

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1511
Judiciary

(Delegate Healey)

Public Safety - State Clearinghouse for Missing Persons

This bill renames the State Clearinghouse for Missing Children, which is operated by the Department of State Police (DSP), to be the State Clearinghouse for Missing Persons and transfers its statutory provisions from the Family Law Article to the Public Safety Article. The bill further establishes that the duties of the State Clearinghouse for Missing Persons include (1) the receipt, collection, and distribution of general information and annual statistics regarding missing persons and (2) coordination of law enforcement agencies and other interested individuals or groups within and outside the State regarding information on persons who have disappeared from, or are thought to be located in, the State. Other conforming changes are made to reflect the expansion of the clearinghouse to include all missing persons, rather than just missing children. In addition, the bill requires DSP to study the department's capacity to report to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System information about persons who have disappeared from, or are thought to be located in, Maryland. By December 1, 2026, DSP must report its findings to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: DSP can implement the bill using existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: The bill's changes can be handled with existing local resources. Local revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The State Clearinghouse for Missing Children is responsible for (1) the receipt, collection, and distribution of general information and annual statistics regarding missing children and (2) coordination of law enforcement agencies and other interested persons or groups within and outside the State regarding information on children who have disappeared from, or are thought to be located in, the State.

For children who have disappeared from or are thought to be located in the State, the State Clearinghouse for Missing Children (1) must publish the names of and relevant available information on missing children and annual statistics regarding missing children and (2) may establish and maintain a list of organizations and groups that provide volunteer search teams or resources relating to missing children. The Secretary of State Police may develop, in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, a plan for voluntary fingerprinting programs for children.

Additional Comments: In February 2026, DSP completed a [study](#) on the department's capacity to report to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System information about persons who have disappeared from, or are thought to be located in, Maryland. DSP concluded that, while the department has the technical capability to access the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, the logistical, operational, and resource realities necessary to rely on the system do not exist. DSP further noted that the system, although accessible, is not the most effective or appropriate tool for managing routine missing person cases in Maryland.

Although the General Assembly passed similar legislation in the 2025 session (House Bill 1116), the Governor vetoed the bill.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 1116 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, Frederick, Montgomery, and Somerset counties; City of Frederick; Maryland Municipal League; Department of Natural Resources; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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jg/lgc

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