

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 492

(Senator Britt)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

Commission on Civic Literacy

This bill establishes a Commission on Civic Literacy to promote civic education in schools.

The bill takes effect October 1, 2007 and expires September 30, 2012.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) should be able to staff and support the commission using existing personnel and resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The commission must meet at least twice annually, with additional meetings subject to the approval of a majority of commission members. The commission will:

- develop programs to educate students in civic discourse;
- identify and support existing civic education programs in Maryland;
- build professional civic education networks; and
- establish an Internet-based clearinghouse of civic education resources.

MSDE is required to staff and support the commission with existing resources.

The commission is authorized to seek, accept, and use funds or resources from any source. It must report annually on its activities to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Background: Chapter 424 of 2006 established a Task Force to Convene a Summit on Civic Literacy in Maryland staffed by MSDE and the Maryland Higher Education Commission. The task force was required to convene a civic literacy summit to develop and recommend a plan for enhancing civic engagement and literacy in the State. The summit was held on January 4, 2007 and recommended that a commission such as the one proposed by this bill be established to continue its work.

The Voluntary State Curriculum developed by MSDE includes recommendations by the Center for Civic Education that civics be incorporated into the curriculum for all grades from kindergarten to twelfth grade. The recommendations entail at least 30 hours of civic education per school year beginning in grades K-2 and culminate with a full-year course on applied civics in twelfth grade.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 2, 2007
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