

**Department of Fiscal Services**  
Maryland General Assembly

**FISCAL NOTE**

Senate Bill 76 (Senator Madden)  
Judicial Proceedings

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**Lawyers - Attorney Grievance Commission and Continuing Legal Education**

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This bill requires that lawyers admitted to the bar must complete 30 hours of continuing legal education every two years, as specified by the State Board of Law Examiners. The bill also codifies the Attorney Grievance Commission and increases its membership from 10 to 13. It gives specific membership appointment responsibilities to the Governor (with advice and consent of the Senate) and the Maryland Bar, instead of the Court of Appeals.

This bill takes effect June 1, 1996.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$55,700 in FY 1997, assuming the State Board of Law Examiners (board) will monitor the continuing legal education requirement. Future year costs reflect annual increases in salary and operating expenses. No effect on revenues.

(in dollars)	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001
GF Revenues	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
GF Expenditures	55,700	50,700	52,500	54,300	56,200
Net Effect	(\$55,700)	(\$50,700)	(\$52,500)	(\$54,300)	(\$56,200)

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

**Local Effect:** None.

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**Fiscal Analysis**

**State Expenditures:** The bill requires all lawyers to complete the proposed continuing legal education requirement. Currently, continuing legal education courses are offered to

lawyers regularly. The lawyers volunteer to take the courses. The lawyers must pay for the courses, but the fee offsets the instruction materials. Instructors volunteer their time.

It is unclear whether the board would be responsible for merely monitoring lawyer compliance of the continuing legal education requirement, or whether the board must actually implement a new system of continuing education. Assuming that the board will monitor the 24,415 lawyers in Maryland for compliance with the requirement, general fund expenditures could increase by an estimated \$55,700 in fiscal 1997. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one Administrator to monitor lawyer compliance of the continuing legal education requirement. It includes salaries of \$31,631, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$42,185
Operating Expenses	<u>13,515</u>
<b>Total FY 1997 State Expenditures</b>	<b>\$55,700</b>

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

If the board must implement and administer a new continuing legal education system, costs would be significantly higher.

Under the Maryland Rules, Attorney Grievance Commission members serve without compensation. However, commission members are reimbursed for expenses under the state standard travel regulations. Increasing the commission membership by three should not increase state expenditures significantly and could be absorbed within existing agency resources.

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**Information Source(s):** Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts, State Board of Law Examiners), Department of Fiscal Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 17, 1996

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