

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 210 (Chairman, Judiciary Committee)
(Maryland Judicial Conference)

Judiciary

Court Interpreters

This bill specifies that in selecting a qualified interpreter for the hearing impaired, a court or other tribunal may consult the registry of interpreters kept by the Administrative Office of the Courts. The Administrative Office of the Courts may require an individual who seeks an assignment as a court interpreter, whether as an independent contractor or as a full- or part-time employee, to undergo a criminal background investigation. Applicants may be required to pay the Federal Bureau of Investigation and State processing fees for such investigations. An interpreter whom a court appoints as a court interpreter is an officer of the court, and no privilege exists for an individual for whom the interpreter interprets unless the court expressly directs the interpreter to act as an agent for an attorney or other person with a privilege and then only to the extent of that person's privilege.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: No net effect on revenues or expenditures.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: The State criminal history record check processing fee is currently \$18.00. This fee is collected by the Criminal Justice Information System Central Repository within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. The Federal Bureau of

Investigation charges a fee of \$24.00 for a national criminal history record check. The Department of State Police charges \$10.00 for a set of fingerprint cards. Interpreters could be required to pay these fees if the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) were to require interpreters to undergo criminal background checks pursuant to the bill. There are currently 465 names listed in the registry of interpreters kept by the AOC.

The State fees are established as cost recovery measures. Therefore, the bill would have no net effect on State revenues or expenditures.

Small Business Effect: Small businesses could be required to pay criminal history record check fees to the extent that any affected interpreters work for small businesses.

Information Source(s): Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Information Technology and Communications Division), Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Legislative Services

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