

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 446

(Delegate West, *et al.*)

Ways and Means

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

State Government - Maryland Youth Advisory Council - Revisions

This bill alters the membership of the Maryland Youth Advisory Council. The bill also expands the council's duties and alters the process for appointing members to the council.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2016.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Governor's Office for Children (GOC) can handle the bill's requirements using existing budgeted resources. Altering the membership and duties of the council does not materially impact governmental operations or finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Bill Summary: The bill reduces, from 57 to 24, the membership of the council and repeals the requirement for the council to have a member from the House of Delegates and the Senate. The bill retains the ability of the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the Governor to appoint members to the board and also requires GOC to appoint specified members. All members must be residents of the State.

The bill alters the factors that must be considered when appointing or nominating members to include the consideration of youths who are involved in established public and private youth councils and youth empowerment organizations in the State, including (1) service

learning and leadership programs; (2) teen court programs; (3) foster care; (4) student councils; (5) juvenile service programs; and (6) transitional programs. Existing requirements to consider geographic and demographic diversity of the State, diversity in education, youth with disabilities, and transitional youths continue, as specified. The bill also establishes that a member who represents an established public or private youth council or youth empowerment organization in the State must represent the views of the council or organization.

The bill alters the term of a member from one year to two years and modifies provisions relating to the executive board. The bill repeals provisions that require a representative from GOC, a Senator, and a Delegate to serve as co-chairs along with an elected youth council member and instead establishes that one of the members, who are all youths, is to serve as the council's chair.

GOC must continue to provide staff support for the council. The bill also requires GOC to (1) develop, in consultation with the council, an initial application and application process; (2) work with established public or private youth councils or youth empowerment organizations in the State to select representatives to apply to become a member of the council; (3) ensure that the members provide a broad representation of all jurisdictions and populations; (4) organize at least four meetings per council year; (5) assist in preparing recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly; and (6) appoint members of the council from lists of nominations, as specified.

The council must continue to examine numerous specified issues of importance to youth and inform the Governor and the General Assembly of these issues, including offering testimony before legislative bodies. The bill also requires the council to participate in local youth activities or organizations, advise local officials and community leaders on youth issues, and collect information from other youth groups in order to inform the activities of the council. The bill also establishes provisions to stagger the terms of the members. As is the case under current law, council members may not receive compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

Background: The council was established by Chapter 559 of 2008; however, GOC advises that it has struggled to achieve relevance. Previous councils failed to maintain member involvement and suffered from poor attendance and participation. This bill is intended to allow the council to function with more efficiency by reducing the membership so that the work can be shared in a more meaningful way, with all members having a role and responsibility. It also staggers the members' terms, which is intended to allow for the council to include new and experienced members each year and transitions the role of youth co-chair to that of chair. According to GOC, these changes are critical in order to enable the council to be more efficient, engaged, and diverse. The bill is intended to allow the

council to be better positioned to provide a valuable experience for those involved and to provide the Governor and the General Assembly an important perspective when developing youth policy.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 103 (Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee) (By Request - Departmental - Office for Children) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Governor's Office for Children, Maryland Higher Education Commission, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 8, 2016
md/lgc Revised - House Third Reader - March 21, 2016

Analysis by: Jennifer K. Botts

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510