

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE  
Revised

Senate Bill 633 (Senator Hughes. *et al.*)

Judicial Proceedings

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Child Support Enforcement - State Case Registry

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This bill establishes a State Case Registry of records for each child support order established or modified on or after October 1, 1998. It requires the registry to include case status and requires case records to be updated on the basis of administrative and judicial actions. The clerk of each circuit court must request, record, and transmit to the registry specified identifying information on all persons involved in support orders established or modified after October 1, 1999. The bill takes effect July 1, 1999.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by at least \$45,000 in FY 2000. Indeterminate increase in special fund revenues. Potential loss of the federal share of child support enforcement program costs if the bill is not passed.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Fiscal Analysis

**Background:** Federal law (the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996) requires states to maintain a State Case Registry with information on every child support order established in the State. The State Case Registry will interface with the Federal Case Registry to assist states with interstate child support enforcement. The Department of Human Resources (DHR) currently maintains records only for child support cases where one party has requested State child support enforcement

services. To comply with federal law, DHR must also maintain records for those cases where State child support enforcement services have not been requested (i.e., child support orders filed with a court). However, Maryland courts do not currently obtain some of the data required by federal law, such as Social Security numbers or dates of birth. The bill would bring Maryland into compliance with federal law.

**State Effect:** Child support collections could increase to the extent that the State Case Registry facilitates child support enforcement efforts. Any such increase cannot be quantified at this time. Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) recipients must assign their support rights to the State and federal government as partial reimbursement for TCA payments made on behalf of the children of the obligor; as a result, TCA child support collections are distributed 50% to the State and 50% to the federal government.

General fund expenditures in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) could increase by at least \$45,000 in fiscal 2000. This estimate includes the cost of software development to allow AOC to transmit the required information to DHR. In addition, AOC may have to purchase new computer hardware to be able to connect with DHR's computer system.

If the bill is not passed, the federal government could assess penalties against all or a portion of the federal share (66%) of child support enforcement program costs. The federal share of child support enforcement program costs represents \$55 million in the proposed fiscal 2000 budget.

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**Information Source(s):** Department of Human Resources, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 12, 1999  
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