

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 933 (Delegate O'Donnell, et al.)
Judiciary

Child Neglect - Definition and Investigation

This bill expands the definition of child neglect to include the use of a controlled dangerous substance by a woman that results in (1) an infant's addiction to or dependence on a controlled dangerous substance; or (2) the presence of a controlled dangerous substance in the infant's blood. The bill exempts cases where the mother is able and willing to accept and participate in support services for the infant. The bill establishes certain investigative procedures in determining substance abuse by the mother.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures could increase by \$2.4 million in FY 1997. Future year expenditures reflect annualization and inflation. Revenues are not affected.

(in millions)	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001
GF Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditures	2.4	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.1
Net Effect	(\$2.4)	(\$2.8)	(\$2.9)	(\$3.0)	(\$3.1)

Note: () - decrease; GF - general funds; FF - federal funds; SF - special funds

Local Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: Of the 73,937 births in Maryland in 1995, approximately 3,600 infants are estimated to have been born with a drug dependency. Under current law, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) is required to conduct an investigation within five days of receiving a child neglect report. DHR estimates that approximately 10% of infant drug dependency cases currently result in a Child Protective Services (CPS) investigation.

Pursuant to this legislation, CPS investigations will increase by 3,240 cases annually. In addition, it is estimated that approximately 360 individuals would not accept support services, thereby requiring continuing intervention services.

General fund expenditures could increase by an estimated \$2.4 million in fiscal 1997, which reflects the bill's October 1, 1996 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring 57 Social Workers, 10 Supervisors, and 10 Clerk Typists to conduct additional investigations and to provide continuing services. It includes salaries of \$1.4 million, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses. The information and assumptions used in calculating the estimate are stated below:

- ° 1 social worker for every 72 investigations;
- ° 1 social worker for each 30 continuing service cases; and
- ° 1 supervisor and 1 clerk typist for each social worker.

Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$1,892,593
Equipment	329,039
Operating Expenses <u>170,135</u>	
Total FY 1997 State Expenditures	\$2,391,767

Future year expenditures reflect (1) full salaries with 3.5% annual increases and 3% employee turnover; and (2) 2% annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Resources, Department of Fiscal Services

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