

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Revised

House Bill 791

(Delegate Taylor, *et al.*)

Ways and Means

Judicial Proceedings

Education - Public Schools - Firearms Safety and Accident Prevention Education Program

This bill requires local boards of education to develop and implement a firearms or hunter safety program consistent with State guidelines for students in kindergarten through grade 12. The State Board of Education must establish policy and guidelines for the program. Local boards may implement the programs in conjunction with State or local law enforcement agencies, other entities of State or local governments, or community or civic organizations. The programs implemented by local boards may not involve the display or handling of ammunition or firearms on school premises. For students in grades 7 through 12, the programs may involve the display and handling of ammunition and firearms at established sport shooting ranges.

The bill is effective July 1, 2001.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The State Board of Education could establish policy and guidelines for the program with existing resources.

Local Effect: Local school expenditures would increase by an estimated \$684,200 in FY 2002 for the cost of consulting fees and instructional materials. Future years would only reflect the cost of instructional materials. *This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.*

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Firearms safety programs in public schools are not mandated.

Background: There are over 200 million guns in America, including at least one in about half of all U.S. households. A study sponsored by Handgun Control Inc., a Washington, DC-based organization that tracks gun control policies, found that there is a gun in about two out of every five households with children. The organization reports that the firearm death rate among teens 15-19 years old increased 222% from 1984 to 1994. In 1996 there were 109 firearm deaths of children and teenagers in Maryland. The number of such firearm deaths in other states include: 5 in Delaware, 16 in West Virginia, 32 in Massachusetts, 39 in Oregon, 56 in Minnesota, 67 in New Jersey, 68 in Washington, 110 in Virginia, and 182 in Pennsylvania.

Local Expenditures: One local school system in Maryland, Carroll County, has implemented a firearms safety curriculum in its public schools. After consulting with the Carroll County Public School System, the Maryland Association of Boards of Education advises that each local board would incur an average cost of \$5,000 for hiring a consultant to aid in the design of the program and an average cost of \$350 and \$500 for instructional materials at each public school. Assuming each local board of education develops and implements a firearms safety curriculum in all of its public schools in fiscal 2002, local school expenditures would increase by \$684,200. This estimate assumes that existing teachers or local law enforcement officers would lead the courses without additional compensation, and that local administration of the program could be handled with existing resources. Future year expenditures would only reflect the cost of instructional materials. **Exhibit 1** shows the estimated fiscal 2002 costs by school system.

Small Business Effect: If consultants are used to aid in the development of firearms safety and accident prevention programs, small consulting businesses could benefit.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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Exhibit 1
Estimated Cost to Develop and Implement Firearms Safety Course
in All Public Schools, Fiscal 2002

School System	Number of Public Schools		Estimated Cost of		
	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Materials*</u>	<u>Consultant</u>	<u>Total</u>
Allegany	13	14	\$11,550	\$5,000	\$16,550
Anne Arundel	76	42	47,600	5,000	52,600
Baltimore City	107	78	76,450	5,000	81,450
Baltimore	103	66	69,050	5,000	74,050
Calvert	12	12	10,200	5,000	15,200
Caroline	5	5	4,250	5,000	9,250
Carroll	21	18	16,350	5,000	21,350
Cecil	17	14	12,950	5,000	17,950
Charles	19	14	13,650	5,000	18,650
Dorchester	6	8	6,100	5,000	11,100
Frederick	31	23	22,350	5,000	27,350
Garrett	9	8	7,150	5,000	12,150
Harford	31	22	21,850	5,000	26,850
Howard	37	29	27,450	5,000	32,450
Kent	4	4	3,400	5,000	8,400
Montgomery	125	67	77,250	5,000	82,250
Prince George's	124	64	75,400	5,000	80,400
Queen Anne's	7	6	5,450	5,000	10,450
St. Mary's	16	11	11,100	5,000	16,100
Somerset	5	6	4,750	5,000	9,750
Talbot	6	3	3,600	5,000	8,600
Washington	26	20	19,100	5,000	24,100
Wicomico	16	11	11,100	5,000	16,100
Worcester	6	8	6,100	5,000	11,100
State	822	553	\$564,200	\$120,000	\$684,200

*Estimate is based on a \$350 cost at each elementary school and a \$500 cost at each middle or high school.