

**Department of Fiscal Services**  
Maryland General Assembly

**FISCAL NOTE**

Senate Bill 262 (Senator Ferguson)  
Judicial Proceedings

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**Juvenile Causes - Preliminary Procedures - Informal Supervision**

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This bill removes the requirement that the consent of a child is needed for the child to participate in an informal adjustment process. As a result, only the consent of the victim and the child's parent or guardian is needed to proceed with a formal adjustment process.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures could decrease by an indeterminate minimal amount. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** Expenditures could decrease by an indeterminate minimal amount. Revenues are not affected.

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**Fiscal Analysis**

**Background:** The informal handling of a case, which includes a short period of intervention and supervision, can prevent the need for formal adjudication and costly juvenile treatment services. Current law provides that an intake officer may propose an informal adjustment if the officer concludes that the court has jurisdiction but that an informal adjustment, rather than formal judicial action, is in the best interests of the public and child. For fiscal 1997, there will be an estimated 10,500 informal cases.

**State Expenditures:** The bill's requirements could result in more informal cases and fewer formal judicial actions, since children not consenting would be forced to participate in informal adjustments. However, the Department of Juvenile Justice indicates that very few children refuse the opportunity to participate in informal adjustment proceedings. The bill's requirements are therefore unlikely to affect State expenditures. In any event, to the extent that the number of informal cases are increased and detention, treatment services, and the

number of District Court cases in Montgomery County are averted, general fund expenditures could decrease. Any such decrease is assumed to be minimal.

**Local Expenditures:** To the extent that the number of informal cases are increased and the number of circuit court cases averted, general fund expenditures could decrease. Any such decrease is assumed to be minimal.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 29, 1996

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