

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 541

(Delegate Zirkin, *et al.*)

Judiciary

Judicial Proceedings

**Task Force to Study the Mentoring and Monitoring of Children in the Custody of
or Under the Supervision of the Department of Juvenile Justice**

This bill establishes a 13-member Task Force to Study the Mentoring and Monitoring of Children in the Custody of or Under the Supervision of the Department of Juvenile Justice. The task force must study and make recommendations regarding the feasibility of implementing volunteer mentoring programs and intensive monitoring and support programs within the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The task force is also charged with making recommendations about ways to help children become productively involved in school or the workplace and ways to use monitoring and mentoring programs to reduce recidivism among children who come into contact with DJJ. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by October 1, 2004. DJJ must provide staff for the task force.

The bill is effective October 1, 2003 and terminates October 31, 2004.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for DJJ could be absorbed within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Secretary of Juvenile Justice is required to establish programs for juvenile intake, community detention, investigation, probation, and aftercare services.

Background: In 1996, a federal law required the U.S. Attorney General to provide Congress with a review of the effectiveness of crime and delinquency prevention strategies that have been funded with federal dollars. The report, *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*, was prepared by the University of Maryland Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice and submitted to the National Institute of Justice in July 1998. The report reviewed evaluations of community-based mentoring programs and found some encouraging results. One study of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program found significant reductions in drug use and minor violent behaviors among at-risk 10- to 14-year old youths. Truancy also declined among the mentored youths. Unfortunately, other evaluations have not produced the same level of positive results. However, as a relatively inexpensive strategy (the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program estimated a cost of \$1,000 per "match"), mentoring was placed by University of Maryland researchers in the "What's Promising" category.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Legislative Services

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