

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 772 (Senator Lawlah, *et al.*)
Finance and Budget and Taxation

Child Welfare Workforce Initiative of 2004

This bill requires the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to hire additional child welfare caseworkers and supervisors beginning in fiscal 2006 to lower the caseload ratio.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2004.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: No effect in FY 2005. General fund expenditures could increase by \$9.9 million and federal fund expenditures could increase by \$2.8 million in FY 2006. Future years reflect annualization and inflation. No effect on revenues.

(\$ in millions)	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	0	9.9	11.8	12.5	13.2
FF Expenditure	0	2.8	3.3	3.5	3.7
Net Effect	\$0	(\$12.7)	(\$15.1)	(\$16.0)	(\$17.0)

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: DHR and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) must develop child welfare caseload ratios using the ratios recommended by the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). DHR must hire additional caseworkers and casework

supervisors to reach the ratio. DHR and DBM must submit an implementation plan by November 1, 2004 to the Governor, the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, the Senate Finance Committee, and the House Appropriations Committee.

For fiscal 2006, the Governor must include funding in the State budget to increase the number of caseworkers and casework supervisors by at least 200. By December 1, 2005, DHR must fill all appropriated caseworker and casework supervisor positions, including preexisting positions and the new positions required by the bill.

For fiscal 2007, the Governor must include funding in the State budget to increase the number of caseworkers and casework supervisors to achieve reduced caseload ratios established in the report. By December 1, 2006, DHR must fill all appropriated caseworker and casework supervisor positions, including preexisting positions and positions added as a result of the report.

For fiscal 2008 and each year after, the Governor must include sufficient funding in the State budget to maintain the CWLA caseload ratios.

Current Law: DHR must have a comprehensive plan for recruitment, training, and retention of caseworkers and supervisors who meet the following qualifications. Beginning January 1, 1999, DHR caseworkers and supervisors must be either: social workers; psychologists; professional counselors; nurses; school psychologists; or human services workers with a degree in an appropriate behavioral science that completed the mandatory pre-service training and competency test, and are supervised by licensed social workers. DHR may retain existing permanent employees who do not meet the qualifications as long as they perform their duties satisfactorily.

All caseworkers hired after January 1, 1999 must be hired provisionally, complete a 40-hour pre-service training program, and pass a competency test before becoming permanent employees.

Background: The fiscal 2002 and 2003 appropriations included funding for almost 200 new child welfare positions to meet the CWLA standards in every jurisdiction by June 2003. However, under Section 37 of the fiscal 2003 budget, the Board of Public Works abolished over 260 positions and, with few exemptions, the local departments may not fill vacancies. As a result of these abolitions and the hiring freeze, DHR did not reach CWLA standards by the June 30, 2003 deadline.

Chapter 544 of 1998 required DHR and DBM to undertake various activities related to improving the State's child welfare system. Among other items, the law required DHR and DBM to develop appropriate caseload-to-staff ratios for each of the 24 jurisdictions. Because of delays in implementing this provision, the General Assembly added language

to the fiscal 2000 budget bill directing DHR to reduce caseload-to-staff ratios in all jurisdictions by the end of fiscal 2003. In both fiscal 2000 and 2001, DHR's appropriation did not include sufficient funding to meet the lower ratios. To emphasize the importance and urgency of the goal, the General Assembly again adopted budget language directing DHR and DBM to meet the caseload-to-staff ratios recommended by CWLA in every jurisdiction by June 2003.

Progress was made in fiscal 2002 when the budget included 109 new positions to implement the first phase of the caseload-to-staff reduction initiative. An additional 64 positions plus a grant for Montgomery County for their share of positions were included in the fiscal 2003 budget to implement the second phase.

This bill seeks to increase the number of caseworkers and supervisors to reach CWLA recommended caseload-to-staff ratios. CWLA's recommended ratios are listed below.

CWLA Recommended Caseload-to-Staff Ratios

<u>Child Welfare Service</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
Family Preservation/Intensive Family Service	6:1
Foster Care and Kinship Care	15:1
Adoption	16-30:1
Services to Families with Children	15:1
Child Protective Services Intake	12:1
Child Protective Services Investigations	17:1

Appendix 1 shows that most jurisdictions continue to fall short of CWLA staffing ratios for all child welfare positions. Nine jurisdictions meet the CWLA standards for both caseworkers and supervisors. They are Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Dorchester, Garrett, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, and Washington counties. In the 14 remaining counties and Baltimore City, 204 additional caseworkers and supervisors are needed to meet CWLA staffing ratios. The greatest number of caseworkers and supervisors are needed in Baltimore City (60), Prince George's County (37), and Frederick County (29). Six jurisdictions have less than 85% of the caseworkers and supervisors needed to meet CWLA standards. They are, in order of increasing need, Howard, Prince George's, Charles, Worcester, Wicomico, and Frederick counties.

Appendix 1 also compares each jurisdiction's achievement or need related to CWLA standards to its current vacancies. In 16 of 23 jurisdictions, vacancies equal or exceed the number of needed caseworkers and supervisors by 38 positions. The department's budget for personnel is sufficient to fill 98 currently vacant positions. If these positions

were exempted from the hiring freeze, the State could make significant progress toward meeting the CWLA standards.

DHR's fiscal 2005 proposed budget for child welfare includes sufficient funds to fill 98 current vacant caseworker and supervisor positions. Although the total number of child welfare vacancies is 241, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) assumes the requirements under this bill would apply to 111 caseworker and supervisor vacancies (family services caseworker II and social services administrator III positions). For every six caseworkers DHR hires, the department needs one supervisor, one office secretary, and one typist to provide oversight of and support to the caseworkers. The typists are necessary to enter data from the various forms into DHR's Client Information System and the Foster Care and Adoption Child Tracking System. DLS estimates that of the 98 vacant but funded positions DHR could fill in fiscal 2005, there would be 66 caseworkers, 11 supervisors, 11 secretaries, and 10 typists.

After hiring these individuals, DHR would still need to hire 34 caseworkers and supervisors to fill the vacant positions as required under this bill.

State Expenditures: No fiscal effect in fiscal 2005. DLS assumes that DHR will hire 98 people to fill some of the 111 existing caseworker and supervisor vacant positions (family services caseworker and social services administrator positions) in fiscal 2005, which DLS assumes will consist of 66 caseworkers, 11 supervisors, 11 secretaries, and 10 typists. DHR would still need to hire 34 additional caseworkers and supervisors to fill the existing staff vacancies ("preexisting positions"). Salary amounts for these positions are as follows:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Average Salary Amount</u>
Caseworkers	\$32,588
Supervisor	\$45,116
Secretary	\$25,211
Typist	\$17,287

Expenditures could increase by an estimated \$12.7 million in fiscal 2006 (\$9.9 million general funds, \$2.8 million federal funds), which accounts for a 90-day start-up delay. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring 201 caseworkers, 33 supervisors, 33 secretaries, and 33 typists. It includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, one-time training expenses, travel costs, and ongoing operating expenses. Federal foster care funds (Title IV-E) will cover 22% of the costs, with general funds supporting the remainder.

Filling all of the existing vacant caseworker and supervisor positions and the 200 new positions required in fiscal 2006 will result in the number of caseworkers exceeding the CWLA standard in fiscal 2006 by three.

Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$10,461,335
One-time Training	234,000
Travel	111,671
Operating Expenses	<u>1,900,343</u>
Total FY 2006 State Expenditures	\$12,707,349

Future year expenditures reflect: (1) full salaries with 4.6% annual increases and 3% employee turnover; and (2) 1% annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

Since DHR would already be over the CWLA recommended staffing ratio in fiscal 2006 by hiring the 234 minimum caseworkers and supervisors required under the bill and the caseload is currently very stable, there would not be a need to hire any additional caseworkers or supervisors in future fiscal years, except to replace any vacant positions.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1202 (Delegate Jones, *et al.*) – Appropriations.

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

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ncs/jr

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Appendix 1 Local Child Welfare Staffing

<u>Local Department</u>	<u>Filled Positions</u>		<u>CWLA Standards</u>			<u>12/31/2003 Vacancies</u>	<u>Vacancies Beyond Need</u>
	<u>Workers</u>	<u>Supervisors</u>	<u>Workers</u>	<u>Supervisors</u>	<u>Need</u>		
Allegany	42	5	36	7	-2	2	0
Anne Arundel	86	16	93	19	-10	19	10
Baltimore	112	19	120	24	-13	20	8
Calvert	17	3	15	3	0	5	5
Caroline	12	3	10	2	0	5	5
Carroll	24	7	22	5	0	1	1
Cecil	29	9	32	7	-4	6	2
Charles	33	4	42	9	-14	11	-3
Dorchester	15	4	10	2	0	1	1
Frederick	36	7	60	12	-29	8	-21
Garrett	15	3	12	3	0	4	4
Harford	45	9	50	10	-6	12	7
Howard	28	9	35	7	-7	6	-1
Kent	7	1	4	1	0	1	1
Prince George's	114	26	148	29	-37	36	-1
Queen Anne's	10	2	8	2	0	3	3
St. Mary's	26	3	24	5	-2	4	2
Somerset	15	3	13	3	0	3	3
Talbot	10	4	12	3	-2	1	-1
Washington	56	13	56	11	0	7	7
Wicomico	26	7	40	8	-15	1	-14
Worcester	14	4	20	4	-7	6	-1
Baltimore City	733	152	787	158	-60	81	22
Total	1,501	313	1,642	330	-204	241	38

Source: Department of Human Resources