

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 755 (Delegate Bronrott. *et al.*)

Commerce and Government Matters

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Election Laws - Contribution Reports - Contributor Information

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This bill requires that campaign finance reports submitted in election years by candidates for public or party offices include the full name, mailing address, and if applicable, the occupation and employer of each contributor that donates at least \$251 during a four-year election cycle. A candidate, chairman, or treasurer is in compliance with this requirement if it is shown that "best efforts" have been made to obtain, maintain, and submit the required information.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** A one-time cost of approximately \$30,000 in FY 2001 would be required for the software vendor employed by the State Board of Elections to modify the existing database in order to capture the occupation and employer of each contributor.

**Local Effect:** None. Requiring additional information on reports submitted to the local boards of elections will not materially affect operations or finances.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** Contributors' names and addresses are included on campaign finance reports. No provisions require occupation or employer to be stated.

**Background:** The bill is modeled after federal law and seeks to identify candidates who may have a disproportionate share of their contributions coming from contributors of a

particular profession or interest. The range of reporting requirements varies considerably from state to state, with some requiring only names and addresses and others requiring detailed explanations of employment status and potentially even affiliates of a contributor's employer. In three nearby states, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, contributors are required to provide their occupations and/or the names and addresses of their employers.

In each of the three election years (Baltimore City elections, presidential elections, and State elections) during the four-year election cycle, four reports would be subject to the bill's requirements. If no contributions or expenditures have been made in a given reporting period, a statement noting this must be submitted to the local board of elections and the State Board of Elections.

**State Expenditures:** According to the State Board of Elections and its software vendor, additions to the State database that tracks campaign contributions would require about six to eight weeks of work by the vendor at a total cost of approximately \$30,000. This is a one-time cost and no expenses beyond fiscal 2001 would be expected.

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### Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** A similar bill, HB 563 of 1999, received an unfavorable report from the House Commerce and Government Matters Committee.

**Cross File:** SB 425 (Senator Frosh, *et al.*) - Economic and Environmental Affairs.

**Information Source(s):** State Board of Elections, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 24, 2000  
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