

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2001 Session

**FISCAL NOTE**

Senate Bill 672      Senator Ferguson, et al.)

Judicial Proceedings

Judiciary

**Christopher's Law III - Sexual Offender Registry - Internet Posting**

This bill requires the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) to post on the Internet a current listing of the State's Sexual Offender Registry, including each registrant's name, crime, and other identifying information.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditure increase of \$266,500 in FY 2002, including one-time expenses for contractual services and equipment. Out-years reflect annualization and inflation.

(in dollars)	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	266,500	63,600	64,700	65,800	66,900
Net Effect	(\$266,500)	(\$63,600)	(\$64,700)	(\$65,800)	(\$66,900)

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

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful. This bill could provide a significant small business opportunity for providers of needed hardware, software, and services.

**Analysis**

**Current Law:** DPSCS is authorized, but not required, to post current listings of sexual offender registrants on the Internet.

**Background:** According to published newspaper accounts, nine-year-old Christopher Lee Ausherman of Frederick was sexually assaulted and killed November 19, 2000. Elmer Spencer Jr., 46, a homeless man with a history of convictions for sex crimes, and who was released from prison five days before the killing, has been charged. Spencer was indicted on charges of first-degree murder, first-degree sexual offense, attempted sexual offense, and child abduction.

Chapter 402 of 1999 authorized DPSCS to post on the Internet a current listing of each person who is registered with the department as an offender, child sexual offender, sexually violent offender, or sexually violent predator. Such a listing would include each registrant's name, offense, and other identifying information. At that time, DPSCS estimated that the posting of this information on the Internet would entail a one-time computer related expenditure of up to \$200,000. To date, the department has not posted this information on the Internet.

In accordance with committee narrative from the 1999 *Joint Chairmen's Report*, 60 days before initiating such a website, DPSCS is required to submit a report to the budget committees that addresses:

- the anticipated cost of establishing and maintaining a secure website and what information DPSCS plans to make available on the website;
- the annual cost of disseminating copies of the registry via the mail;
- DPSCS's plans, if any, to confirm registrant information; and
- other options for making the information more easily accessible to the public (such as toll free telephone numbers).

The information provided by DPSCS for this bill does not address all of the questions raised in the *Joint Chairmen's Report*.

**State Expenditures:** General fund expenditures could increase by an estimated \$266,512 in fiscal 2002, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 2001 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of one contractual administrator to provide continuing project management. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs for contractual services (for project analysis, design, development, testing, and implementation), one-time website equipment costs (firewall, web server, gateway server, database server, router, and hub), and ongoing operating expenses.

Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$26,415
Contractual Services	165,100
Website Equipment	53,500
Operating Expenses	<u>21,497</u>
<b>Total FY 2002 State Expenditures</b>	<b>\$266,512</b>

Future year expenditures reflect: (1) contractual salaries with 2.3% annual increase, with 3.8% employee turnover; and (2) 1% annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Information Technology and Communications, Division of Correction), Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader – March 6, 2001  
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