

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 984 (Delegates Quinter and O'Donnell)
Judiciary

State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy – Review of Variability in Sentencing

This bill requires the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy (MSCCSP) to annually report to the General Assembly on variability in sentencing among individual judges in the State. This information is required to be a part of an existing annual report produced by MSCCSP on State sentencing policies and practices.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any increased printing costs for MSCCSP could be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: MSCCSP must annually review sentencing policy and practice, and, on or before December 1 of each year, provide an annual report to the General Assembly. The report must:

- include any changes to the sentencing guidelines made during the preceding year;
- review judicial compliance with the sentencing guidelines, including compliance by crime and judicial circuit;

- review reduction or increases in original sentences that have occurred because of reconsiderations of sentences of those convicted of crimes of violence; and
- categorize information on the number of reconsiderations of sentences for crimes of violence, broken down by crime and by judicial circuit.

Background: MSCCSP was established in 1999. The commission has 19 members and is responsible for the State's voluntary criminal sentencing guidelines, including collecting sentencing guidelines worksheets and automating the information; monitoring sentencing practices, including judicial compliance with the guidelines; and, when necessary, adopting changes to the guidelines.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 8, 2004
mam/jr

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