

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1021 (Delegate C. Davis, et al.)
Judiciary

Crimes - Parole Eligibility - Repeal of Governor's Approval

This bill allows the Parole Commission and the Patuxent Institution Board of Review to parole inmates who have served at least 20 years of a life sentence without approval of the Governor or the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

This bill applies retroactively to include all inmates serving a life sentence before or after the time the bill becomes effective.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential minimal decrease in general fund expenditures. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

Background: There are currently 1,750 inmates in the Division of Correction (DOC) serving a life sentence, 110 of whom were admitted in 1995. There have been 20 people with life sentences paroled since 1991, with average time served of 20 years and 9 months. The current Governor has pledged not to approve parole for anyone serving a life sentence.

State Expenditures: To the extent that this bill would reduce the population of the DOC, general fund expenditures could decrease. Any reduction in time served is not expected to have a significant fiscal impact as it costs the DOC approximately \$2,717 per year for one inmate's food, medical care, and other costs.

The bill requires the Parole Commission to order testing of parole candidates to determine

whether they are appropriate for community placement, work release, substance abuse treatment, or home detention. Assuming this testing is the same as the screening currently done by DOC for participation in these programs, expenditures would not be affected.

Information Source(s): Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Division of Correction, Division of Parole and Probation, Maryland Parole Commission, Patuxent Institution), Department of Fiscal Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 1, 1996

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