

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2014 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

Senate Bill 20  
Finance

(Senators Forehand and Montgomery)

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**Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing - Name Change**

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This bill changes the name of the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to the Office of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind. The bill also changes the name of the Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to the Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill has no fiscal impact beyond a one-time \$200 cost to change the name of the office on the door, which can be handled with existing resources. Any changes to stationery and business cards can be handled as existing supplies are exhausted.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law/Background:** The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, within the Office of the Governor, was established by Chapter 537 of 2001. The office is responsible for promoting the general welfare of deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the State.

The office has 12 specific statutory responsibilities: (1) providing, advocating, and coordinating the adoption of public policies, regulations, and programs; (2) improving access to communication and to existing services and programs; (3) providing direct

services as appropriate; (4) increasing public awareness of the needs and issues affecting deaf and hard of hearing individuals; (5) working with State and local agencies to ensure access to safety and emergency services; (6) developing a referral service; (7) serving as an information clearinghouse on the needs and issues affecting deaf and hard of hearing individuals; (8) working to increase access to educational, health, and social opportunities; (9) working with private organizations, the federal government, and other units of State government to promote economic development; (10) working to eliminate underemployment and unemployment; (11) providing a network through which services provided by State and federal programs can be channeled; and (12) promoting compliance with State, local, and federal laws and policies protecting and serving deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

Although the bill changes the name of the office and its advisory council, it does not change their statutory responsibilities, which do not specifically include deafblind individuals. Even so, the office does also serve deafblind individuals. Thus, the name change does not substantively change its scope or that of its advisory council.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 13, 2014  
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