

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
1999 Session

**FISCAL NOTE**

House Bill 846 (Prince George's County Delegation)

Judiciary

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**Prince George's County - Weapons-Free School Zone  
PG 301-99**

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This bill increases the penalty for carrying a deadly weapon on school property and expands the definition of school property in Prince George's County. The bill makes the maximum penalties a \$20,000 fine and/or 20 years imprisonment for a first offense and \$40,000 and/or 40 years for a subsequent offense. Current law provides for \$1,000 and/or 3 years for a deadly weapon offense, \$2,500 and/or 3 years for a handgun offense, 3 to 10 years for a second offense, and 5 to 10 years for a subsequent offense.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Indeterminate general fund revenue decrease and expenditure increase.

**Local Effect:** Indeterminate revenue increase and expenditure decrease.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Fiscal Analysis**

**State Revenues:** The District Court generally hears less serious criminal cases. As the penalties for crimes are increased, there is the greater likelihood that the case would be transferred to the Prince George's County Circuit Court. Since the State receives all fines imposed in the District Court, transfer of cases to circuit courts may reduce general fund revenue by an indeterminate amount.

**State Expenditures:** Persons serving a sentence of one year or less are sentenced to the Prince George's County Correctional Center. The State reimburses the county for part of the per diem rate after 90 days. If sentences of more than one year are imposed, State payments to Prince George's County may decrease. Per diem payments to Prince George's County are

expected to be approximately \$28 in fiscal 2000. The number of people convicted of this crime is expected to be minimal.

Any savings in per diem costs would be offset by increased costs to the Division of Correction (DOC). Persons serving a sentence longer than one year are incarcerated in DOC facilities. Currently, the average total cost per inmate, including overhead, is estimated at \$1,600 per month. This bill alone, however, should not create the need for additional beds, personnel, or facilities. The average variable cost of housing a new DOC inmate (food, medical care, etc.), excluding overhead, is \$275 per month. For illustrative purposes, under the bill's maximum incarceration penalty for a first offense, the average time served would increase from 18 months to 120 months, or by 102 months. Assuming the variable inmate costs of \$275 per month, State costs could increase by \$28,050 for each person imprisoned under the bill.

**Local Revenues:** Revenues could increase by an indeterminate amount as more cases are heard in the Prince George's County Circuit Court and higher fines are imposed.

Per diem reimbursement payments from the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to the Prince George's County Correctional Center could decrease by an indeterminate amount as more violators are sentenced to DOC instead of the county correctional center.

**Local Expenditures:** Expenditures could decrease by an indeterminate amount as it would be more likely that a violator would be sentenced to DOC instead of the Prince George's County Correctional Center. Prince George's County Correctional Center per diem costs are estimated at \$56 for fiscal 2000.

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**Information Source(s):** Prince George's County, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Division of Correction), Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 11, 1999

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