

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 917 (Senator Lawlah)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Economic Matters

Task Force on the Status of Women and Information Technology

This bill creates a 20-member Task Force on the Status of Women and Information Technology to: (1) study the declining involvement of girls and women in information technology (IT) and the impact of this decline on the future of the IT workforce in Maryland; (2) examine existing programs, laws, and services to identify practices to address this issue; and (3) develop a statewide women and information technology plan, as well as strategies for implementing and promoting the plan. The Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED) must provide staff for the task force, which must be appointed by August 1, 2004.

The task force must present an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly by October 1 of each year, beginning October 1, 2004. The bill takes effect July 1, 2004 and terminates June 30, 2009.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures would increase by \$34,500 in FY 2005. Out-years reflect inflation. Revenues would not be affected. Expense reimbursements for task force members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing resources.

(in dollars)	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	34,500	40,600	42,600	44,800	47,100
Net Effect	(\$34,500)	(\$40,600)	(\$42,600)	(\$44,800)	(\$47,100)

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: None applicable.

Background: According to a study by Computer Research Associates, the number of women who are choosing IT for undergraduate study is declining. This decline is also evident in the number of women in the IT workforce. The study cites anecdotal evidence that women are entering information systems programs in greater percentages than computer science and computer engineering programs because that field is perceived as more people-oriented and more attuned to the uses of information technology, whereas computer science and computer engineering are more focused on the technology itself.

The Center for Women and Information Technology, established at the University of Maryland Baltimore County in 1998, sponsors programs and research to address the low entry of women in the IT industry workforce. Specifically, the center encourages more women and girls to study computer science and information systems and to pursue careers in IT. The center also helps all women and girls use IT comfortably and knowledgeably.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures would increase by \$34,495 in fiscal 2005. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring a part-time person to staff the task force and conduct the necessary research. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses. Future year expenditures reflect a full salary with 4.6% annual increases and 3% employee turnover and 1% annual increases in ongoing operating expenses. Due to the bill's provision requiring appointment of task force members by August 1, 2004, the estimate does not assume a start-up delay.

DBED advises that it will require two full-time staff and an additional 800 square feet of office space to accommodate the staff at an estimated cost of \$155,759. However, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) advises that DBED eliminated 10 positions under fiscal 2004 statewide cost containment requirements and would likely have enough space for additional staff persons. DLS agrees that permanent employees are necessary due to the long-term appointment of the task force; however, the task force is not a full-time operation and would not require full-time staff.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1538 (Delegate Cryor, *et al.*) – Economic Matters.

Information Source(s): Department of Business and Economic Development,
Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 16, 2004
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Analysis by: Ann Marie Maloney

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510