

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 829 (Prince George's County and  
Montgomery County Delegations)

Judiciary

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**Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Infractions -  
Montgomery County - Witnesses - Testimony by Electronic Means  
PG/MC 1-98**

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This bill authorizes, in Montgomery County only, the presentation of witness testimony by electronic means in any proceeding for a M-NCPPC infraction before a District Court. The testimony may be from any location, in accordance with rules adopted by the Court of Appeals. The bill defines "electronic means" to include: (1) electronic transmission of audio; (2) electronic transmission of audio and video; or (3) a deposition prerecorded utilizing electronic audio and video means.

This bill must be construed prospectively only, and may not apply to cases filed before October 1, 1998.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Significant increase in State expenditures for the District Court in Montgomery County in FY 1999. Revenues would not be affected.

**Local Effect:** None. The costs arising from the provisions of this bill would be borne by the District Court.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful impact. This bill may result in additional revenue for a private contractor or vendor, which may be a small business, selected through the procurement process to equip and install audio/video equipment.

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## Fiscal Analysis

**State Expenditures:** The District Court has two courtroom locations in Montgomery County. They are located in Silver Spring and Rockville. There are a total of 10 courtrooms at those two locations.

The District Court advises that an audio and video system, similar to remote video bail review, would be needed between each remote station and each of the courtrooms. The District Court assumes that each courtroom would require: (1) one large monitor in a secure cabinet for the courtroom audience; (2) three smaller monitors for the judge, plaintiff's counsel, and defense counsel; and (3) one wide area panning camera. Modification of existing recording equipment would be necessary for compatibility of purpose and use.

The District Court estimates that the cost of such equipment and installation would range from \$25,000 to \$35,000 per courtroom. Accordingly, the District Court estimates that these costs could range from \$250,000 to \$350,000 to equip all 10 courtrooms in the county. In addition, the District Court believes that the bill's requirement that the capability to present witness testimony by electronic means "from any location" may mean that equipment and installation costs could involve remote site capabilities and could increase the potential range of costs arising from this bill.

For purposes of illustration, recent studies to upgrade and improve the remote video bail review system in Baltimore City has yielded estimates from potential contractors of up to \$1 million, depending upon whether fiber optics are involved in such closed circuit video systems. Actual costs associated with this bill would also depend upon the rules to be adopted by the Court of Appeals and their interpretation of capabilities mandated by these provisions.

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**Information Source(s):** Judiciary (District Court), Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 4, 1998

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