

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2003 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 480 (Delegate Rosenberg)  
 Appropriations

**Task Force on Child Welfare System Accountability**

This bill creates a 28-member Task Force on Child Welfare System Accountability. Among other things, the task force must determine a method for estimating the extent of child abuse and neglect in the State; develop an agreed upon list of performance measures and qualitative assessments of individual child welfare cases; determine measurements of child outcomes to be conducted by an independent research facility including longitudinal studies of represented families; and study how data from certain sources can be compiled and disseminated in order for the State to monitor child safety, permanency, and well-being. The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) will provide staff. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly in a preliminary report by October 31, 2003, and in a final report by December 1, 2004.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2003 and terminates December 31, 2004.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures could increase by \$100,000 in FY 2004 for an independent child welfare study. Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing resources. No effect on revenues.

(in dollars)	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	100,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$100,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## **Analysis**

**Current Law:** The Department of Human Resources' Social Services Administration (SSA) must provide child welfare services to a child and the child's parent or guardian: (1) to assist in preventing the placement of the child outside of the child's home; (2) to reunite the child with the child's parent or guardian after the child has been placed in foster care; or (3) if the child has been placed in foster care and cannot return to the child's parent or guardian, to develop and implement an alternative permanent placement plan for the child.

**Background:** SSA offers a range of child welfare services including in-home family preservation services, foster care, kinship care, and adoption. SSA conducted more than 32,000 child protection investigations in fiscal 2002. SSA reports that 92% of the families who receive services do not abuse their children again. In addition, SSA reports that more than 8,000 children were helped with in-home family preservation services.

**State Fiscal Effect:** General fund expenditures could increase by \$100,000 in fiscal 2004 for an independent research facility to conduct a longitudinal study of represented families after child welfare service intervention is completed, as required by the bill. Any expense reimbursements for task force members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing resources. No effect on revenues.

DBM advises that it would need seven separate longitudinal studies conducted by an independent research facility at \$100,000 per study. The Department of Legislative Services disagrees. The task force members could perform most of the functions DBM suggests it would need studies for.

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## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Human Resources, Department of Budget and Management, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 26, 2003  
mdf/jr

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