

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1354 (Delegates Branch and Conway)
 Appropriations

Child Welfare Accountability - Caseload Ratios - Modifications

This bill repeals a requirement that the Department of Human Resources consult with the Child Welfare League of America to develop a methodology by January 1, 2007 to calculate caseload ratios for child welfare services. The bill also repeals the requirement that the Child Welfare League of America annually review these calculations.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2008.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General and federal fund expenditures could decrease by a total of \$50,000 annually in FY 2009 through 2012 to reflect reductions in contractual services. Revenues would not be affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	(25,000)	(25,000)	(25,000)	(25,000)	0
FF Expenditure	(25,000)	(25,000)	(25,000)	(25,000)	0
Net Effect	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Secretaries of Human Resources and Budget and Management are jointly responsible for ensuring that the State employs sufficient numbers of qualified child welfare staff to meet caseload standards established by the Child Welfare League of America. DHR is required to contract with the Child Welfare League of America to develop a methodology to calculate appropriate ratios by January 1, 2007 and annually review these ratios. These provisions terminate June 30, 2012.

Background: Chapter 544 of 1998 established the Child Welfare Workforce Initiative to require DHR and the Department of Budget and Management to develop appropriate caseload ratios consistent with Child Welfare League of America guidelines. This requirement was reinforced by Chapters 31 and 475 of 2006, the Child Welfare Accountability Act of 2006. In addition to these requirements, the General Assembly has added language to the State budget in each year since 2004 that makes a portion of the DHR appropriation contingent on maintaining a minimum number of filled child welfare caseworker and supervisor positions.

Fiscal 2008 budget bill language restricts \$2 million of the DHR appropriation for Child Welfare, with \$1 million contingent on DHR maintaining 2,021 filled caseworker and supervisor positions as of December 1, 2007 and the second \$1 million contingent on the same number of positions filled as of March 1, 2008. DHR met the December 1 requirement with 2,025.8 filled positions, though this number is still below Child Welfare League of America guidelines, as detailed in **Exhibit 1**.

State Fiscal Effect: DHR advises that the current contract with the Child Welfare League of America to review caseload calculations is valued at \$50,000 per year. These savings continue through fiscal 2012, when statutory review requirements terminate. If requirements are repealed, the department would still have the option to contract for these services, which would negate anticipated cost savings. No changes to caseworker staffing levels are assumed as a result of this bill.

Exhibit 1
Local Departments of Social Services Staffing
Filled Positions as of December 1, 2007

<u>County</u>	<u>CWLA Caseworker Standard</u>	<u>Filled Caseworker Positions</u>	<u>CWLA Supervisor Standard</u>	<u>Filled Supervisor Positions</u>
Allegany	36.2	63.0	7.2	6.0
Anne Arundel	92.8	102.8	18.6	16.0
Baltimore City	942.5	752.5	188.5	129.5
Baltimore	149.0	123.7	29.8	22.0
Calvert	15.1	19.5	3.0	2.0
Caroline	12.3	20.0	2.5	4.0
Carroll	28.3	30.0	5.7	8.0
Cecil	27.3	42.0	5.5	5.0
Charles	30.6	40.5	6.1	6.0
Dorchester	11.3	20.0	2.3	5.0
Frederick	49.9	49.0	10.0	11.0
Garrett	10.1	19.0	2.0	3.0
Harford	42.6	50.8	8.5	11.0
Howard	35.1	34.5	7.0	6.0
Kent	4.3	9.0	0.9	2.0
Prince George's	132.1	149.0	26.4	27.0
Queen Anne's	7.8	13.0	1.6	3.0
St. Mary's	25.4	28.6	5.1	6.0
Somerset	13.5	19.5	2.7	3.0
Talbot	10.9	12.0	2.2	4.0
Washington	74.5	70.5	14.9	12.0
Wicomico	40.6	34.0	8.1	8.0
Worcester	16.8	19.5	3.4	4.0
Total	1,809.0	1,722.3	361.8	303.5

CWLA: Child Welfare League of America

¹CWLA requirements based on caseload as reported during 2007 session.

Note: Montgomery County operates independently as part of a grant agreement; these caseworkers are not included in State totals.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Resources, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 15, 2008
ncs/hlb

Analysis by: Suzanne O. Potts

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