

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 343

(Senator Sydnor)

Judicial Proceedings

Judiciary

State's Attorneys - Reconstitution of Task Force to Study Transparency Standards for State's Attorneys

This bill reestablishes the Task Force to Study Transparency Standards for State's Attorneys, originally created under Chapter 141 of 2022, to study the possibility of establishing minimum transparency standards for State's Attorneys. The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) must provide staff for the task force. By December 31, 2025, and annually thereafter, the task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and the House Judiciary Committee. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025, and terminates June 30, 2028.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: DLS can staff the task force with existing budgeted resources. Any expense reimbursements for task force members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill (1) reestablishes the task force (and expresses the intent of the General Assembly for the Governor to appoint the individuals appointed to the predecessor task force); (2) adds additional members to the task force; and (3) requires the task force to submit an annual report, due by December 31 each year. In addition to conducting the study according to the same requirements applicable to the predecessor task force, as

specified below, the task force must identify sustainable funding sources to implement recommendations made by the task force, including recommendations made by the predecessor task force.

A member of the task force may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

Current Law:

Office of the State's Attorney

Under § 15-302 of the Criminal Procedure Article, the State's Attorneys' Coordinator, with the approval of the State's Attorneys' Coordination Council, must (1) establish and implement uniform reporting procedures for State's Attorneys and professional staffs of State's Attorneys to maintain and provide statistical data and information relating to prosecutorial functions and standards of the office of State's Attorney and (2) accept and expend funds, grants, and gifts, and accept services from public or private sources.

Task Force to Study Transparency Standards for State's Attorneys

Chapter 141 established the Task Force to Study Transparency Standards for State's Attorneys, staffed by DLS. The task force was required to study the possibility of establishing minimum transparency standards for State's Attorneys. In conducting its study, the task force was required to (1) develop processes by which prosecutors can collect information and determine what information should be made public and what information may be kept private and (2) examine any existing policies of State's Attorneys' offices across the State relating to the transparency of data, the charging of crimes, and sentencing. The task force was required to report its findings and recommendations to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and the House Judiciary Committee by December 31, 2023. In its report, the task force recommended statewide uniform data collection for State's Attorneys' offices with specified data points.

Also, the task force recommended a State-funded grant program to assist State's Attorneys' offices to establish or enhance case management systems to facilitate data collection and sharing between State's Attorneys' offices and other entities. The task force's December 2023 report can be found [here](#). The task force terminated June 30, 2024.

State's Attorney's Office Case Automation System Enhancement Grant Program

The fiscal 2025 budget appropriated \$500,000 in general funds to the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP) for the purpose of providing grants to State's Attorneys' offices to establish or improve automated case management systems to

collect the data points set forth in the task force's report. Commencement of awards began March 1, 2025, and end on June 30, 2025. Funds not expended by June 30, 2025, may not be transferred to any other purpose and must revert to the general fund. However, GOCPP anticipates exhausting the \$500,000 appropriated in fiscal 2025.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Carroll, Frederick, Garrett, Montgomery, Talbot, Queen Anne's, and Washington counties; Maryland Association of Counties; Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy; Maryland State's Attorneys' Association; Department of Legislative Services – Office of Legislative Audits; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 30, 2025
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Third Reader - March 21, 2025
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 21, 2025

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