

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 185
Judiciary

(Delegate Turner, *et al.*)

Family Law - Adoption Search, Contact, and Reunion Services

This bill expands the adoption search, contact, and reunion services program within the Department of Human Resources to include siblings of adopted individuals, relatives of a biological parent, and members of the adoptive family. It sets guidelines for how a confidential intermediary providing the search, contact, and reunion services may proceed if the individual sought is dead or if the individual's sibling is at least 21 years old and also was adopted. It permits confidential intermediaries to charge reasonable fees that may not exceed the cost of providing the services.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's requirements could be handled by the Department of Human Resources with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Chapter 679 of 1998 provides that the Social Services Administration (SSA) of the Maryland Department of Human Resources must provide adoption search, contact, and reunion services. Adopted individuals and biological parents over 21 years of age are currently allowed to apply for these services through the use of an approved confidential intermediary.

Background: The Department of Human Resources advises that since the time that Chapter 679 went into effect, birth siblings have expressed a strong desire to be able to take advantage of the adoption search, contact, and reunion services so that they can be in touch with other children born to their parents. In some cases siblings were released for adoption and have not seen each other since. These individuals share common family and medical histories and many wish to contact each other.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A similar bill, HB 395, was introduced during the 2001 session. It passed the House and received an unfavorable report from the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. Another similar bill, HB 461, was introduced in the 2000 session and received an unfavorable report from the House Judiciary Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Resources, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

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