

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2022 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader**

Senate Bill 169

(Chair, Finance Committee)(By Request - Departmental -  
Governor's Office of Community Initiatives)

Finance

Appropriations

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**State Autism Strategy – Revisions**

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This departmental bill delays the date, from July 1, 2021, to December 1, 2022, by which the State Coordinator for Autism Strategy must begin submitting an annual report on the State's strategic plan for addressing autism-related needs. The bill removes the requirement that the annual report be submitted to the Secretary of Disabilities and specifies that the report be published on the website for the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) rather than the Department of Disabilities (MDOD). The bill also alters the membership of the Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs and transfers provisions governing the coordinator and the Advisory Stakeholder Group from the Human Services Article to the State Government Article.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill's requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** GOCI and MDOD have determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

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## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The Advisory Stakeholder Group must include (1) one representative from the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of the Senate and (2) two representatives from the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the House.

The bill removes the requirement for the coordinator to chair the Advisory Stakeholder Group, and instead requires the Governor to designate a chair from the members of the Advisory Stakeholder Group. The term of the chair is two years. At the end of a term, the chair is eligible for redesignation and continues to serve until a successor is designated. A chair who is designated after a term has begun serves only for the remainder of the term and until a successor is designated. The term of the initial chair must begin on October 1, 2022.

GOCI, rather than MDOD, must provide staff to the Advisory Stakeholder Group. The bill removes the requirement that the Advisory Stakeholder Group hold its initial meeting by December 31, 2020.

**Current Law/Background:** Chapter 341 of 2020 established a State Coordinator for Autism Strategy in MDOD to (1) identify and evaluate existing services for individuals with autism and their families; (2) develop a strategic plan for addressing autism-related needs by July 1, 2021; (3) identify national benchmarks and other performance measures; and (4) monitor and evaluate the implementation of the strategic plan and the success of the State in addressing autism-related needs. Chapter 341 required, by July 1, 2021, and each year thereafter, the coordinator to submit a report to the Secretary of Disabilities, the Governor, and the General Assembly on the development, implementation, and effectiveness of the strategic plan.

Chapter 341 also established the Advisory Stakeholder Group, which comprises the State Superintendent of Schools; the Secretary of Disabilities, the Secretary of Human Services, and the Secretary of Health; the State Coordinator for Autism Strategy; several members from relevant associations; and additional members appointed by the Governor. The Advisory Stakeholder Group was to be staffed by MDOD and chaired by the coordinator (altered under this bill). The advisory group must work with the coordinator to (1) identify and evaluate existing services for individuals with autism and their families; (2) develop a strategic plan for addressing autism-related needs in the State; (3) promote, monitor, and evaluate implementation of the strategic plan; and (4) recommend and implement changes to the strategic plan. Although the coordinator position was established under Chapter 341, implementation during the 2020 interim was delayed due to lack of funding and the COVID-19 state of emergency.

Chapter 389 of 2021 moved the coordinator position from MDOD to GOCI and required, beginning in fiscal 2023, that the Governor fund the position and the Advisory Stakeholder Group. The coordinator position was filled in December 2021. The fiscal 2022 budget includes a general fund appropriation of \$53,330 to provide a salary for the coordinator position for nine months.

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## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Governor's Office; Governor's Office of Community Initiatives; Maryland Department of Disabilities; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 25, 2022  
fnu2/jc Third Reader - February 17, 2022

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Analysis by: Amberly Holcomb

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

## ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: State Autism Strategy– Revisions

BILL NUMBER: SB 169

PREPARED BY: Elizabeth Hall, Director of Interagency Affairs, Maryland Department of Disabilities

### PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESSES

**OR**

WILL HAVE A MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESSES

### PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

This bill has no fiscal note and is intended to be a technical bill aligning previously passed legislation's established statutory funding with the responsible delegated government entity.