

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 21
Judiciary

(Delegate Benson)

Crimes - Assault on an Educator - Penalties

This bill prohibits a person from causing physical injury to another if the person knows, or has reason to know, that the other person is an “educator” acting on school grounds within the course and scope of the educator’s employment. A violator is guilty of felony second degree assault and subject to maximum penalties of imprisonment for 10 years and/or a fine of \$5,000.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal increase in general fund revenues and expenditures due to the bill’s penalty provision.

Local Effect: Minimal increase in revenues and expenditures due to the bill’s penalty provision.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A person may not commit an assault. A violator is guilty of the misdemeanor of second degree assault and subject to maximum penalties of imprisonment for 10 years and/or a fine of \$2,500. Assault means the crimes of assault, battery, and assault and battery.

A person may not intentionally cause physical injury to another if the person knows or has reason to know that the other is a law enforcement officer engaged in the

performance of the officer's official duties. "Physical injury" means any impairment of physical condition, excluding minor injuries. A violator is guilty of the felony of second degree assault and subject to maximum penalties of imprisonment for 10 years and/or a fine of \$5,000.

Background: Under the federal provisions of No Child Left Behind, as adopted by Maryland, a "persistently dangerous school" means a school in which each year for 3 consecutive school years, the total number of student suspensions for more than 10 days or expulsions for any of the following offenses equals 2.5% or more of the total number of students enrolled in the school:

- arson;
- drugs;
- explosives;
- firearms;
- other guns;
- other weapons;
- physical attack on a student;
- physical attack on a school system employee or other adult; and
- sexual assault.

State Revenues: General fund revenues could increase minimally as a result of the bill's monetary penalty provision from cases heard in the District Court.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures could increase minimally as a result of the bill's incarceration penalty due to more people being committed to Division of Correction (DOC) facilities and increased payments to counties for reimbursement of inmate costs. The number of people convicted of this proposed crime is expected to be minimal.

Persons serving a sentence longer than 18 months are incarcerated in DOC facilities. Currently, the average total cost per inmate, including overhead, is estimated at \$1,974 per month. This bill alone, however, should not create the need for additional beds, personnel, or facilities. Excluding overhead, the average cost of housing a new DOC inmate (including medical care and variable costs) is \$341 per month. Excluding medical care, the average variable costs total \$134 per month.

Persons serving a sentence of one year or less in a jurisdiction other than Baltimore City are sentenced to local detention facilities. For persons sentenced to a term of between 12

and 18 months, the sentencing judge has the discretion to order that the sentence be served at a local facility or DOC. The State reimburses counties for part of their incarceration costs, on a per diem basis, after a person has served 90 days. State per diem reimbursements for fiscal 2007 are estimated to range from \$17 to \$65 per inmate depending upon the jurisdiction. Persons sentenced to such a term in Baltimore City are generally incarcerated in DOC facilities. The Baltimore City Detention Center, a State-operated facility, is used primarily for pretrial detentions.

Local Revenues: Revenues could increase minimally as a result of the bill's monetary penalty provision from cases heard in the circuit courts.

Local Expenditures: Expenditures could increase minimally as a result of the bill's incarceration penalty. Counties pay the full cost of incarceration for people in their facilities for the first 90 days of the sentence, plus part of the per diem cost after 90 days. Per diem operating costs of local detention facilities are expected to range from \$33 to \$119 per inmate in fiscal 2007.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Maryland Association of Boards of Education, Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 2, 2006
ncs/jr

Analysis by: Guy G. Cherry

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