

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 350

(Senator Mooney)

Judicial Proceedings

Courts - Interpreters

This bill clarifies that a qualified interpreter used in the courts must be an adult.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. This bill is clarifying in nature and is not expected to have a material impact on governmental finances or operations.

Local Effect: None -- see above.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: In a criminal proceeding, a qualified interpreter must be appointed to assist a defendant who is deaf or does not speak English. The District Court of Maryland pays for interpreters in criminal proceedings in District Court; the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) pays for interpreters in criminal proceedings in circuit courts.

In a civil proceeding, a qualified interpreter must be appointed to assist a party or witness who is deaf or does not speak English, upon the application of any party for an interpreter for that person. The court has discretion to tax, as part of the costs of the case, amounts paid to an interpreter for services and expenses. Otherwise, by law, the amount must be paid by the county where the proceedings were initiated.

The State budget for the Judiciary Department of Maryland, beginning in fiscal 2000, must include an authorization to the AOC in the total amount necessary to provide interpreter services as required under federal or State law in a circuit court proceeding.

Background: Pursuant to a 1995 administrative order issued by then chief judge of the Court of Appeals, Robert Murphy, interpreters seeking work in the Maryland courts must meet certain minimum qualification standards, including passing an approved certification examination when available.

Additional Comments: Other bills relating to use of court interpreters have been introduced in the 2002 session, including HB 320 and SB 6.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 13, 2002
lsc/cer

Analysis by: Debra A. Dickstein

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