

Department of Fiscal Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 882 (Prince George's County Delegation)  
Judiciary

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Prince George's County - Weapons-Free School Zone  
PG 324-96

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This bill increases the penalty for carrying a deadly weapon on school property and expands the definition of school property in Prince George's County. The bill makes the maximum penalties \$20,000/20 years imprisonment for a first offense and \$40,000/40 years for a subsequent offense. Current law provides for \$1,000/three years for a deadly weapon offense, \$2,500/three years for a handgun offense, three to ten years for a second offense, and five to ten years for a subsequent offense.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Indeterminate general fund revenue decrease and expenditure increase as discussed below.

**Local Effect:** Indeterminate revenue increase and expenditure decrease.

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Fiscal Analysis

**State Revenues:** The District Court generally hears less serious criminal cases. As the penalties for crimes are increased, there is a greater likelihood that the case would be transferred to the Prince George's County Circuit Court. Since the State receives all fines imposed in the District Court, transfer of cases to circuit courts may reduce general fund revenue by an indeterminate amount.

**State Expenditures:** Persons serving a sentence of one year or less are sentenced to the Prince George's County Correctional Center. The State reimburses the county for part of the per diem rate for the 91st through 365th day. If sentences of more than one year are imposed, State payments to Prince George's County may decrease. Per diem payments to Prince

George's County are expected to be approximately \$33 in fiscal 1997.

Any savings in payments for per diem costs would be offset by increased costs to the Division of Correction (DOC). Persons serving a sentence longer than one year are incarcerated in a DOC facility. In fiscal 1997 the average monthly cost per inmate is estimated at \$1,400. For illustrative purposes, under the bill's maximum incarceration penalty for a first offense the average time served would increase from 18 months to 120 months (50% of the maximum sentence with the possibility of parole), or by 102 months. Thus, State costs could increase by \$142,800 for each person convicted under the provisions of this bill.

**Local Revenues:** Revenue could increase by an indeterminate amount as more cases are heard in the Prince George's County Circuit Court and higher fines are imposed.

Per diem reimbursement payments from the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to the Prince George's County Correctional Center could decrease by an indeterminate amount as more violators are sentenced to DOC instead of the Correctional Center.

**Local Expenditures:** Expenditures could decrease by an indeterminate amount as it would be more likely that a violator would be sentenced to DOC instead of the Prince George's County Correctional Center. It will cost an estimated \$67 to keep an inmate in the Prince George's County Correctional Center each day.

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**Information Source(s):** Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Division of Correction) Prince George's County, Department of Fiscal Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 6, 1996

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