

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 769 (Delegate O'Donnell)
Environmental Matters

Recreational Hunting or Fishing License Applications - Disclosure of Information

This bill specifies, under existing provisions relating to suspension or denial of occupational licenses for child support arrearages, that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) must require an applicant for a recreational hunting or fishing license to disclose only the last four digits of the applicant's Social Security number and DNR must record the applicant's partial Social Security number on the application. The bill also allows information that is exchanged between licensing authorities and the Child Support Enforcement Administration (CSEA) in order to facilitate suspension or denial of licenses to include an individual's partial Social Security number as appropriate. The bill limits the information that DNR may require on recreational hunting and fishing license applications to (1) an applicant's full first, middle, and last name; (2) an applicant's date of birth; and (3) the last four digits of an applicant's Social Security number.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential significant decrease in federal grant funding for child support enforcement services, child support incentives, and the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The State operates several intercept programs to collect delinquent child support payments, including the interception of tax refunds, lottery prizes, and wages.

In accordance with the Family Law Article, licensing authorities, which include DNR among others, must require each occupational license applicant to disclose their Social Security number and record that number on the application. CSEA may ask licensing authorities for information concerning any obligor in arrears in paying child support. A request by CSEA for this information must contain the full name and Social Security number of the obligor and may be transmitted to a licensing authority using an electronic format. In addition, upon request, a licensing authority must also submit the obligor's address and a description of the license held by the obligor. CSEA is authorized to request that a licensing authority suspend or deny a person's license, in specified circumstances.

In accordance with federal law, states must develop a plan for child and spousal support that includes specified items, including procedures requiring that the Social Security number of any applicant for a professional license, driver's license, occupational license, recreational license, or marriage license be recorded on the application. If a state allows a number other than the Social Security number to be used on the face of the document while the Social Security number is kept on file, the state must advise an applicant.

In accordance with the Natural Resources Article, DNR must comply with the license requirements summarized below.

- An applicant for a recreational fishing license must provide his or her Social Security number, if the applicant has a Social Security number; generally, the applicant's Social Security number may not be disclosed as part of the application's public record.
- An applicant for an angler's license must provide all of the information requested by DNR.
- An application for a hunting license must contain the applicant's name, height, color of eyes and hair, occupation, place of residence, and Social Security number.

Background: DNR preserves, protects, enhances, and restores the State's natural resources for the use and enjoyment of all citizens. DNR is also responsible for issuing numerous different licenses, including licenses that permit individuals to engage in specified fishing and hunting activities. DNR's Licensing and Registration Service operates seven regional service centers that assist the public with vessel titling and registration, off-road vehicle registration, commercial fishing licenses, and hunting and sport fishing licenses.

DNR's COMPASS online licensing and registration system was designed so that an individual can access or create a personal DNR licensing account via the Internet, HB 769/ Page 2

telephone, or U.S. mail or by visiting a DNR service center. Individuals may also establish a personal DNR licensing account at 1 of DNR's approximately 250 sports license agent locations in retail stores throughout the State. Once an individual creates an account, he/she is issued a DNR identification card that contains a unique identification number (not a Social Security number) to use for future licensing purchases. A person's Social Security number is required only to establish a DNR licensing account and it is not requested subsequently to process licensing transactions.

CSEA, a division of the Department of Human Resources (DHR), administers and monitors child support services provided by local departments of social services and other offices, provides technical assistance, formulates policy, develops and implements new programs, and ensures compliance with regulations and policy. Social Security numbers are a key tool CSEA uses to enforce payments from noncustodial parents. Because the provisions under the Family Law Article relating to suspension or denial of licenses for child support arrearages currently apply only to occupational licenses, however, DNR does not exchange information with CSEA on recreational licensees.

State Fiscal Effect: DHR advises that failing to comply with federal laws that require license applicants to provide their Social Security numbers may result in the loss of significant federal grant funding. Specifically, DHR advises that the bill may result in a reduction in federal funding for child support enforcement services (\$79.9 million), child support incentives (\$7.2 million), and TANF (about \$229.1 million).

DNR can handle necessary changes in the COMPASS online licensing and registration system within existing resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 514 of 2013 passed the House and received a hearing in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, but no further action was taken. HB 1479 of 2012, a similar bill, was referred to interim study by the House Environmental Matters Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Department of Human Resources, Department of Legislative Services

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