

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1156 (Chairman, Commerce and Government Matters Committee)
(Departmental - State Commission on Ethics)
Commerce and Government Matters

**Ethics Law - Registration and Disclosure - Local Lobbyists -
School Board Lobbyists**

This departmental bill provides that for the purpose of registration and activity reporting, a county, municipal corporation, or school board may opt to be governed by State lobbying laws in lieu of or as an alternative to local filing. Local and school board lobbyists would be required to register and report to the State Ethics Commission, which would have the responsibility of forwarding copies of all registration forms and reports to the designated local government or school board depository.

This bill is effective November 1, 1997.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Indeterminate minimal increase in general fund expenditures and revenues beginning in FY 1998.

Local Effect: Indeterminate minimal decrease in general fund revenues and expenditures, as discussed below.

Small Business Effect: The State Ethics Commission has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). Fiscal Services concurs with this assessment.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: Because each locality and school board would have to enact authorizing legislation before they can be governed by State lobbying laws, it is assumed that there would be no effect on revenues or expenditures in fiscal 1997. The amount of revenue stemming from the bill beginning in fiscal 1998 depends on the number of local and school board lobbyists that register and report to the State Ethics Commission, each of whom would be required to pay a \$20 registration fee. The extent to which local and school board lobbyists will register with the commission cannot be reliably estimated at this time. However, any increase is assumed to be minimal because there currently is not a significant amount of lobbying activity at the local level.

Any additional revenue stemming from the bill would be used to offset increased expenditures associated with additional responsibilities required by the bill, such as making additional copies of registration forms and reports, and mailing the information to the appropriate depository.

Local Effect: To the extent that a local government or school board opts to be governed by State lobbying laws, there would be a decrease in revenues associated with lobbyist registration and reporting. Expenditures would also decrease by an indeterminate amount because the workload requirements associated with lobbyist registration and reporting would become the responsibility of the State. Any change in revenues and expenditures is expected to be minimal.

Information Source(s): State Ethics Commission, Carroll and Harford counties, cities of Annapolis, Takoma Park, and Thurmont, Department of Fiscal Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 26, 1996
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