

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 728 (Senator Van Hollen. *et al.*)

Finance and Budget and Taxation

Department of Human Resources - Reducing Caseloads in Child Welfare Services

This bill requires the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to request, and the Governor to provide in the State budget, the additional qualified caseworker and casework supervisor positions necessary to attain appropriate caseload to staff ratios in child protective services, foster care, kinship care, group care, and residential care cases.

The effective date of this bill is July 1, 2000.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures would increase by \$5.51 million and federal fund expenditures would increase by \$2.36 million for a total increase of \$7.87 million in FY 2002. No effect in FY 2001. Future year expenditures increase with the three-year phase-in, annualization, and inflation. No effect on revenues.

(in millions)	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
GF Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditures	0	5.51	10.09	15.19	17.25
FF Expenditures	0	2.36	4.32	6.51	7.39
Net Effect	\$0	(\$7.87)	(\$14.41)	(\$21.70)	(\$24.64)

Note: () = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - =indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The Secretary of DHR must request additional positions to develop the following caseload ratios: (1) 12 cases per caseworker in child protective services; (2) 15 cases per caseworker in foster care, kinship care, group care, and residential care cases; and (3) 8 caseworkers per supervisor.

The Governor must include in the annual State operating budgets for fiscal 2002, 2003, and 2004 the funds needed to phase-in, in each jurisdiction, the appropriate caseload to staff ratios for child protective services, foster care, kinship care, group care, and residential care services.

Both DHR and DBM must submit a progress report on the achievement of the appropriate caseload ratios by January 1 and July 1 of calendar 2001 through 2004 and on January 1, 2005 to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, the Senate Finance Committee, and the House Appropriations Committee.

Current Law: Chapter 544 of 1998 required DHR and DBM to develop appropriate caseload to staff ratios for every jurisdiction based on the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) standard of 15 foster care cases per worker and 12 protective services cases per worker.

Background: The CWLA was contracted by DHR to analyze the policies and practices of Maryland's child welfare system. CWLA published its report, *A Review of the Maryland Child Welfare System*, in January 1997. The report recommends that, in the area of foster care services, DHR develop a strategy to reduce the average caseload for foster care to the CWLA standard of 15 foster care cases per worker and 12 protective services cases per worker. Caseload ratios were developed by DHR and DBM for each local jurisdiction using the ratios recommended by CWLA. DHR and DBM submitted a report in December 1998 to various legislative committees on the proposed caseload ratios for child protective services, family preservation, foster care, kinship care, and preadoption care services. Based on experience and a task force study, the report recommends one caseworker and one-half aide to eight family caseload ratio. A pilot program testing the effect of ratios recommended by the task force is currently operating in Allegany, Anne Arundel, and Caroline counties, as well as in the northwestern part of Baltimore City.

State Fiscal Effect: Expenditures would not be affected in fiscal 2001. Based on the bill's requirements regarding ratios for caseworkers to cases, caseworkers to supervisors, and the additional requirements for support staff, DHR would need a total of 489 new positions. A three-year phase-in will be implemented by hiring an average of 163 workers per year in fiscal 2002, 2003, and 2004. Total expenditures would increase by \$7.87 million in fiscal 2002 to phase-in one-third of the personnel. Approximately 30% of these expenditures would qualify for federal funding. This estimate includes the cost of hiring 52 foster care caseworkers, 79 protective services workers, 16 typists/clerks, and 16 supervisors. The same

number of personnel will be hired each year through fiscal 2004. It includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$6.80 million
Operating Expenses	1.07 million
Total FY 2002 State Expenditures	\$ 7.87 million

Future year expenditures reflect: (1) hiring an average of 163 workers per year through fiscal 2004; (2) full salaries, where appropriate, with a 4.5% annual increase and 3% employee turnover; and (3) 1% annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

Small Business Effect: The bill's provisions regarding staffing ratios could adversely affect any small business entity with which DHR contracts for the provision of casework services. Conversely, small businesses that either provide training for caseworkers or are the beneficiaries of paid internships could be favorably affected. In addition, the available pool of employees in the social services field could be reduced, increasing competition for available qualified employees.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 903 (Delegate McIntosh, *et al.*) - Appropriations.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Resources; Child Welfare League of America, *A Review of the Maryland Child Welfare System*, January 1997; Department of Legislative Services

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