

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 522 (Senator Van Hollen. *et al.*)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

Public Libraries - Internet Access by Minors - Obscene Materials

This bill requires each county or board of trustees of a county library to adopt and implement policies and procedures to prevent minors from obtaining access through the library, by means of the Internet or other interactive computer service, to materials that are “obscene” or constitute “child pornography.” These policies and procedures must be adopted by January 1, 2001. The State Superintendent of Schools must regularly monitor the county libraries to determine whether each library is complying with the required policies and procedures.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2000.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Maryland State Department of Education can monitor local library policies and procedures relating to Internet access with existing resources.

Local Effect: Local boards should be able to adopt and implement the required policies and procedures with existing resources. If filtering devices are required, then local expenditures could increase by \$1,200 each year for an average size library system.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Local libraries are not required by statute to adopt specific policies and procedures on Internet access to obscene materials.

Local Fiscal Effect: This bill does not specifically require local library boards to install filtering devices on its computers; however, the State Superintendent could require these

devices as part of the board's policies and procedures governing Internet access to obscene materials. The cost to install a filtering device on a computer server is estimated at \$1,200 per year for an average size library system. At present, only a few library systems in Maryland have installed filtering devices.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 10, 2000
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