General Provisions Article. Such regulations must meet specified minimum standards that are similar to those required of financial disclosure provisions for local officials enacted by counties and municipalities.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Baltimore, Garrett, and Montgomery counties; City of Laurel; Maryland Municipal League; Maryland State Department of Education; State Ethics Commission; Baltimore City Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 23, 2021
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