

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 1248  
Judiciary

(Delegate Metzgar)

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Juvenile Law - Questioning of a Juvenile - Crime of Violence or Crime Involving  
a Firearm

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This bill authorizes a law enforcement officer to conduct a lawful custodial interrogation of a child without complying with specified existing notice requirements and the requirement that the child consult with an attorney prior to the interrogation when (1) probable cause exists to believe the child committed a crime of violence, as defined in § 14-101 of the Criminal Law Article, or a crime involving a “firearm” (as defined in § 4-204 of the Criminal Law Article) and (2) the law enforcement officer conducting the custodial interrogation has made an effort reasonably calculated to give actual notice to the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child that the child will be interrogated.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** While the bill affects operations of the Office of the Public Defender (OPD), as discussed below, the bill is not expected to materially affect State finances or the operations of other State agencies.

**Local Effect:** The bill does not materially affect local government operations or finances.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** If a law enforcement officer takes a child into custody, the officer must immediately notify, or cause to be notified, the child’s parents, guardian, or custodian in a manner reasonably calculated to give actual notice of the action. The notice must include the child’s location, provide the reason for the child being taken into custody, and instruct

the parent, guardian, or custodian on how to make immediate in-person contact with the child.

The custodial interrogation of a child by a law enforcement officer is prohibited until the child has consulted with an attorney, and the law enforcement officer has made an effort reasonably calculated to give actual notice to the parent, guardian, or custodian that the child will be interrogated. A child's attorney consultation must be confidential and conducted in a manner consistent with the Maryland Rules of Professional Conduct and may be conducted in person or by telephone or video conference. To the extent practicable and consistent with the Maryland Rules of Professional Conduct, an attorney providing consultation must communicate and coordinate with the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child in custody. The requirement of consultation with an attorney may not be waived and applies whether the child is proceeded against as a child or is charged as an adult.

An exception to the notice and consultation requirements specified above authorizes a law enforcement officer to conduct an otherwise lawful custodial interrogation of a child if (1) the law enforcement officer reasonably believes that the information sought is necessary to protect against a threat to public safety and (2) the questions posed to the child by the law enforcement officer are limited to those questions reasonably necessary to obtain the information necessary to protect against the threat of public safety. Unless impossible, impracticable, or unsafe, an interrogation conducted under such circumstances must be recorded. A child being interrogated under such circumstances must be informed if the interrogation is being recorded.

There is a rebuttable presumption that a statement made by a child during a custodial interrogation is inadmissible in a delinquency proceeding or a criminal prosecution against that child if a law enforcement officer willfully failed to comply with statutorily mandated custodial interrogation requirements. The State may overcome the presumption by showing, by clear and convincing evidence, that the statement was made knowingly, intelligently, and voluntarily. These provisions may not be construed to render a statement by that child inadmissible in a proceeding against another individual.

**State Fiscal Effect:** While it does not cite any specific data or projections, OPD advises that the bill requires one additional attorney to handle an increased level of effort in juvenile cases involving children who engage in a custodial interrogation without prior advisement from an attorney under the exception established by the bill.

In its *2023 Annual Report*, OPD indicated that since October 1, 2022 (when the attorney consultation requirement went into effect), OPD has responded to more than 290 calls on its consultation hotline across the State. The report does not specify the date range for this data, and OPD conducts consultations exclusively through its telephone hotline, which it will continue to staff under the bill.

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) advises that, without actual experience, it is unclear to what extent OPD's workloads will be changed *solely* by the provisions of the bill. Thus, DLS advises that OPD can likely address workloads resulting from the bill with existing budgeted resources. Should actual workloads indicate the need for additional personnel, OPD may request those resources through the annual budget process.

Other affected agencies, including the Judiciary and the Department of State Police, can implement the bill with existing budgeted resources.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** SB 326 (Senator Carozza, *et al.*) - Judicial Proceedings.

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore City; Prince George's County; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Office of the Public Defender; Maryland State's Attorneys' Association; Department of General Services; Department of Juvenile Services; Department of Natural Resources; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 12, 2024  
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Analysis by: Amanda L. Douglas

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510