

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Joint Resolution 7 (Delegate Montague)
(Co-Chairman, Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics)
Rules and Executive Nominations

Rules of Legislative Ethics

This joint resolution repeals rules of legislative ethics made obsolete by changes made to the Maryland Public Ethics Law in Chapters 129 and 130 of 1999. The joint resolution also adopts a new rule of legislative ethics authorizing the Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics, upon a vote of three-fourths of its membership, to allow public access to information relating to a complaint, proceeding, or record if disclosure is necessary to uphold the integrity of the ethics investigation process.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The proposed rule essentially mirrors current statutory law.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Maryland Public Ethics Law (as amended by Chapters 129 and 130 of 1999) provides that, with specified exceptions, any matter before the Joint Ethics Committee, including information relating to any complaint, proceeding, or record of the committee, shall remain confidential. Public access and inspection is available for, among other things, information relating to any complaint, proceeding, or record of the committee involving an individual member of the General Assembly, if consent to public access and inspection is granted by the committee, upon three-fourths vote of its membership based on criteria established by rule.

Background: Joint resolutions enacted during the 1998 session established a special study

commission on the Maryland Public Ethics Law to review and make recommendations regarding the ethics law as it relates to the General Assembly and its members. The study commission was chaired by Congressman Benjamin L. Cardin and consisted of six legislators and nine public members. In its final report to the General Assembly, the study commission recommended numerous changes to the Maryland Public Ethics Law. Most of those recommendations are reflected in Chapters 129 and 130 of 1999.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SJ 1 (Senator Collins) - Economic and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): State Ethics Commission, Department of Legislative Services

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