

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2012 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

Senate Bill 411 (Senator Jennings)  
Judicial Proceedings

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**Criminal Procedure - Maryland Victim Information & Notification Everyday  
(VINE) Services - Contact Information**

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This bill requires correspondence or documents provided by the District Court to a crime victim or the victim's representative to contain contact information for Maryland Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) services. The bill also requires a prosecuting attorney to mail or deliver similar information to a crime victim or victim's representative under specified circumstances. The State Board of Victim Services (SBVS) is required to develop contact information for use by the District Court and prosecuting attorneys for victims and victims' representatives regarding Maryland VINE and the Internet site for those services.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$5,800 in FY 2013 only for applicable computer reprogramming costs for the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). General fund revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** On first contact with a victim or victim's representative, a law enforcement officer, District Court commissioner, or juvenile intake officer must give the victim or the victim's representative a specified SBVS pamphlet.

Within 10 days after the filing or the unsealing of an indictment or information in circuit court, whichever is later, the prosecuting attorney must:

- mail or deliver to the victim or victim's representative the SBVS pamphlet and a notification request form; and
- certify to the clerk of the court that the prosecuting attorney has complied with these provisions or is unable to identify the victim or victim's representative.

If the prosecuting attorney files a petition alleging that a child is delinquent for committing an act that could only be tried in the circuit court if committed by an adult, the prosecuting attorney must:

- inform the victim or victim's representative of the right to request restitution;
- mail or deliver to the victim or victim's representative a notification request form; and
- certify to the clerk of the juvenile court that the prosecuting attorney has complied with these provisions or is unable to identify the victim or victim's representative.

**Background:** VINE is an information service that can provide an individual with information on the custody status of offenders and upcoming court hearing dates either by telephone or through [vinelink.com](http://vinelink.com). It is a fully automated system, available in English and Spanish 24 hours a day. Operator assistance in using the VINE system is also available by telephone 24 hours a day.

A national call center located in Louisville, Kentucky constantly monitors offender and court case activity through a connection with local booking and court case management systems. Updated offender records are automatically sent to the center as often as every 15 minutes.

The Maryland State Board of Victim Services was created in 1988. It is currently a part of the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP). In 2008, GOCCP working in conjunction with the board, applied for and was awarded federal funds to expand the VINE program to include offenders who are on parole or probation and under the supervision of the Division of Parole and Probation. Crime victims will soon be able to access information and register for notification of status changes for parolees or probationers.

**State Expenditures:** To meet the bill's notification requirements for the District Court, AOC estimates one-time reprogramming costs of \$5,760 in fiscal 2013. While some court forms will need to be changed, AOC does not anticipate that the bill will have a significant fiscal or operational impact on the State's trial courts.

The bill will not have a direct fiscal impact on GOCCP or SVCF. The bill's requirements can be met by the State Board of Victim Services providing VINE contact information to the courts and prosecutors' offices, which are responsible for including that information in materials made available to crime victims. It is assumed that most criminal justice entities in the State, including the courts and prosecutors' offices are already familiar with VINE.

GOCCP indicated that the bill will require redesign and reprinting costs of \$41,800 annually for pamphlets provided by the board to reflect the bill's provisions. However, Legislative Services advises that current pamphlets already in use would not need such updating under the bill.

**Local Expenditures:** The State's Attorneys' Association advises that the bill's requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources. The bill will not have a significant fiscal or operational impact on the circuit courts.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, State's Attorneys' Association, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 20, 2012  
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