

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2005 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 257

(Senator Grosfeld, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health and Government Operations

Maryland Commission for Women

This bill makes various changes to the Maryland Commission for Women. It requires the Secretary of Human Resources to appoint an executive director for the commission who is a Department of Human Resources (DHR) employee. It expands the membership of the commission from 24 to 25 and alters the appointment process by requiring the Governor to appoint nine members and the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House to each appoint eight members. To the extent practicable, commission membership must be geographically diverse. A commissioner who does not attend at least 50% of the commission's regularly scheduled meetings during a 12-month period must be considered to have resigned. The bill makes the commission chair and vice chair elected positions. A commissioner appointed to fill an unexpired term serves only for the rest of that term and until a successor is appointed and qualifies. A commissioner may not serve more than two consecutive terms. The commission must inform the Executive and Legislative branches of government on issues concerning women, including offering testimony on these issues before legislative and administrative bodies.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2005.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The changes would not directly affect governmental finances as an executive director currently serves the commission.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A unit of DHR, the commission consists of 24 members appointed by the Governor. Membership includes men and women and must broadly represent all fields of interest of women. Membership must include individuals experienced in public affairs, private industry, and volunteer activities and must represent various age groups and geographical regions of Maryland. The commission must report to the Governor and the legislature through the Secretary of Human Resources.

Members are appointed to four-year terms. Vacancies must be filled in the same manner as the original appointments for the rest of the unexpired term. Any commissioner may be reappointed to one additional term. The Governor appoints the chairman, who serves as the chief executive officer, and vice-chairman.

Background: The Maryland Commission for Women folded its Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women into its Legislative and Public Policy Committee, which is responsible for building a legislative agenda for the commission in collaboration with the Governor's legislative office. Individuals who used to serve on the former Legislative Agenda for Maryland Women formed a separate group, the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW). MLAW is a statewide group of organizations and individuals that advocates for legislation and policies affecting women and families. This bill is part of MLAW's 2005 legislative agenda. MLAW is concerned about the commission's ability to take independent positions on legislation and to advocate on behalf of legislative priorities voted upon by the participants.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Resources, Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women 2005, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 9, 2005
ncs/ljm Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 24, 2005
Revised - Enrolled Bill - May 4, 2005

Analysis by: Lisa A. Daigle

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

