

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 594

(Dorchester County Delegation)

Health and Government Operations

Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Legal Advertisement or Legal Notice in Dorchester County - Publication in
Newspaper or Newspaper in General Circulation - Digital Newspapers**

This bill establishes that, in Dorchester County, if a law, resolution, or court order, judgement, or decree requires the county to publish a legal advertisement or legal notice (1) any required advertisement or notice must be published and distributed through print and digital format; (2) the time period required for publication starts once the first advertisement or notice appears in print or digital format; and (3) if there is no print and digital publication that meets specified qualifications, the advertisement or notice may be placed in any digital publication that can be accessed in the county and that regularly contains local news and information for the county.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill pertains only to Dorchester County.

Local Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect Dorchester County operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: In general and unless otherwise specified, “newspaper” or “newspaper in general circulation” mean a publication that (1) has at least four pages; (2) habitually contains news items, reports of current events, editorial comments, advertising matter, and other miscellaneous information that is of public interest and is found generally in an ordinary newspaper; (3) has been published and distributed, by sale, from an established place of business at least once a week for six months or more before publication of the

advertisement or notice; (4) has general circulation throughout the community where the publication is published; and (5) qualifies for Periodicals rates for mailing through the United States Postal Service.

Broadly, legal advertisements and legal notices must be published in newspapers to give sufficient notice of specified government and public activities of interest to the general public. Legal advertisements and legal notices include, among other things, the appointment and election of government officials, specified judicial activity and judgements, business entity and real property actions, meetings and decisions of government bodies, and other specified occurrences and events as required under current law.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 1273 of 2023; SB 1003 and HB 1475 of 2022; and HB 79 of 2021.

Designated Cross File: SB 811 (Senator Mautz) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Dorchester, Howard, and Prince George's counties; Maryland Association of Counties; Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission; Maryland Municipal League; Comptroller's Office; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Department of Agriculture; Maryland Department of the Environment; Department of General Services; Maryland Department of Health; Department of Housing and Community Development; Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Natural Resources; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Maryland Insurance Administration; Public Service Commission; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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