

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 144 (Delegate Hixson. *et al.*)

Appropriations

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State Budget - Increases - Line Item Veto

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This proposed constitutional amendment would modify the State budget process to authorize the General Assembly to increase appropriations and to add items relating to the proposed budgets for agencies in the executive branch of government, so long as the total of appropriations does not exceed the total as submitted by the Governor. The Governor could exercise a line item veto over these actions of the General Assembly, which could be overridden by a three-fifths vote of the General Assembly.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** As legislative action to modify the budget could not increase the total beyond the total requested by the Governor, there would be no impact on the total of State expenditures.

**Local Effect:** Indeterminate.

**Small Business Effect:** Indeterminate impact on small business.

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Fiscal Analysis

**State Expenditures:** The proposed change would allow the General Assembly to reduce an appropriation and increase another appropriation or to add a new appropriation to the budget so long as the total of appropriations requested by the Governor for the executive branch of government was not exceeded. The new authority would not affect the total of the appropriations. There would be impacts on individual agencies or programs depending on legislative action. The first effect would be on the budget for the year 2000.

The Governor could veto the legislative action and the General Assembly could override the veto by a three-fifths vote of each house at a special session. As the special session will be

limited to this one purpose, the special session would be short and incur modest expenses, not exceeding \$10,000. This amount could be accommodated within the \$44 million budget of the legislative branch.

The Maryland Constitution requires that proposed amendments to the Constitution be publicized in at least two newspapers in each county, if available, and in at least three newspapers in Baltimore City once a week for four weeks immediately preceding a general election. The costs associated with these requirements are borne by the State. The fiscal 1999 budget of the State Board of Elections contains funding for publishing constitutional amendments for the 1998 general election.

**Local Revenues:** Local governments receive substantial sums of revenues as a result of State appropriations. In the proposed fiscal 1999 budget, it amounts to \$3.7 billion or 22% of \$16.5 billion of appropriations requested by the Governor. There is no basis to determine if the new authority provided to the General Assembly would result in an increase or decrease in State funds received by local governments.

**Local Expenditures:** If approved by the General Assembly, this constitutional amendment will be submitted to the voters at the 1998 general election. It should not require additional costs for the county election boards to administer the election.

**Small Business Effect:** Budgetary actions taken under this bill cannot be known at this time. Any actions taken could have a positive or negative impact on small business.

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**Information Source(s):** Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 22, 1998

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Analysis by: David F. Roose

Reviewed by: John Rixey

Direct Inquiries to:

John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst

(410) 841-3710

(301) 858-3710