

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 279 (Senator Ruben, *et al.*)
Judicial Proceedings

Vehicle Laws - Mandatory Seat Belt Use

This bill expands the application of the mandatory seat belt requirement by prohibiting a person who is at least 16 years old from being a passenger in any seat of a motor vehicle without wearing a seat belt.

The bill specifies that a violation of the seat belt requirement for back seat passengers may only be enforced as a secondary violation when a police officer detains the driver of a vehicle for another suspected motor vehicle violation.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal general fund revenue increase from the penalty provision applicable to this offense under the Maryland Vehicle Law (\$25). Enforcement could be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Adult passengers in the outboard front seats in a motor vehicle and passengers under 16 years old in any seat in a motor vehicle must be restrained by a seat belt.

Background: In fiscal 2005, the District Court processed 133,237 citations for seat belt violations. Of these, only 10,205 were issued for passenger use of a seatbelt. The State Highway Administration (SHA) advises that the State has never faced a federal sanction or failed to qualify for federal funding under the current seat belt law. SHA also advises that recently enacted federal transportation authorization legislation contains two grant programs related to seat belts. State eligibility for these grant programs would likely continue under current law. At this time, there are no federal proposals to restrict federal funding to states that mandate seat belt use of only front seat passengers.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: This bill is a reintroduction of SB 560 of 2005. SB 560 received an unfavorable report from the Judicial Proceedings Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of State Police, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 3, 2006
ncs/ljm

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