

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 813 (Delegate M. Washington, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

Finance

Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness

This bill establishes a Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness to take specified actions to ensure that public resources, programs, and policies are coordinated and effective in preventing, mitigating the effects of, and ending homelessness in Maryland. The committee must submit a report to the General Assembly by December 1 of each year that includes a description of the committee's work and any recommendations. The Department of Legislative Services must provide staff assistance to the committee.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2015.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill can be implemented with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The committee must:

- study issues relating to homelessness, including housing, income, health care, education, government supports, and veterans experiencing homelessness;
- consult with governmental agencies, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders to identify State policies, programs, and actions that should or could prevent, mitigate the effects of, and end homelessness in Maryland;

- review and make recommendations to align State statutes, regulations, programs, services, and budgetary priorities with State policies and actions that should or could prevent, mitigate the effects of, and end homelessness in Maryland;
- search for any intradepartmental or interdepartmental gaps, inconsistencies, and inefficiencies in the implementation or attainment of State policies, programs, and actions that should or could prevent, mitigate the effects of, and end homelessness in Maryland; and
- identify new laws, regulations, programs, services, and budgetary priorities that are needed.

The committee must hold an initial organizational meeting and any other meetings considered necessary.

The committee may hold a hearing on any matter relating to the functions of the committee and may consider a vote on a bill or resolution referred to the committee by the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House.

The Governor's Interagency Council on Homelessness must:

- cooperate fully with the committee;
- keep the committee fully informed as to its priorities and progress; and
- submit an annual report to the committee by October 1 of each year regarding the council's work; priorities and progress; and recommendations for new laws, regulations, programs, services, and budgetary priorities that are needed to prevent, mitigate the effects of, and end homelessness in Maryland.

Current Law/Background: The Governor's Interagency Council on Homelessness was established in 2002 (by Executive Order 01.01.2002.14) to, among other things, coordinate State policy regarding the homeless. The council's 2013 annual report indicates that homelessness is a complex social and public health crisis that results primarily from four factors: lack of affordable housing; lack of affordable health care; low incomes; and lack of comprehensive services. According to the report, homeless population counts conducted by Maryland's 16 Continuums of Care, while subject to data integrity concerns, counted 8,205 Marylanders experiencing homelessness in 2013. The Continuums of Care are community plans to organize and deliver housing and services to the homeless, funded by both the State and federal governments. The Department of Human Resources provided approximately \$5.5 million in fiscal 2013 to the State's Continuum of Care organizations and local government agencies. The council's 2013 annual report indicated a need for efforts to better understand the prevalence of homelessness in the State and for improvements in service providers'

coordination and ability to adjust and respond to the unique needs of the homeless population.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 795 (Senator Madaleno, *et al.*) - Finance.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Resources, Governor's Office, Governor's Interagency Council on Homelessness, Department of Legislative Services

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mc/lgc Revised - House Third Reader - March 18, 2014
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