

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1354 (Delegate Busch. *et al.*)

Ways and Means

Task Force to Study Public Funding of Nonpublic Schools

This bill establishes a 15-member Task Force to Study Public Funding of Nonpublic Schools.

The task force must: (1) identify the number of nonpublic schools in the State whose annual costs and tuition are above the State norm; (2) determine the costs incurred by the State to purchase textbooks and technology and provide transportation to nonpublic schools; (3) examine the effects that State funding of nonpublic schools would have on local governments and local school boards, if any; (4) examine the constitutional issues relating to public funding of nonpublic schools; (5) examine the process that nonpublic schools must go through to access State funds; and (6) examine public funding initiatives of nonpublic schools in other states.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in cooperation with other appropriate State and local units, will provide staffing for the task force within existing budgeted resources. The task force's findings and recommendations must be submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly by January 1, 2001. This bill takes effect June 1, 2000, and sunsets on January 31, 2001.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for MSDE are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Prior to fiscal 2001, Maryland has not provided funding for nonpublic schools. The proposed fiscal 2001 State budget includes \$6 million in special funds from the Cigarette Restitution Fund to provide textbooks for nonpublic schools.

Background: Approximately 134,400 students, not including prekindergarten students, attended nonpublic schools in Maryland in 1998, representing 14% of all students. Schools operated by the Catholic Archdiocese serve around 60,000 students in Maryland. Tuition averages about \$2,500 per student at most Catholic elementary schools and \$5,500 at most Catholic secondary schools. Non-parochial private schools charge on average approximately \$9,000 at elementary schools and \$11,000 at secondary schools. Many private schools, especially parochial schools, have parent organizations that subsidize the school's operation, thereby keeping both costs and tuition low.

Approximately 26 states provide some form of assistance to nonpublic schools, including 13 states that have a textbook program for nonpublic schools. These states include Alabama, Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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