

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

**FISCAL NOTE**

House Bill 909  
Judiciary

(Delegate Cryor, *et al.*)

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**Private Juvenile Group Homes - Notice to Police and Schools**

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This bill requires the Department of Juvenile Justice to notify, before contracting for or authorizing the creation of a private group home or residential facility, the head of the local law enforcement agency and the principal of the school that facility residents will attend. The notification must include the name and address of the facility operator, the street address of the facility, the name of the facility's owner, a statement that the operator will comply with laws and regulations surrounding private facilities, and a statement that the operator has sufficient resources to establish the facility.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** It is assumed that the cost of sending notification to local law enforcement agencies and school principals could be absorbed within the existed budgeted resources of the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** DJJ is not required to send notification of a new group home or residential facility to local law enforcement agencies or schools.

**Background:** In December 2000, two teenage residents at Crossroads House, a Germantown therapeutic group home used by DJJ, allegedly committed several nighttime property crimes over a ten-day period using a window to exit and reenter the facility.

The boys were arrested on December 16. The *Washington Post* reported that the Germantown Police Captain and many of his officers were not aware that the group home was operating in the neighborhood. Alarms were installed on the windows, rules requiring more frequent bed checks were established, and victims of the alleged crime spree were reimbursed by First Home Care Corp., the private company that operated Crossroads House. Due to continued community pressure, however, the group home closed in February 2001, and the six boys who were living at the home were relocated.

DJJ has indicated that a contractor can choose whether or not to notify neighbors of a new juvenile group home and that mandatory notification is illegal due to the federal Fair Housing Act. DJJ paid \$192 per day per resident to use the facility.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader – February 25, 2001  
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