

Department of Planning and Budget 2014 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB 604

House of Origin ☐ Introduced ☐ Substitute ☒ Engrossed
Second House ☐ In Committee ☐ Substitute ☐ Enrolled

2. Patron: Ebbin, Adam P.

3. Committee: -

4. Title: Immigrant Assistance, Office of; created

5. Summary: The legislation, as amended, establishes an Office of Immigrant Assistance within the Department of Social Services to assist persons lawfully entering the United States and the Commonwealth for the purpose of becoming citizens. This office shall provide advice and assistance with the citizenship application process as well as employment, housing, and services for eligible immigrants. The bill's provisions will not become effective unless an appropriation effectuating its purposes is included in a general appropriation act passed in 2014 by the General Assembly that becomes law.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes. For the bill to become effective, the 2014 General Assembly must include an appropriation effectuating its purposes in the enacted appropriation act.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary

Expenditure Impact:

| <i>Fiscal Year</i> | <i>Dollars</i> | <i>Positions</i> | <i>Fund</i> |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| 2014 | - | - | - |
| 2015 | \$390,928 | 2.0 | General Fund |
| 2016 | \$230,602 | 2.0 | General Fund |
| 2017 | \$230,602 | 2.0 | General Fund |
| 2018 | \$230,602 | 2.0 | General Fund |
| 2019 | \$230,602 | 2.0 | General Fund |
| 2020 | \$230,602 | 2.0 | General Fund |

8. Fiscal Implications: There are estimated to be 424,000 foreign born persons in Virginia who are not United States citizens based on data from the United States Census Bureau and the University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. Of this number, 20 percent or 84,800 (424,000 x .20) are estimated to be in Virginia illegally. Based on this, it is estimated that 339,200 (424,000 – 84,800) immigrants are legally present but not United States citizens and could potentially be served by the Office of Immigrant Assistance as established by this legislation.

It is assumed that the Office of Immigrant Assistance (OIA) would be an extension of the Office of Newcomer Services (ONS) and would coordinate and provide referrals for immigrant assistance, rather than providing direct services to immigrants. Currently, ONS provides assistance to persons from around the world who have been forced to flee their homeland because of wars, armed conflicts, or gross violations of civil rights.

ONS already has an existing network of local service providers that provide citizenship services, language, housing and employment assistance, as well as understand the complexities of integrating the foreign born into Virginia communities. As such, there would be no cost to the department for the services provided to refugees, asylees, Cuban/Haitian entrants, and unaccompanied refugee minors, which are about seven percent of the total immigrant population. This legislation could also potentially impact other agencies if their service populations increase due to referrals from Department of Social Services for employment, housing and other services.

There are two areas of cost involved in establishing an OIA at the department, staffing expenses and the cost of a public outreach campaign. The ONS is currently funded by the federal Refugee and Entrant Assistance grant. Due to the restrictive nature of this grant, these funds cannot be used to fund the OIA. It is estimated that two additional positions consisting of a program administration manager (pay band 5) and a program administration specialist (pay band 5) will be needed. The program administration manager will provide in-house expertise in immigration needs and available services. The program administration specialist will be knowledgeable about immigration needs, monitor the quality of service delivered by the local service providers, and work closely with the program administration manager to expand the network of local service providers. Using an average salary of \$66,837 for the program administration manager and \$54,308 for the program administration specialist, it is estimated that an additional \$190,928 general fund would be needed for salaries, benefits and other operating costs in FY 2015; and \$180,602 general fund in FY 2016 and each year thereafter.

In order for the OIA to be effective there must be a targeted public outreach campaign to make immigrants aware of the OIA and services it provides. The public outreach campaign would include, but not be limited to, public service announcements, pamphlets and publications, press releases, posters, promotional items, graphic design, and market boards. Public outreach must be done in multiple languages given the targeted audience, immigrants seeking citizenship, thereby increasing the cost. It is estimated to cost approximately \$200,000 in the first year and \$50,000 each year thereafter to conduct a public outreach campaign in multiple languages for the immigrant population.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:

Department of Social Services

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: This bill is a companion to HB 1138.