

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 778 (Delegates Franchot and Hixson)

Judiciary

Child Abuse and Neglect - Failure to Report

This bill provides that a health practitioner, police officer, educator, or human service worker required to make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect who knowingly fails to make such a report is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to a fine of up to \$1,000. It alters the time period during which a written report must be made to a local department of social services. Current law requires a written report no later than 48 hours after the incident that led the individual to suspect abuse or neglect; the bill requires a written report no later than 48 hours after initial oral notification of the local department.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential minimal increase in general fund revenues due to the bill's penalty provision. Any additional workload could be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: Potential minimal increase in revenues due to the bill's penalty provision. No effect on expenditures.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Fiscal Analysis

Background: After reviewing a number of cases in which children died or were seriously injured as a result of severe child abuse, grand jurors in Montgomery County and Worcester County recently issued reports calling on Maryland to change the way in which the State currently handles child abuse cases. One of the recommendations included imposing criminal penalties for failure to report suspected child abuse.

State Revenues: General fund revenues could increase minimally under the bill's monetary penalty provision for those cases heard in the District Court.

State Expenditures: It is assumed that any increase in the number of reports of child abuse or neglect generated by the bill's provisions would be relatively small and could be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Local Revenues: Revenues could increase minimally under the bill's monetary penalty provision for those cases heard in the circuit courts.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Resources; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Community and Public Health Administration); Prince George's, Montgomery, and Anne Arundel counties; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 1, 1999

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