

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 246 (Senator Ruben)
Judicial Proceedings

Prospective Jurors - Motor Vehicle Administration Lists

This bill expands the sources from which jury commissioners or clerks of courts must select prospective jurors to include individuals at least 18 years of age who have been issued a driver's license or identification card by the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA). The lists are to be provided by the MVA to the clerks and jury commissioners without cost. This bill takes effect on January 1, 1998.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential increase in general fund expenditures as discussed below. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: Potential increase in expenditures. No effect on revenues. **This bill imposes a mandate on units of local government.**

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

Fiscal Analysis

State Expenditures: Jury management in the circuit courts is performed by either the offices of the court clerks, who are State employees, or by county employees. The bill gives the court clerks wide discretion on how to implement the program. For example, if the court clerks eliminate duplicate names with an automated system, they may not incur significant costs. If the clerks manually research every name to ensure that they eliminate only true duplicate listings, the State could incur significant costs.

The Department of Fiscal Services advises that the Administrative Office of the Courts is in the early stages of a multi-year project to automate the offices of the clerks of the circuit courts. Though it is not currently part of the project, software to merge voting lists and MVA data could be incorporated into this system as it is implemented throughout the State. Any such additional costs cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

The Motor Vehicle Administration can supply lists to the clerks of courts and jury commissioners without additional resources.

Local Expenditures: In most counties jury management is done by county employees. The bill gives the jurisdictions wide discretion on how to implement the mandate as discussed above. It should be noted that Baltimore City, Anne Arundel County, Somerset County, and Worcester County already use the MVA list for its jury pool.

Small Business Effect: The bill will provide for a greater number of people (employers and employees) being available for jury duty. Accordingly, small businesses of all varieties may be affected to the extent that the bill could lead to more occasions when a business would face a temporary interruption of normal operations due to the jury service of an individual.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Transportation (Motor Vehicle Administration); Kent, Frederick, Prince George's, Washington, and Worcester counties; Department of Fiscal Services

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Analysis by: Guy Cherry
Reviewed by: John Rixey
(410) 841-3710
(301) 858-3710

Direct Inquiries to:
John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst