



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

FISCAL NOTE

SENATE BILL NO. 923

PRINTERS NO. 1515

PRIME SPONSOR: Baker

COST / (SAVINGS)

FUND	FY 2013/14	FY 2014/15
General Fund	\$0	See Fiscal Impact

SUMMARY: Senate Bill 923, Printer's Number 1515, amends Title 51 (Military Affairs) to preserve and expand the Military Family Relief Assistance Program.

ANALYSIS: This legislation amends Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to revise language and time frames related to Military Family Relief Assistance. The proposed changes are intended to provide greater flexibility to the program when providing service to members. Such changes include:

- amending Section 7319(B)(2) to expand the type and extent of different circumstances that would be applicable unrelated to the member's military service; and
- amending Section 7319(H) to extend the sunset date of the program by an additional four years, to June 30, 2020.

It also amends Section §7319(J) for definitions to include language for "exigent circumstances." The definition of "eligible service member" is further revised to extend the time limit during which service members can apply for aid under the program: from one year to three years after release from a tour of active duty for reservists; and from two years to four years for former members of the armed forces, its reserve component or the National Guard. The bill specifically states that the need for assistance is directly related "to exigent circumstances beyond the eligible member's control" ...or "in the line of duty" of the military service.

The effective date of this legislation is 60 days after enactment.

FISCAL IMPACT: Enactment of this legislation is projected to have no adverse fiscal impact on Commonwealth funds, more specifically the Military Family Relief Assistance (MFRA) Fund.

The MFRA Fund is a restricted revenue account within the General Fund and was established to receive funds through voluntary contributions. The program is funded entirely through voluntary contributions from individuals (by way of a check-off box on income tax forms) and private contributions from businesses.

The bill revises and expands the type of circumstances that would be eligible for funding under this program, as well as extending the time limit during which service members can apply for aid. However, while such changes help make the program more flexible to assist eligible members, it is not expected such changes will result in significant application or cost increases for the program.

It should be noted that more applications could be submitted due to the expanded time frame established in the bill. If so, it is projected this would result in an additional \$40,000 in requested aid, but such a cost would not adversely impact the MFRA Fund. During FY2012-13, the fund received \$142,000 in total revenues and program expenditures totaled \$104,000, and the fund was carrying an available balance of approximately \$1 million at the end of the fiscal year.

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House Appropriations Committee (R)

DATE: June 9, 2014

Estimates are calculated using the best information available. Actual costs and revenue impact incurred may vary from estimates.