

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 537
Finance

(Senator Klausmeier, *et al.*)

Commission on Gambling Addiction

This bill creates a Commission on Gambling Addiction within the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH). The commission is charged with studying the effects and costs of gambling addiction, and working with State and local agencies to improve programs for the treatment and prevention of gambling addiction. The commission must report on its progress annually beginning in 2008 to the Governor and the General Assembly.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2007.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: DHMH and other State agencies with members serving on the commission could handle the requirements of this bill with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The commission consists of 19 voting members: 7 members of the public with relevant interest or expertise in gambling addiction appointed by the Governor; 5 cabinet secretaries; 3 other Executive Branch officers; 1 member each of the House of Delegates and Senate of Maryland appointed by the presiding officers; and 1 judge each from the District Court and circuit court nominated by the chief judge and

appointed by the Governor. There are also three nonvoting members from the Executive Branch. The members who do not serve ex-officio serve three-year staggered terms, and may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

The Governor may remove any member for incompetence or neglect. The Governor appoints one member to serve as chair of the commission. The commission must meet at least four times each year. Commission members do not receive compensation but are entitled to State reimbursement for travel and other related expenses.

The purpose of the commission is to study the effects of individuals who are seriously addicted to gambling, measure the cost of gambling addiction to Maryland taxpayers, and propose solutions to the threat of gambling addiction. The commission may consult with other units of State government, and establish committees or task forces as it considers necessary. DHMH may adopt regulations to implement the bill.

The commission shall:

- develop a comprehensive, coordinated, and collaborative approach to the use of State and local resources for the prevention and treatment of gambling addiction;
- promote the coordinated planning and delivery of State resources to combat addiction;
- promote collaboration and coordination with local gambling treatment programs;
- identify, develop, and recommend improvements in providing prevention and treatment services to gambling addicts;
- prepare a study to measure the human and financial costs of addiction in the State;
- prepare a plan for the delivery and funding of State services to addicts;
- coordinate with the Governor's Grants Office to seek funds for prevention and treatment; and
- receive, review, and serve as a repository for studies of State and local gambling addiction programs and other relevant materials.

Current Law/Background: Specified types of gambling are allowed in Maryland. This includes the State lottery and wagering on horse racing. Bingo, bazaars, and gaming nights are allowed for some nonprofit organizations on a county-by-county basis. Several counties permit for-profit bingo. In addition, some nonprofit organizations in Eastern Shore counties are allowed to operate up to five slot machines, provided that at least 50% of the proceeds go to charity. For additional discussion of gambling in Maryland, including studies on gambling addiction, please consult the *Legislators' Guide to Video Lottery Terminal Gambling* published by the Department of Legislative Services Office of Policy Analysis.

The Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene is authorized to make grants from or agreements for the use of State or federal funds to operate a center for compulsive gamblers and establish and operate local programs to provide medical and educational services to compulsive gamblers.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, District Court,
Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Nicholas M. Goedert

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