

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1220 (Harford County Delegation)
Judiciary

Harford County - Marriage License and Ceremony Fees

This bill increases the marriage license fees in Harford County by up to \$5, from \$35 to \$40. The clerk of the circuit court must pay \$5 from each license to the Harford County Sexual Assault/Spousal Abuse Resource Center, Inc. The bill also requires the clerk to pay \$10 from each marriage ceremony fee to the Historical Society of Harford County, Inc.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: \$5,700 annual general fund revenue decrease. No effect on expenditures.

Local Effect: Harford County revenues would decrease by approximately \$300 annually. No effect on expenditures.

Small Business Effect: None. The bill would not directly affect small businesses.

Fiscal Analysis

Background: Currently, the marriage license fee in Harford County is \$35. Of this amount, the clerk of the circuit court and the county get \$5 each. The remaining \$25 is dedicated for spousal abuse programs offered by the county. However, the clerk retains 3% of the \$25 for processing the license. The county receives the remaining amount. For each marriage license, the clerk collects \$5.75 and the county collects \$29.25.

In addition, the clerk charges a \$25 fee for performing a marriage ceremony. Of this amount, \$10 is remitted to the county and the clerk retains the remaining \$15.

State Revenues: Under the bill, Harford County may increase the marriage license fee to \$40. If the county sets such a fee, the clerk of the circuit court would collect an additional

\$0.15 per license, or 3% of the fee increase. As a result, general fund revenues would increase by \$255 annually based on the clerk issuing 1,700 marriage licenses annually.

However, general fund revenues would decrease by approximately \$6,000 annually due to the changes in the distribution of the marriage ceremony fees. There are approximately 600 ceremonies each year. Currently, the clerk retains \$15 for each ceremony. Under the bill, the clerk would only retain \$5.

Local Revenues: If Harford County increases the marriage license fee to \$40, revenues would decrease by approximately \$255 annually due to the changes in the distribution of the fees. Of the fee increase, the clerk would retain 3% before paying \$5 to the Harford County Sexual Assault/Spousal Abuse Resource Center, Inc. The remaining proceeds would be paid to the county; thus, the county would lose \$0.15 per license. The clerk issues 1,700 marriage licenses annually. As a result, the county would lose \$255 annually.

Information Source(s): Harford County, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Fiscal Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 13, 1997

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