



Maryland Municipal League
The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

February 21, 2025

Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Bill: SB 770 - Applicants for Positions Involving Direct Contact With Minors - Required Information, Review Process, and Reporting - Alterations

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) supports Senate Bill 770, with amendments. The bill adds a definition which includes new entities that will be subject to existing provisions that place requirements on job applicants and employers for positions with direct contact with minors.

Instituting policies that aim to promote the safety of children while interacting with an authority figure are of utmost importance and municipal governments practice such policies. The hiring process in municipal parks and recreation departments is already quite rigorous as they understand the importance of vetting candidates for jobs that involve programs geared toward children; background checks and employer references are already standard practice. The new definition of “youth-serving organization” captures municipal parks and recreation departments which would subject them to the provisions of the bill. There are concerns that the provisions of this bill are redundant to existing practice in municipal parks and recreation departments and may shrink the pool of eligible applicants by placing more burden on the application process.

It is unclear if a municipal staff person reviewing applications who makes an honest mistake is considered an act that is covered under the Local Government Tort Claims Act, thus limiting governmental liability. Additionally, there are instances where a local government is involved in the youth-serving program but does not operate it; for instance, a youth soccer league that has a separate organizing entity but rents fields at a municipal park. Would the municipal government need to follow the provisions of the bill for employees of another organization that just use the municipal facilities?

MML recommends amendments that clarify the liability and rental agreement questions or remove municipal park and recreation departments from the bill as they already follow strict hiring practices.

For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal League respectfully requests a favorable report with the above amendments on Senate Bill 770. For more information, please contact Bill Jorch, Director, Public Policy and Research at billj@mdmunicipal.org. Thank you in advance for your consideration.