

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 508 (Senator Ruben)
Economic and Environmental Affairs

Education - Public Schools - Use of Portable Phones

This bill allows students to possess a “portable phone” on public school property or use a portable phone on public school property after school hours. School officials may prohibit a student from using or possessing a portable phone on public school property if the use or possession of the portable phone disrupts school functions. A student cannot possess or use a portable phone on public school property if the portable phone is found to be connected with criminal activity or if the student has been arrested for a reportable offense.

This bill takes effect July 1, 2000.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: None. Providing an additional exemption to the law prohibiting the possession of portable pagers on public school property would not affect local school operations.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Individuals are prohibited from possessing portable pagers on public school property. This prohibition does not apply to: (1) a disabled student using portable pagers for medical reasons; (2) law enforcement officers; (3) visitors on public school property for an authorized program, meeting, or function; (4) faculty or staff members employed by a local board; (5) emergency service personnel; and (6) students whose portable pagers are contained in vehicles that are on public school property and are not found to be connected with criminal activity.

Background: In 1989, the General Assembly passed a law prohibiting the use and possession of portable pagers on school property. The law provided for specified exemptions. Portable pagers were defined in law as any device carried, worn, or transported by an individual to receive or communicate messages. This included portable phones. The General Assembly amended the law in 1997 to allow students to possess portable pagers on school property if the pagers are contained in vehicles and are not found to be connected with criminal activity.

Reportable offenses are offenses that involve crimes of violence -- including abduction, kidnaping, assault, sexual assault, and robbery -- handgun and firearms violations, the use of explosives, drug offenses, and crimes generally punishable for an adult by death or imprisonment. They also include traffic violations and the making of bomb threats.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 228 (Delegate Cryor) - Judiciary.

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

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