

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1038

(Prince George's County Delegation)

Judiciary

Judicial Proceedings

Prince George's County - Master for Juvenile Causes – Authority
PG 303-08

This bill repeals provisions of law that limit the types of juvenile hearings that masters in Prince George's County can conduct.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill would not increase the overall caseload of the Judiciary, but would permit masters to conduct certain juvenile proceedings that are currently only authorized to be heard by judges in Prince George's County. Any costs related to training masters on conducting the types of hearings under this bill could be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: None. The bill would not increase the overall caseload of the circuit court in Prince George's County, but would permit masters to conduct certain juvenile proceedings that are currently only authorized to be heard by judges in Prince George's County.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Following approval from the Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals, circuit court judges in each county may appoint masters to conduct juvenile causes. Masters appointed for juvenile causes in Prince George's County are restricted to conducting only the following types of juvenile proceedings:

- probable cause hearings, detention hearings, arraignments, acceptances of admissions, and restitution hearings in delinquency cases;
- shelter care, adjudicatory, and disposition hearings in CINA (Child in Need of Assistance) cases; and
- voluntary placement hearings.

Masters in Prince George's County are expressly prohibited from conducting the following types of juvenile proceedings:

- adjudicatory hearings in delinquency cases, unless the hearing is limited to the acceptance of an admission;
- disposition hearings in delinquency cases; or
- peace order proceedings.

These restrictions and prohibitions are repealed by this bill.

Background: To the extent feasible, masters appointed for juvenile causes shall desire to be so assigned, have the temperament necessary to deal properly with the cases and children that are likely to come before the court, and have special experience or training in juvenile causes and the problems of children likely to come before the court. The proposals and recommendations of a master for juvenile causes do not constitute orders or final action of the court, but are to be promptly reviewed by the court.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Juvenile Services, Prince George's County, Department of Human Resources, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Legislative Services

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mll/hlb

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