

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 467 (Senator Hough, *et al.*)
 Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

General Assembly - Live and Archived Video Streaming of Meetings

This bill requires that the General Assembly make available to the public live and archived video streaming of each meeting of the Senate and House of Delegates.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures for the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) increase by at least \$1.2 million in FY 2017 for hardware, installation, and staffing costs associated with the bill’s requirement to provide video streaming of floor sessions in the Senate and House of Delegate chambers. Future year expenditures reflect annualization, inflation, and ongoing maintenance costs. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	1,197,300	414,600	429,000	444,000	459,600
Net Effect	(\$1,197,300)	(\$414,600)	(\$429,000)	(\$444,000)	(\$459,600)

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: Under Maryland’s Open Meetings Act, with limited exceptions, a “public body” must (1) provide adequate notice of the time and location of meetings and (2) meet in open session in a location that is reasonably accessible to attendees. A public body is any entity that (1) consists of at least two individuals and (2) is

created by the Maryland Constitution; a State statute; a county or municipal charter; a memorandum of understanding or a master agreement to which a majority of the county boards of education and the Maryland State Department of Education are signatories; an ordinance; a rule, resolution, or bylaw; or an executive order of the Governor or of the chief executive authority of a political subdivision. Exclusions from the definition of “public body” include juries, the Governor’s cabinet and Executive Council, judicial nominating commissions, and single-member entities, among others.

DLS is required to develop, coordinate, support, and maintain computer services and information systems for the General Assembly. It must provide computer training for General Assembly employees and plan for the future information systems needs of the General Assembly.

All floor and standing committee meetings in both the Senate and the House of Delegates are subject to the Open Meetings Act. Thus, they are open to the public and must be published in the General Assembly’s meeting schedule. Live and archived video streaming is available for all public hearings held by standing committees of the House of Delegates and the Senate. In addition, while live and archived audio streaming is available for floor sessions of both chambers, neither chamber is equipped with video-streaming equipment. All live and archived video and audio are available on the General Assembly website.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures for DLS increase by at least \$1,197,281 in fiscal 2017, which accounts for the bill’s October 1, 2016 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring four audiovisual technicians to operate video cameras and microphones in the two chambers. It includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs to add video recording capability to the two chambers (including costs for microphones, video cameras, wiring, hardware, and installation), and ongoing operating costs.

Positions	4
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$278,023
Equipment and Installation	917,452
Other Operating Expenses	<u>1,806</u>
Minimum FY 2017 State Expenditures	\$1,197,281

Future year expenditures reflect full salaries with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

DLS notes that costs could be higher if additional modifications to the chambers are required by the State House Historic Trust.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 177 of 2014, a similar bill, received a hearing in the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee, but no further action was taken.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Legislative Services

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min/mcr

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