

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 885

(Senator Peters)

Judicial Proceedings

Appropriations

Parole and Probation - Employee Caseloads - Disciplinary Actions

This bill requires the Division of Parole and Probation (DPP) to consider the size of an employee's active caseload and the classification of the offenders within the employee's active caseload when considering disciplinary actions relating to employee performance.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. DPP must already consider, as a matter of policy, all mitigating factors before imposing disciplinary sanctions on employees.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: DPP does not currently have statutorily mandated caseload levels. However, maintaining manageable caseload ratios remains an important issue for the agency because larger caseloads can limit an agent's ability to detect violations and intervene effectively. Maryland supervises offenders based on risk level, dividing the population into three categories: violence prevention initiative (VPI), sex offenders, and general cases.

The ideal average caseload ratio is 30:1 for VPI, 30-40:1 for sex offenders, and 100:1 for general cases. DPP does well managing VPI and sex offender caseloads; however, the agency has had between 16 and 18 jurisdictions operating every month for the past 15 months with general caseload ratios in excess of the 100:1 target. Further

complicating the issue is the significant disparity among jurisdictions in terms of the number of specialized cases and access to services. The result can be blended caseloads and jurisdictions where agents have to provide more services because community resources are not available, which skews what an appropriate caseload size might be. There are currently 339 parole and probation agents statewide assigned to the general caseload.

DPP is currently working with union representatives to discern the appropriate general caseload average. Legislative Services has recommended that DPP submit the findings of a caseload study to the legislative budget committees, along with recommendations for acceptable agent caseload standards. In examining the issue, Legislative Services also recommends that DPP explore acceptable caseload ratios for urban, rural, and suburban jurisdictions, as well as by offender risk level and case type.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1121 (Delegate Guzzone, *et al.*) - Appropriations.

Information Source(s): Department of Budget and Management, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 21, 2012
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