

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 50 (Chairman, Finance Committee)
(Departmental - Aging)

Finance

Assistance Card Programs - Operation

This departmental bill repeals the "Golden Age Card" voluntary discount program established in 1982 for aged and disabled individuals. The bill creates instead the "Disability Access Card" Program to be implemented by the Office of Individuals with Disabilities (OID). Participants may not be charged a fee for the card.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Repealing the Golden Age Card Program and establishing a Disability Access Card Program would not materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: The Department of Aging (DOA) has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). Legislative Services concurs with this assessment. (The attached assessment does not reflect amendments to the bill.)

Analysis

Current Law: The Secretary of Aging is required to issue a Golden Age Card upon request to those eligible for a \$1 fee. There is no Disability Access Card Program.

Background: The Golden Age Card Program was established in 1982 to promote recognition of the fixed-income status of older or disabled adults and to encourage businesses to voluntarily offer discounts with proof of age. Currently, similar discounts are commonly

available to the elderly at many businesses in the private sector, making the Golden Age Card obsolete. This bill requires the OID to offer a “Disability Access Card,” to be issued only to those certified as disabled as a replacement for the Golden Age Card.

State Fiscal Effect: The DOA advises that only about 52 Golden Age Cards are issued each year. The current fee for a card is \$1. Given this low level of program activity, revenues and expenditures for the department would not be materially affected when the replacement card is issued for free.

The OID must offer a “Disability Access Card,” to those certified as disabled. Based on DOA records, the OID is expected to receive no more than two requests per year for the “Disability Access Card.” The number of requests could increase if the OID effectively encourages participation, as outlined in the bill. The DOA will transfer the necessary lamination equipment at no cost and staff responsibilities for the new discount card program could be handled using existing resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Aging, Governor’s Office of Individuals with Disabilities, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 21, 2000
ncs/jr Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 16, 2000

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