

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 374 (Senator Della)
Judicial Proceedings

Baltimore City - Special Traffic Enforcement Officers - Authority to Issue Warnings

This bill authorizes a Special Traffic Enforcement Officer (STEO) in Baltimore City to issue a warning, to the same extent a police officer is authorized, when exercising the officer's authority to control and direct pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Granting STEOs in Baltimore City the authority to issue warnings should not affect the operations or finances of Baltimore City.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: An STEO in Baltimore City may only exercise the same authority of a city police officer, under State and local law, to control and direct pedestrian and vehicular traffic within the boundaries eligible for inclusion in the downtown commercial district (as authorized under Chapter 604 of 1992) and on property controlled by the city's Department of Recreation and Parks (as authorized under Chapter 469 of 2003). They do not have the power to make arrests and may only issue citations for a failure to obey lawful traffic direction or traffic control devices.

The boundaries of the downtown commercial district are delineated in the Baltimore City Charter (Article II, § 61) as follows:

- On the North – a line beginning at the Jones Falls Expressway, going west on Centre Street to Park Avenue, then north on Park Avenue to Read Street, then northwest on Read Street to Howard Street, then north on Howard Street to Martin Luther King Boulevard, then southwest on Martin Luther King Boulevard to Eutaw Street, then south on Eutaw Street to Franklin Street, then west to Greene Street;
- On the West – Greene Street and Russell Street;
- On the South – a line running generally westerly from Russell Street and Lee Street to Lee Street and Light Street, and then following Light Street to Key Highway, and then following Key Highway to Lawrence Street; and
- On the East – the Jones Falls Expressway and President Street.

The district may also include properties binding on either side of the authorized boundaries.

Background: According to Baltimore City, 47 STEOs currently work in the city’s Department of Transportation. These positions are budgeted at \$1.9 million in fiscal 2006. Although they are authorized to issue citations in certain circumstances, their primary role is to move traffic during peak periods, such as for Ravens and Orioles games, during rush hour, and for other special events like concerts.

The city estimates that these officers write about 10,500 moving violation citations per year. An STEO does not currently have the authority to issue a warning.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City, Department of Legislative Services

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ncs/hlb

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