

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 571

(Senators Hughes and Conway)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

**Task Force to Study the Governance and Fiscal Structure of the Enoch Pratt Free
Library System**

This bill establishes a 17-member Task Force to Study the Governance and Fiscal Structure of the Enoch Pratt Free Library System. The task force must study the governing and fiscal structure of the library system to determine whether there are defects in the operation or funding of the system or impediments to the efficient operation of the system. The task force must recommend actual solutions to any problem found in the governing or fiscal structure of the library system, including suggested legislation on a State or city level or work plan for solving structural defects. The task force must report its finding and recommendations to the General Assembly on or before January 15, 2004. The Department of Legislative Services will provide staff support.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2003.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for the Department of Legislative Services are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The governance structure of the library and the powers and duties of the board of trustees are established in Chapter 181 of 1882.

Background: The Enoch Pratt Free Library serves as the public library system in Baltimore City and as the State Library Resource Center. It was established in 1882 through a donation from Enoch Pratt who insisted that the library serve all city residents, “rich and poor without distinction of race or color.” A private self-perpetuating board of trustees administers the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Governance Structure

According to the bylaws of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, the board of trustees has ultimate responsibility for the control and management of the library. The board of trustees appoints a board of directors to carry out the management and affairs of the library under the oversight and control of the board of trustees. The board of trustees must hold its annual meeting in September plus three additional regular meetings.

The board of trustees must consist of 9 to 50 members. Currently, the board has 24 trustees. A library trustee must be a State citizen and reside in Baltimore City. Trustees can serve an unlimited number of years as long as they maintain their city residency and attend annual meetings. The board of trustees is responsible for appointing new trustees.

The board of trustees elects the members of the board of directors. Members of the board of directors must be State residents and a majority must be members of the board of trustees. Whereas the trustees must be Baltimore City residents, members of the board of directors do not have to reside in Baltimore City. Members of the board of directors are elected to three-year terms and can serve a maximum of two terms. The board of directors can consist of up to 25 members. Currently, the board of directors has 23 members of which 15 are city residents. The board of directors must hold its annual meeting in September following the annual meeting of the board of trustees plus three other regular meetings. Pursuant to this legislation, the board of directors would be abolished.

Fiscal Structure

The Enoch Pratt Free Library was designated the State Library Resource Center by the General Assembly in 1971. This designation and accompanying State support allow all Maryland citizens to have access to the public library system. Acting in place of the state library that exists in most states, the State Library Resource Center works cooperatively with other libraries in a network that allows materials and information to be shared statewide.

State funding for the Enoch Pratt Free Library comes from two primary sources: (1) the County-State Minimum Library Program; and (2) the State Library Resource Center grant. In fiscal 2003, the Enoch Pratt Free Library received \$14.7 million from the State, \$5.5 million under the County-State Minimum Library Program, \$9.1 million under the

State Library Resource Center grant, and \$0.1 million to operate the library at the Baltimore City Detention Center.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City has 1 central library and 21 branches. The budget for the Enoch Pratt Free Library totals \$27.1 million in fiscal 2002 and \$28.5 million in fiscal 2003. Most of the increase in funding for the library came from the State. **Exhibit 1** shows the revenue sources for the library.

Exhibit 1
Funding for the Enoch Pratt Free Library

<u>Source</u>	<u>FY 2002</u>	<u>FY 2003</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Baltimore City	\$12.8 million	\$12.8 million	\$0
State Funding			
Minimum Program	5.2 million	5.5 million	0.3 million
Resource Center Grant	8.1 million	9.1 million	1.0 million
Detention Center Grant	0.1 million	0.1 million	0
Special Funds	0.9 million	1.0 million	0.1 million
Total	\$27.1 million	\$28.5 million	\$1.4 million

Due to funding difficulties in recent years, the library system has closed several branches. In 1997, the St. Paul and the Morrell Park branches were closed. In 2001, five branches at Dundalk, Fells Point, Gardenville, Hollins-Payson, and Pimlico were closed. This bill would prohibit the board of trustees or Baltimore City from reducing the number of library branches in the city.

Library officials advise that the direct costs to operate a small branch, such as the Canton branch, totals \$250,000 to \$300,000. A larger branch, such as the Hamilton branch, costs \$600,000 to \$700,000 to operate. These direct costs include staff salaries, books, materials, utilities, and maintenance. Most library branches operate under a five-day single shift; whereby extended hours cannot be provided. In order for a library branch to be opened on Saturday, the branch would have to be closed on a weekday. To provide the current level of services to city residents, library officials have discussed the possibility of closing additional branches.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: SB 840, introduced at the 2002 session, would have altered the governing structure of the Enoch Pratt Free Library and required that the library consist of one central library and at least 21 branches. The bill received an unfavorable report by the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore City, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 19, 2003
ncs/jr Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 19, 2003

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