

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 276 (Senator Forehand)

Judicial Proceedings

Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry - Disclosure of Nonidentifying Information

This bill authorizes natural parents, adoptees, and natural siblings to register with the Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry to disclose or receive “nonidentifying information”. It requires the Social Services Administration (SSA) to attempt to match registrants and to disclose nonidentifying information to registrants. In order to make a match, SSA is authorized to inquire into the records of a child placement agency, a local department of social services, or a court that issued an adoption decree. The bill authorizes registrants to withdraw from the registry by submitting a notarized affidavit to SSA and prohibits the SSA from obtaining information regarding adoptive parents or adoptive siblings.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures could increase by \$51,600 in FY 1999; future year expenditures increase with annualization and inflation. Offsetting fee revenue would increase by an indeterminate amount.

(in dollars)	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003
GF Revenues	--	--	--	--	--
GF Expenditures	\$51,600	\$62,700	\$64,900	\$67,200	\$69,500
Net Effect	(\$51,600)	(\$62,700)	(\$64,900)	(\$67,200)	(\$69,500)

Note: () - decrease; GF - general funds; FF - federal funds; SF - special funds

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Fiscal Analysis

State Expenditures: Current law authorizes natural parents, adoptees, and natural siblings to register with the Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry to disclose or receive identifying information and requires SSA to attempt to match registrants. This bill authorizes the same process for persons wishing to share nonidentifying information such as medical information or family history that could be crucial for a birth relative to know about.

General fund expenditures could increase by an estimated \$51,585 in fiscal 1999, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 1998 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of two new positions (Social Worker and Office Secretary) to match registrants, disclose nonidentifying information to registrants, and inquire into adoption records. It includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses. There is an estimated pool of 63,800 adopted individuals and 127,600 birth parents in Maryland who could potentially seek to exchange nonidentifying information.

Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$44,190
Other Operating Expenses	<u>7,395</u>
Total FY 1999 State Expenditures	\$51,585

Future year expenditures reflect (1) full salaries with 3.5% annual increases and 3% employee turnover; and (2) 1% annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

These expenditures could be at least partially offset because current law authorizes SSA to charge a reasonable fee for registrants. Therefore, the amount of additional revenues will depend on fee levels established by SSA and the number of applicants.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (General Services Administration), Department of Human Resources, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 4, 1998

ncs

Analysis by: Sue Friedlander

Reviewed by: John Rixey

Direct Inquiries to:

John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst

(410) 841-3710

(301) 858-3710