

Department of Fiscal Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE  
Revised

Senate Bill 63 (Senator Hafer)  
Judicial Proceedings

Referred to Judiciary

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**Divorce - Educational Seminar on Effects on Children**

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This enrolled bill allows a court to require the parties to a divorce action in which issues of child support, custody, or visitation are present to attend an educational seminar designed to educate parents about the effects of a divorce on the lives of children. The Court of Appeals is authorized to adopt rules for implementation of the bill. Information about a party obtained from an educational seminar is not admissible during the action for divorce; parties may not be required to attend seminars together. The bill applies to all divorce actions filed on or after October 1, 1997.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Indeterminate increase in general fund expenditures and revenues as discussed below.

**Local Effect:** None.

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

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**Fiscal Analysis**

**State Revenues:** Any potential additional revenue resulting from this bill depends upon whether the implementation rules adopted by the Court of Appeals include a fee/revenue feature. This potential cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

**State Expenditures:** While the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) advises that during fiscal 1996 there were 31,987 cases for divorce and annulment of marriages, it cannot identify the percentage of those cases that involved custody, support, or visitation issues. The AOC further advises that some indeterminate costs would be involved in the exercise of the rule-making authority by the Court of Appeals.

The Department of Fiscal Services advises that in the absence of information regarding the

percentage of cases, contested or uncontested, wherein the issues of custody, support, or visitation are present, it is difficult to determine need and thus to project potential costs. This department further advises that any projection of costs is dependent upon the nature and extent of the rules adopted by the Court of Appeals, and thus is not quantifiable at this time.

**Small Business Effect:** Since the bill allows for the seminars to be provided under contract with a public or private agency, but does not require it, the effect on small businesses cannot be accurately or reliably estimated. The bill does not specify how contracts for the seminars will be awarded, nor whether the court must be the contracting authority. However, to the extent that particular small businesses would secure such contracts, the effect on their operations and income could be meaningful.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader -January 29, 1997  
ncs Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 20, 1997  
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