

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1253 (Delegates Montague and Pitkin)
Judiciary

Premarriage Education - Waiting Period

This bill lengthens the waiting period for marriage licenses from 48 hours to 60 days after an application is filed. Marriage licenses are allowed to be delivered sooner than 60 days if (1) the parties submit a certificate of completion of a “premarriage education course”; (2) there is certification from a physician that the woman is pregnant or has recently given birth; (3) one of the parties is in the U.S. armed forces; or (4) death is imminent for one of the parties.

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) is required to provide county clerks with information on the premarriage education course requirement and a list of such courses in the county.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill’s requirements could be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None. The extension of the waiting period would not have a fiscal impact on clerk offices.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal effect on small businesses as discussed below.

Fiscal Analysis

State Expenditures: DHMH advises that general fund expenditures would increase by an estimated \$30,700 in fiscal 1998, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 1997 effective date. The estimate reflects the cost of hiring a part-time contractual Community Health Educator and Office Clerk to prepare information on premarriage education courses, brochure printing costs, and associated operating expenses. The Department of Fiscal Services advises, however, that the bill merely requires DHMH to provide information on the premarriage education course requirement and a list of such courses in the county to each county clerk, not to each engaged couple applying for a marriage license. Therefore, expenditures could be absorbed with existing budgeted resources.

Small Business Effect: Small businesses providing premarriage education courses could benefit to the extent that engaged couples choose to take a premarriage education course rather than wait 60 days to be married after an application for a marriage license is filed.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Fiscal Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 10, 1997

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