

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 390

(Senator McFadden)

Judicial Proceedings

Judiciary

Baltimore City - Marriage License Fee - Increase - The Carole Alexander Act

This bill increases the maximum amount of the additional marriage license fee set by the mayor and city council of Baltimore City from \$25 to \$75. The bill repeals a provision that allows the mayor and city council to set an additional fee by ordinance and instead requires them to set an additional fee, up to the maximum of \$75, by resolution.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill would not directly affect State finances or operations.

Local Effect: Baltimore City revenue from marriage fees increases by \$50 for every license issued (assuming that the maximum fee is set). Revenue from the additional fee charged for marriage licenses is paid to the mayor and city council for allocation to domestic violence programs.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The basic statewide marriage license fee is \$10, of which \$5 is retained by the clerk of the circuit court and \$5 is paid into the general fund of the county where the fee is assessed. Except as otherwise specified by law, individual or groups of counties are authorized to set additional marriage license fees of up to \$25 and the proceeds must be used to fund domestic violence programs.

In Baltimore City, the mayor and city council may set by ordinance an additional fee for each license. The clerk must pay the proceeds from the additional fee to the mayor and

city council each month and the proceeds must be used to fund domestic violence programs that have a 24-hour intake ability.

Background: The maximum additional marriage license fees that may be charged by the various counties and Baltimore City for funding domestic violence programs are shown in **Exhibit 1**.

Exhibit 1
Maximum Additional Marriage License Fees by County

<u>County</u>	<u>Additional License Fee</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Additional License Fee</u>
Allegany	\$25	Harford	\$40
Anne Arundel	\$45	Howard	\$50
Baltimore City	\$25	Kent	\$25
Baltimore	\$15	Montgomery	\$45
Calvert	\$55	Prince George's	\$60
Caroline	\$15	Queen Anne's	\$25
Carroll	\$25	Somerset	\$25
Cecil	\$20	St. Mary's	\$25
Charles	\$35	Talbot	\$25
Dorchester	\$25	Washington	\$50
Frederick	\$65	Wicomico	\$25
Garrett	\$40	Worcester	\$25

The bill's title honors Carol Alexander, the former Executive Director of the House of Ruth, who stepped down in 2009 after leading the organization for 25 years. The House of Ruth opened Baltimore's first crisis shelter for victims of domestic violence in 1977. Its services include a 24-hour hotline, a legal clinic, counseling services, an abuser intervention program, community outreach and training, and specialized services for children and teens.

Local Revenues: Information regarding the average number of marriage licenses issued per year is not available. Under current law, \$25 from every marriage license issued is used to fund domestic violence programs. Under this bill's provisions, assuming that the maximum fee is set, the clerk of the circuit court in Baltimore City will instead charge an additional fee of \$75 for each marriage license issued and the proceeds from the additional fee will continue to be paid to the mayor and city council each month and used to fund domestic violence programs that have 24-hour intake ability.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1187 (Delegate Anderson, *et al.*) – Judiciary.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 14, 2010
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