

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 246

(Chair, Judiciary Committee)(By Request - Departmental  
- Juvenile Services)

Judiciary

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Juvenile Law - Placement Visits - Video Conferencing

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This departmental bill allows the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to use video conferencing in specified circumstances to satisfy mandatory visitation requirements. Video conferencing may be used if a child's placement is in a facility operated by DJS and at least one visit every six months is conducted in person.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. Although the bill may improve operational efficiency for DJS, it does not materially affect State finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** DJS has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** At disposition, the juvenile court may place a child under supervision in the child's own home or in the custody or under the guardianship of a relative or other fit person. A child may also be committed to the custody or guardianship of DJS or other agency on terms that the court considers appropriate.

Once a child has been committed to an individual or to a public or private agency or institution, a juvenile counselor must visit the child at the child's placement no less than

once every month if the placement is in the State. The court may order the juvenile counselor to visit the child more frequently if the court deems it to be in the child's best interest. The court may require the custodian to file periodic written progress reports, with recommendations for further supervision, treatment, or rehabilitation.

**Background:** DJS advises that this change provides case managers with additional time to devote to ensuring that juveniles are appropriately supervised in the community and to make certain that juveniles receive aftercare planning when returning to their home communities. Facilities operated by DJS have video-conferencing capabilities and at least one office in each DJS region is also capable of supporting video-conferencing. In fiscal 2012, the average daily population of juveniles committed to a DJS-operated facility was 226.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Juvenile Services, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 19, 2013  
ncs/kdm

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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: Juvenile Law – Commitment – Placement Visits

BILL NUMBER: HB 246

PREPARED BY: Department of Juvenile Services

PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESS

OR

WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESSES

PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

The proposed legislation will have no impact on small business in Maryland.