

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 90 (Delegate Giannetti)

Rules and Executive Nominations

Maryland General Assembly - Recording of Floor Sessions

This bill requires the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) to produce an audio and video recording of each floor session of the General Assembly. DLS is to make the recordings available to the media for broadcasting. The Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) is to adopt guidelines regarding the recording, which must cover procedures governing public availability of recordings and charges for recordings or access to the recording system to offset recording costs.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures could increase by \$475,000 to \$775,000 in FY 2001, which includes the initial system installation costs. Future year expenditures would reflect only ongoing operating expenses of approximately \$500,000. Potential increase in general fund revenues from the collection of fees to offset the costs of the recording systems.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Meaningful impact on a limited number of small businesses that win a contract with the General Assembly to install and maintain an audiotaping and/or videotaping system.

Analysis

Current Law: Audio and video recording of floor sessions of the Maryland General Assembly is not addressed in statute.

Background: Since the early 1990s, the Senate has been making audio recordings of floor sessions and committee meetings. The House of Delegates began making audio recordings of floor proceedings this session. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 19 states videotape floor proceedings and two states record all committee hearings.

The following is based on information provided by states that videotape floor and/or committee meetings. Initial capitalization costs averaged from \$2 to \$4 million for construction, installation, and cabling for video cameras for two chambers, ten to 12 committee rooms, and remote consoles for monitoring those cameras. Most states reported using five to six cameras in each chamber for floor sessions and three cameras in each committee room. The cost to purchase cameras with panning, zooming, and focusing capabilities ranges from \$10,000 to \$40,000 per camera.

Operational costs, including staffing, purchase of videotapes, and maintenance, range from \$500,000 to \$1.0 million annually. Most states that were surveyed use remote rather than manned cameras, which requires two remote control rooms since both houses of the legislature are usually in session simultaneously. Staffing for two control rooms and for production is usually at ten persons, including two technical staff, four producers, and interns. Reported salaries for staff included \$40,000 to \$50,000 for technical engineers and \$35,000 to \$40,000 for media producers.

State Expenditures: Since floor sessions in the House and Senate usually occur simultaneously, two remote control rooms with ten cameras would be needed to monitor floor sessions. First-year equipment and installation costs could range from \$100,000 to \$400,000. Operational costs could reach \$500,000 (including salaries and fringe benefits of at least \$350,000) annually.

Therefore, fiscal 2001 general fund expenditures could increase by an estimated \$475,000 to \$775,000. This estimate reflects the cost of installing a videotaping system in both houses of the General Assembly and the cost of six positions (two technical engineers, four producers). It includes salaries, fringe benefits, and ongoing operating expenses. Future year expenditures would reflect only ongoing operating expenses of up to \$500,000. **Exhibit 1** shows the projected costs of videotaping floor sessions in fiscal 2001.

Exhibit 1

<u>Equipment and Installation Costs</u>	<u>Ongoing Operating Costs</u>	<u>Total</u>
\$100,000 to \$400,000	\$375,000*	\$475,000 to \$775,000

*reflects 3-month start-up delay.

State Revenues: General fund revenues would increase depending on the amount which is charged to those who want access to the recordings. It is not possible at this time to predict the amount of revenues that could be recovered because fee levels will be set by the Legislative Policy Committee.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A similar bill was introduced in the 1999 session as HB 31 and received an unfavorable report by the House Commerce and Government Matters Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source: Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 8, 2000
drg/jr

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