

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2006 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 291  
Judiciary

(Howard County Delegation)

Judicial Proceedings

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**Howard County - Marriage License Fee – Increase**  
**Ho. Co. 18-06**

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This bill increases the maximum amount of the additional marriage license fee that the Howard County Council is authorized to set from \$25 to \$50.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill would not directly affect State finances or operations.

**Local Effect:** The Howard County revenue increase from marriage fees would vary according to the number of marriage licenses issued and the amount of the additional fee, up to \$50.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** The basic statewide marriage license fee is \$10, of which \$5 is retained by the clerk of the circuit court and \$5 is paid into the general fund of the county where the fee is assessed. Except as otherwise specified by law, individual or groups of counties are authorized to set additional marriage license fees of up to \$25.

In Howard County, the county council may set, by resolution, an additional fee of up to \$25 for each license to fund battered spouse shelters and domestic violence programs. The clerk pays the additional fees to the Director of Finance monthly. The Howard County Executive is required to make available an annual report by December 1 on the

disposition of the proceeds from the additional marriage license fee during the previous fiscal year.

Howard County currently sets an additional marriage license fee of \$25. The total fee for a marriage license in Howard County is \$35.

**Background:** According to the latest information available from the Administrative Office of the Courts, the additional marriage license fees charged by the various counties for funding domestic violence programs as shown in **Exhibit 1**.

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**Exhibit 1**  
**Additional Marriage License Fees by County**

<u>County</u>	<u>Additional License Fee</u>
Allegany	\$25
Anne Arundel	\$45
Baltimore City	\$25
Baltimore County	\$25
Calvert	\$45
Caroline	\$15
Carroll	\$25
Cecil	\$20
Charles	\$30
Dorchester	\$25
Frederick	\$75
Garrett	\$40
Harford	\$30
Howard	\$25
Kent	\$25
Montgomery	\$45
Prince George's	\$45
Queen Anne's	\$25
Somerset	\$5
St, Mary's	\$15
Talbot	\$25
Washington	\$50
Wicomico	\$10
Worcester	\$25

**Local Revenues:** There were 1,521 marriage licenses issued in Howard County in fiscal 2005. The total marriage license fee is \$35. Of this amount, the clerk of the circuit court and the county each received \$5 and the domestic violence programs received \$25. In fiscal 2005, domestic violence programs received \$38,025 from Howard County.

Howard County advises that for fiscal 2007, it expects to issue 1,713 marriage licenses. With a maximum charge of \$50 per license, the county could receive an additional \$42,825 (for a total of \$85,650) to allocate to battered spouse shelters and domestic violence programs under the provisions of this bill.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** The bill is a reintroduction of HB 500 of 2005. HB 500 was heard in the Judiciary Committee, but received no further action.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Howard County, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 7, 2006  
ncs/hlb

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