

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 446 (Senator Jacobs, *et al.*)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

Education - Public Schools - Firearms Safety and Accident Avoidance Program

This bill requires the State Board of Education to establish a firearms safety and accident avoidance program for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. The State board must develop guidelines and curricula in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of State Police, and local law enforcement agencies. Local boards of education must implement the program and may implement additional firearms safety programs to supplement the State board's program.

The bill is effective July 1, 2001.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures would increase by \$89,200 in FY 2002 due to staffing and operating costs associated with implementing the new program. Future year expenditures reflect annualization, salary increases, and inflation. No effect on revenues.

(in dollars)	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	89,200	62,400	65,600	69,000	72,600
Net Effect	(\$89,200)	(\$62,400)	(\$65,600)	(\$69,000)	(\$72,600)

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

Local Effect: Local school expenditures could increase by \$385,000 each year for the cost to purchase new educational materials for the firearms safety course. ***This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.***

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Firearms safety and accident avoidance 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 America, the rate of firearms deaths among children -- through homicides, suicides, and accidents -- far outpaces the rates in other industrialized countries. In 1996, there were 109 firearm deaths for 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.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures would increase by an estimated \$89,200 in fiscal 2002, which accounts for a 90-day start-up delay period. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one education specialist within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop and coordinate the program. The estimate includes salary, fringe benefits, ongoing operating expenses, and one-time printing and postage costs to print curricula and guidelines and to send materials to schools and interested parties.

Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$43,140
One-time Printing and Postage Expenses	35,000
Operating Expenses	<u>11,031</u>
Total FY 2002 State Expenditures	\$89,171

Future year expenditures reflect: (1) full salaries with a 6.5% increase in fiscal 2003 and a 4.5% increase each year thereafter, with 3% employee turnover; and (2) 1% annual increase in ongoing operating expenses.

It is assumed that involvement in curriculum development by the Department of State Police and by the Department of Natural Resources could be handled with existing resources.

Local Expenditures: One local school system, Carroll County, has implemented a firearms safety curriculum in its public schools. After consulting with the county, the Maryland Association of Boards of Education advises that materials needed for the safety

program would cost approximately \$350 per school. With about 1,100 public elementary and middle schools in the State, local school expenditures would increase by approximately \$385,000 each year. This estimate assumes that existing teachers or local law enforcement officers would lead the safety courses without additional compensation.

It is assumed that local law enforcement agencies could aid in the development of curricula and guidelines with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: MSDE advises that the development of a firearms safety and accident avoidance program would necessitate the hiring of a consultant at a cost of approximately \$5,000 in fiscal 2002. (This cost is reflected under operating expenses in the estimates above.) If a consultant working for a small business is hired to aid with curriculum development, the business would benefit.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 130 (Delegate Amedori, *et al.*) -- Ways and Means.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader – January 30, 2001
jm/jr

Analysis by: Mark W. Collins

Direct Inquiries to:
John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510