

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 782
Judiciary

(Delegate Conaway)

Criminal Law - Taking and Breaking Open Letters - Penalty

This bill increases, from \$15 to \$500, the maximum fine for violating the prohibition against taking and opening a letter addressed to another person without the other person's permission.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential minimal increase in general fund revenues from fines imposed in the District Court. Expenditures are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A person is prohibited from taking and breaking open a letter that is not addressed to them without permission from the person to whom the letter is addressed or the personal representative of the addressee's estate. A violator is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to imprisonment for six days and a fine of \$15.

Additional Comments: According to the Judiciary, there were 21 violations (charges) and 1 guilty disposition for violations of opening a letter without permission under § 3-905 of the Criminal Law Article in the District Court during fiscal 2024. There were 16 violations and 1 guilty disposition for this offense in the District Court during fiscal 2025.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 291 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 15, 2026
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