

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

## FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 679 (Senator Forehand)  
Rules

General Assembly - Fiscal Notes - Criminal Justice Policy Impact Statements

This bill requires a fiscal and policy note for a bill to include a criminal justice policy impact statement under specified circumstances. The bill specifies the information that must be included, to the extent the information is available, in the criminal justice policy impact statement.

## **Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill's requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** The bill's requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources.

### **Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** A fiscal and policy note must include a criminal justice policy impact statement if the bill, as introduced or amended, does the following: (1) creates a criminal offense; (2) significantly alters the elements of an existing criminal offense; (3) alters the penalties applicable to a criminal offense; or (4) alters existing sentencing, parole, or probation procedures.

To the extent the information is available, the criminal justice policy impact statement must include the following:

- an estimate of the number of criminal cases that would be affected by the bill during the year in which the bill is to become effective and any estimates available for the following years;
- an estimate of the fiscal impact of detaining, imprisoning, or imposing other penalties on individuals in accordance with the provisions of the bill during the year in which the bill is to become effective and any estimates available for the following years;
- the potential impact of the bill on racial and ethnic groups;
- the potential impact of the bill on existing State or county detention facilities, correctional facilities, or other programs used for sentencing;
- whether the bill is likely to create a need for additional detention or correctional facilities or juvenile placement services; and
- the estimate of the fiscal impact associated with the need for additional judicial resources for legal representation and court services during the year in which the bill is to become effective and any estimates available for the following years.

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) must prepare the criminal justice policy impact statement by requesting available information from (1) the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS); (2) the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS); (3) the Judiciary; and (4) any other State, county, or local entity that DLS deems necessary. DLS or any other entity may not be required to prepare information that is not readily available for inclusion in the criminal justice policy impact statement.

**Current Law:** DLS must prepare a fiscal and policy note for each bill considered by the General Assembly. In general, a standing committee of the General Assembly may not vote on a bill unless it is accompanied by a fiscal and policy note. A fiscal and policy note prepared by DLS must contain:

- an estimate of the fiscal impact of the bill on the revenues and expenditures of the State government and of local governments for five years, beginning with the year the bill takes effect. If the bill's full fiscal impact is not expected to occur during that time, the analysis must include each year until and including the first year during which the impact occurs;
- for bills that require a mandated appropriation in the State budget, a statement to that effect and an estimate of the fiscal impact of the mandated appropriation;

- for bills that impose a mandate on a unit of local government, a statement to that effect and an estimate of the fiscal impact of the local mandate, including the effect on local property tax rates;
- an analysis of the bill's economic impact on small businesses; and
- a list of sources of information used in preparing the fiscal impact estimates.

DLS must prepare a revised fiscal and policy note as soon as possible after the adoption of an amendment that changes the fiscal impact of a bill. A revised fiscal and policy note is typically prepared when a bill passes third reading in the house of origin and crosses over for consideration by the second house.

**State and Local Fiscal Effect:** Although fiscal and policy notes do not currently include a specific criminal justice policy impact statement, to a large extent, the bill's requirements are already being met. For example, the bill summary portion of each fiscal and policy note typically states if a bill creates a criminal offense; alters the elements of an existing criminal offense; alters penalties applicable to a criminal offense; or alters existing sentencing, parole, or probation procedures. In addition, if a State or local entity provides a credible estimate of the number of cases that would be impacted by the bill's provisions, that information is included as part of the fiscal analysis. DJS, DPSCS, and the Judiciary are already queried when preparing relevant estimates to determine any potential impact on their respective operations. Finally, standard language regarding incarceration costs is generally included in any fiscal and policy note involving criminal penalties. This language details incarceration costs relating to per diem State grants to local detention facilities, per diem operating costs of local detention facilities, and the average cost of housing a new Division of Correction inmate.

Although the fiscal impact is often not quantified for a majority of fiscal and policy notes involving these types of expenditures, DLS believes that, in general, the relevant entities are providing any credible information that is readily available, particularly considering the volume of requests that are received and the limited time available during which a request for fiscal impact information must be prepared and processed.

Information regarding the potential impact of a bill on racial and ethnic groups is not currently included in fiscal and policy notes. To the extent that the relevant entities can find readily available and credible information and provide it to DLS, that information can be incorporated into fiscal and policy notes using existing resources.

## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 709 (Delegate Valentino-Smith, *et al.*) - Rules and Executive Nominations.

**Information Source(s):** Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of State Police; Office of the Public Defender; State's Attorneys' Association; Maryland Association of Counties; Charles, Frederick, and Montgomery counties; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 22, 2012  
ncs/lgc

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