

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 944

(Delegate Love, *et al.*)

Health and Government Operations

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Commission on the Establishment of a Maryland Women in Military Service
Monument**

This bill reestablishes the Commission on the Establishment of a Maryland Women in Military Service Monument. The bill specifies new purposes for the reestablished commission and requires the commission to produce a report on its activities and the status of the monument project by September 30, 2014. Any new recommendations of the commission may also be included in the report. The commission will not continue to meet if a monument is completed prior to the termination date.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2009, and terminates September 30, 2014.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Assuming the requirement to monitor funding does not extend to expending funds for such a monument, reconstituting the commission has no impact on expenditures. The requirement to staff the commission can be absorbed within existing resources of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA). No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The commission must refer to the reports from the earlier commission and task force; monitor compliance with the recommendations of the earlier commission

regarding funding, design, construction, and placement of a monument; and coordinate and monitor the effort to erect the monument. The commission may enter into a written agreement or memorandum of understanding regarding the funding, design, construction, or placement of an appropriate monument with other government entities, including the federal government, a unit of State government, a county, or a municipality.

The bill requires the Governor to appoint to the commission those individuals who formerly were appointed to the earlier commission and were serving as of September 30, 2007.

Current Law/Background: Chapter 556 of 2005 established the Task Force on the Establishment of a Maryland Women Veterans Monument. It was required to identify and recommend the funding, design, construction, and placement of an appropriate monument to honor Maryland women who have served in the U.S. uniformed services. The task force terminated on December 31, 2005. It recommended that the State:

- appoint a commission to proceed with the design, construction, and placement of an appropriate monument dedicated to all women from Maryland who are currently serving or have served in the uniformed services of the United States;
- charge that commission with the responsibility to provide a comprehensive educational component to the monument, and use a combination of private and State funds for construction;
- proceed with the project at Fort George G. Meade, or other location, thus providing cost-effective space, the site for the museum/educational component of the project, visibility, existing traffic, and easy access; and
- phase in planning and funding over a two-year period.

Subsequently, Chapters 281 and 282 of 2006 established the 10-member Commission on the Establishment of a Maryland Women in Military Service Monument to again identify and recommend the funding, design, construction, and placement of an appropriate monument dedicated to women from Maryland who served in the uniformed forces of the United States. The commission terminated on September 30, 2007.

The commission's final report, issued in December 2007, likewise recommended that the monument be funded by a combination of State bonds and private fund-raising. The monument design preferred by the commission includes information about the past and present role of women in the uniformed services. The proposed location for the monument is Fort George G. Meade. At the time of the report, Fort Meade's Installation Commander supported building a monument on the facility. The planned location for the monument was on a two-acre parcel of land near Route 175 and Twentieth Street in Anne Arundel County. MDVA advises that, although Fort Meade remains a possible location,

the commission, if reestablished, may have to identify alternative locations due to the difficulty of procuring the federal property planned for use. Funds have not been secured for the project, nor have specific sources of funding been identified.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs advises that, as of October 2007, approximately 44,000 of the approximately 463,000 veterans in Maryland were women. Although there are approximately 400 monuments and memorials to veterans in Maryland, none has been dedicated solely to women who served or are serving in the uniformed services of the United States of America.

In the past two decades, the State has funded memorials commemorating veterans of World War II, and the Vietnam and Korean wars.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 367 (Senator Klausmeier, *et al.*) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Michael T. Vorgetts

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