

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

House Bill 83

(Delegate Queen)

Ways and Means

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Public and Nonpublic Schools – Electric Retractable Room Partitions –
Operation Requirements

This bill prohibits an employee of a public or nonpublic school from operating an electric retractable room partition under specified circumstances. Annual safety reviews, evaluations, or exercises must include information and demonstrations regarding the safe operation of an electric retractable room partition. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must develop and disseminate model safety guidelines to each local school board and nonpublic school, including publishing them on its website. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. MSDE can develop the required guidelines with existing budgeted resources. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: None. Local school systems can implement the bill’s requirements with existing budgeted resources. To the extent that local school systems elect to install sensors on their electric partitions, which is one of several methods to comply with the bill, they may incur costs for their purchase and installation. No effect on local revenues.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill defines an “electric retractable room partition” as a room partition, divider, curtain, or any other similar device that is opened and retracted by operation of an electric motor.

A public or nonpublic school employee may not operate an electric retractable room partition unless:

- the partition includes a safety sensor that automatically stops the movement of the partition when a body passes through the sensor;
- no students are present in the school building; or
- the room or area where the partition is located is locked or otherwise free of or inaccessible to students.

Current Law: There are no statutory requirements or limitations regarding the operation of electric retractable room partitions by school employees.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: SB 258 of 2020 passed the Senate as amended and was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee, but no further action was taken on the bill.

Designated Cross File: SB 104 (Senator Bailey) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Wicomico County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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