

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 252
Judiciary

(Delegate O'Donnell, *et al.*)

Child Protection from Predators Act

This bill prohibits the earning of diminution credits to reduce the term of confinement of specified sexual offenders, including child sexual offenders, sentenced to a term of imprisonment in a Division of Correction facility or a local correctional facility. The bill's provisions are applied prospectively only.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal. The bill's limitations on diminution earning abilities for a limited number of inmates after October 1, 2008 is not expected to significantly increase State correctional costs. Any increases in parole hearings or in workloads for the Division of Parole and Probation are assumed to be absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: Minimal. The bill's limitations on diminution earning abilities for a limited number of inmates after October 1, 2008 is not expected to significantly increase local correctional costs.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Generally, a person convicted of a sex crime or other specified crime in Maryland, including kidnapping and false imprisonment, is required to register with the State sex offender registry upon release from prison or release from court if the person did not receive a prison sentence. Offenders who have to register in other states and

come to Maryland are required to register upon entering Maryland. Offenders from other states who may not be required to register in the home state are required to register in Maryland if the crime would have required registration in Maryland if committed in Maryland. Juveniles who are adjudicated as adults and convicted for crimes that require registration are included in the registry. Juveniles who are adjudicated delinquent for these crimes through the juvenile court system are not included in the registry.

Maryland has four categories of persons convicted of sexual offenses: (1) child sexual offender; (2) offender; (3) sexually violent offender; and (4) sexually violent predator.

“Child sexual offender” means a person who • has been convicted of sexual abuse of a minor; • has been convicted of first or second degree rape or first, second, or third degree sexual offense involving a child under age 15; • has been convicted of fourth degree sexual offense involving such a child and has been ordered by the court to register under these provisions; or • has been convicted in another state or in a federal, military, or Native American tribal court of a crime that, if committed in this State, would constitute one of these crimes.

“Offender” means a person who is ordered by a court to register and who • has been convicted of child kidnapping; • kidnapping; • fourth degree sexual offense, if the victim is under 18; • false imprisonment, if the victim is under 18 and the person is not the victim’s parent; • a crime that involves soliciting a person under 18 to engage in sexual conduct; • production and distribution of child pornography; • prostitution or related criminal prohibitions if the intended prostitute or victim is under 18; • any crime that involves conduct that by its nature is a sexual offense against a person under 18; • an attempt to commit any of these offenses; or • has been convicted in another state or in a federal, military, or Native American tribal court of a crime that, if committed in Maryland, would constitute one of these crimes.

An inmate in a local correctional facility may receive deductions of five days per calendar month for good conduct; industrial, agricultural, or administrative tasks; educational and training courses; work projects; and special programs. The use of diminution credits to reduce an inmate’s term of incarceration is a means of recognizing an inmate’s good behavior. Inmates are allowed a deduction in advance from the term of confinement. If an inmate violates a rule of discipline, however, diminution credits may be revoked.

For DOC inmates whose terms of confinement include consecutive or concurrent sentences for a crime of violence or a crime involving a controlled dangerous substance, the deduction in the sentence for good conduct is calculated at 5 days per calendar month. For all other inmates the deduction is calculated at 10 days per calendar month. An

inmate may also receive deductions calculated at 5 days per calendar month for work tasks and education and 10 days per calendar month for special projects. However, the total deduction may not exceed 20 days per calendar month.

These credits are awarded as they are earned. When an inmate's total number of diminution credits is equal to the remainder of sentence, including consideration for any losses of credits, the inmate is eligible for mandatory supervision release.

A deduction may not be allowed for a period during which an inmate does not receive credit for service of the inmate's term of confinement, including a period: (1) during which the inmate's sentence is stayed; (2) during which the inmate is not in DOC custody because of escape; or (3) for which the Maryland Parole Commission has declined to grant credit after revocation of parole or mandatory supervision.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures could increase minimally as a result of the bill's limitation on diminution credit earnings by a limited number of inmates due to people staying in a DOC facility for longer periods of time and increased payments to counties for reimbursement of inmate costs.

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 \$2,600 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 \$526 per month. Excluding medical care, the average variable costs total \$148 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 2009 are estimated to range from \$19 to \$71 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.

This bill could also minimally increase the demand for parole hearings at local correctional facilities and the supervision caseload of the Division of Parole and Probation. Additional parole hearings across the State would minimally increase travel costs for the Parole Board. Any potential increase in caseloads for the Division of Parole and Probation is also assumed to be minimal.

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 \$40 to \$129 per inmate in fiscal 2009.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 584 of 2007 received an unfavorable report from the House Judiciary Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Washington County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Kent County, Worcester County, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 13, 2008
mcp/jr

Analysis by: Guy G. Cherry

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