

Department of Fiscal Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 280 (Delegate Mossburg, et al.)  
Judiciary

---

**Protective Orders - Alarms for Victims**

---

This bill allows money collected from fines for failure to comply with certain ex parte or protective orders to be used to provide abuse victims with an alarm to enable them to immediately notify law enforcement officers of impending danger from the abuser.

Under current law the maximum fine for violation of these orders is \$500.

---

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Indeterminate effect on revenues and expenditures as discussed below.

**Local Effect:** Indeterminate effect on revenues and expenditures as discussed below.

---

**Fiscal Analysis**

**State Effect:** Currently, revenues derived from fines imposed by the District Court for violations of protective orders are directed to the general fund. In fiscal 1994 there were 12,522 hearings on protective orders in the District Court, including ex parte orders and final hearings. There is no reliable data on how many District Court hearings resulted in the issuance of orders, or how many orders resulted in violations. There is also no available information as to how many violations of orders resulted in fines rather than imprisonment.

The bill does not sufficiently define or describe “alarm” so as to assess a per unit cost. In addition, the bill is permissive in nature; it does not require the provision of alarms to victims. The bill also does not set any standards and/or guidelines for the distribution of alarms and does not specify who will administer the program. Accordingly, it is difficult

to calculate the extent of the attendant general fund revenue reduction. In any event, it is assumed that any actual expenditures for the alarms would be offset by revenues limited to the amount of actual fines imposed (a maximum of \$500 per violated order).

**Local Effect:** Currently, revenues derived from fines imposed by the circuit courts are divided between each circuit court's law library (in all counties except Anne Arundel, Howard, and Somerset counties) and their general fund. In fiscal 1994 there were 1,339 petitions for protective orders filed in the circuit courts, and 958 were granted statewide. There is no available data as to how many of those orders were violated and resulted in fines rather than imprisonment.

It is difficult to calculate the extent of the local revenue redistribution. The same limitations on calculations of fiscal impact on local revenues and expenditures apply as is described under State Effect (above).

---

**Information Source(s):** Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Fiscal Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 7, 1996

ncs

---

Analysis by: Guy Cherry

Reviewed by: John Rixey

Direct Inquiries to:

John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst

(410) 841-3710

(301) 858-3710