

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 6 (Senator Ruben)

Judicial Proceedings

Vehicle Laws - Mandatory Seat Belt Use

This bill expands the application of the mandatory seat belt requirement by prohibiting a person who is at least 16 years old from being a passenger in any seat of a motor vehicle without wearing a seat belt.

The bill specifies that a violation of the seat belt requirement for back seat passengers may only be enforced as a secondary violation when a police officer detains a driver of the vehicle for another suspected motor vehicle violation.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal general fund revenue increase from the penalty provision applicable to this offense under the Maryland Vehicle Law (\$25). Enforcement could be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Only those adult passengers in the outboard front seats in the motor vehicle and passengers under 16 years old in any seat in the motor vehicle must be restrained by a seat belt.

Background: In fiscal 2000 there were 148,818 citations issued for seat belt violations. Such violations carry a \$25 fine. Of these citations, 117,265 were prepaid, generating \$2.9 million in general fund revenues.

In fiscal 2002, Maryland is scheduled to receive \$175,000 in federal seat belt incentive grants. In order to receive the grant, the State must meet four of six criteria under the seat belt provisions. Currently, the State meets that standard. The bill is not expected to alter the State's eligibility.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: This bill was introduced as SB 115 in 2000 and received an unfavorable report from the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. A similar bill, SB 26, was introduced in 1999. It too received an unfavorable report from the Judicial Proceedings Committee.

Cross File: None.

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

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ef/jr

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