

Department of Fiscal Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1065 (Delegate Muse, et al.)  
Judiciary

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**Work-Release Eligibility - Felons**

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This bill prohibits persons convicted of committing a felony after October 1, 1996, from participating in a Division of Correction work-release program.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Indeterminate decrease in general fund revenues and indeterminate but significant increase in general fund expenditures.

**Local Effect:** None.

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**Fiscal Analysis**

**State Revenues:** Inmates on work release programs are required to pay for room, board, and transportation. In fiscal 1996 the Division of Correction (DOC) estimates this will be \$1,570,000. It is unknown what portion of that revenue comes from work-release inmates who were convicted of felonies.

**State Expenditures:** Behavior of an inmate outside a correctional facility is an important factor in making a parole decision. Lack of evidence of an inmate's behavior outside a prison could lead to people spending more time in prison. The DOC estimates 71% of its 21,235 inmates are felons. About 650 inmates are approved for work-release. To the extent that not allowing work-release increases the length of an inmate's incarceration, expenditures would increase. For example, if 462 inmates (71% of 650) remain in DOC institutions for one additional month, the DOC would require 38 additional beds. The average cost per inmate (bed) is \$16,800 per year. Thus, this bill could increase general fund expenditures by \$638,000 annually. The population could start to increase as soon as fiscal 1998 and would build until the full impact of the bill is felt, more than five years later. The time at which the

full impact of the bill is felt would be determined by the sentences received by these offenders. The actual increase in population will depend on the number of inmates who would have been eligible for work-release and the actual amount of additional time served and cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 7, 1996

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