

Department of Fiscal Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1172 (Delegate Curran)  
(Administrative Judges Committee of the District Court of Maryland)  
Commerce and Government Matters

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Vehicle Offenses - Decriminalization

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This bill decriminalizes motor vehicle offenses punishable with only a fine. Criminal penalties are retained for motor vehicle offenses for which the maximum penalty includes incarceration. The bill also awards safe driving points for drivers who have no traffic violations over two consecutive calendar years. The bill also removes authorization for police to make warrantless arrests under vehicle laws where the maximum penalty authorized does not include a jail term.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Potential minimal ongoing decrease in Transportation Trust Fund revenues, and one-time increase in Transportation Trust Fund expenditures in FY 1997.

**Local Effect:** None.

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Fiscal Analysis

**State Effect:** By altering the point system to award safe driving points, the bill could decrease fees collected for driver's license reinstatements. The Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) charges \$15 for an application to reinstate a license plus \$60 to reinstate the license after drug or alcohol-related offenses or \$30 for reinstatement after other offenses. Any such decrease could be at least partially offset by (1) driver's license renewal fees collected that would not have been collected on a revoked or suspended license; (2) lower expenditures to notify people who accumulate three points; and (3) fewer conferences with people who accumulate five points. Any effect on revenues is assumed to be minimal. The MVA advises that changing the point system could require \$369,750 in computer programming expenditures. The Department of Fiscal Services advises that if other

legislation is passed requiring programming changes, economies of scale could be realized. This would reduce programming costs associated with this bill and other legislation affecting the MVA data processing system.

The District Court advises that this bill would not affect its revenues or expenditures.

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**Information Source(s):** Judiciary (District Court of Maryland), Office of the Public Defender, Department of Transportation (Motor Vehicle Administration, Maryland Transportation Authority), Department of State Police, Department of Fiscal Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 11, 1996

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