

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

First Reader

House Bill 1214

(Delegate Folden, *et al.*)

Health and Government Operations

Public Safety - Trauma-Affected Veterans Training Program - Establishment

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA), the Department of State Police (DSP), and the State Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board, in consultation with veterans, to jointly develop and implement a trauma-affected veterans training program to provide training to emergency responders and law enforcement officers. Training provided under the bill may not be conducted through an online course.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Affected State agencies can likely meet the bill’s requirements with existing resources, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local governments can likely meet the bill’s requirements with existing resources, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: “Emergency responder” includes a firefighter, an emergency medical services provider, and a rescue squad member. “Law enforcement officer” means an individual who in an official capacity is authorized by law to make arrests and is a member of a specified enforcement agency.

The training developed under the bill must address (1) the effects of acquired brain injuries and traumatic brain injuries (TBIs); (2) techniques that can be used when interacting with

veterans who have an acquired brain injury or a TBI; and (3) any other relevant issues relating to veterans with combat-related trauma, post-traumatic stress, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Current Law: State regulations require a police officer who is otherwise required to complete annual in-service training to successfully complete specified training related to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism. Additionally, in order for the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC) to approve an entrance-level training program for police officers, the program must include instruction related to individuals with physical, intellectual, developmental, and psychiatric disabilities.

Background: Chapter 221 of 2014 required, among other things, that all entrance-level and in-service training for law enforcement officers conducted by the State and each county or municipal training school include training regarding individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In response, MPTSC implemented training objectives and a model curriculum regarding interactions with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Training and supporting resources are available to the public, including first responders.

State and Local Expenditures: DSP advises that the additional training and support resources can be likely be developed with existing resources and that the additional training required under the bill, at least with respect to training for law enforcement officers, would ultimately be integrated with existing training related to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Thus, developing and implementing the additional training required under the bill is not anticipated to materially impact State or local government finances or operations and can also likely be accomplished with existing resources. However, DSP notes that any training for law enforcement officers must first be approved by MPTSC, which is not required under the bill to participate in developing the program.

Adapting training materials for use by emergency responders is similarly not anticipated to materially impact State or local government finances or operations and can also likely be accomplished with existing resources. The Department of Legislative Services notes, however, that taking emergency responders out of service to complete the required training may result in increased personnel costs to cover portions of shifts. As it is unclear whether in-house training may be readily provided with limited disruption to shifts, any such impact cannot be reliably estimated at this time. DSP further advises that such training is handled by the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute, which is also not required under the bill to participate in developing the program.

Additional Comments: While the bill requires specified entities to “develop and implement” the training program, this analysis assumes that the bill does not require the

affected agencies to necessarily *conduct* separate trauma-affected veterans training sessions for emergency responders and law enforcement officers, as such work would likely be duplicative of entry-level and in-service training programs already in place. Should the bill be interpreted to require MDVA, DSP, and the State Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board to conduct separate specialized training sessions, general fund expenditures likely increase significantly to hire, train, and coordinate specialized trainers.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs; Department of Legislative Services

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