

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 138
Judiciary

(Delegate Simmons, *et al.*)

Truth in Sentencing Task Force

This bill establishes a Truth in Sentencing Task Force to examine and report on various specified issues relating to sentencing, diminution credits, early release, parole, and the impact that the elimination of early releases would have on the ability of prison officials to control inmate behavior. The bill specifies the membership of the task force and requires the Governor to appoint a chair from among the members. Staffing is provided by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). The task force must report its findings to the General Assembly by December 31, 2009.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2009 and terminates after May 31, 2010.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for DPSCS are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Background: Most states have policies awarding eligible inmates in state prisons and/or local correctional facilities some form of limited, credit-based early release. States with “truth-in-sentencing” policies typically had a target for convicted persons to serve at least 85% of their sentence or term – especially those convicted of felonies and other more serious crimes. As its name suggests, these policies tend to ensure that the actual time

served by offenders is closer to the length of sentence they were given, thus decreasing the amount of diminution credit which may be applied to their sentence.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Office of the Public Defender, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, State's Attorneys' Association, Department of Legislative Services

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ncs/hlb

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