

Department of Planning and Budget 2014 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB 344

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

2. Patron: Taylor

3. Committee: House Courts of Justice

4. Title: Harassment by computer

5. Summary:

Under current law, it is a Class 1 misdemeanor for any person, with the intent to coerce, intimidate, or harass another person, to use a computer or computer network to communicate obscene, vulgar, etc. language; make any suggestion or proposal of an obscene nature; or threaten any illegal or immoral act.

The proposed legislation would make the offense a Class 6 felony if the offender had knowingly and intentionally assumed the identity of another person.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes. See Item 385.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary. See Item 8 below.

Expenditure Impact:

| <i>Fiscal Year</i> | <i>Dollars</i> | <i>Fund</i> |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------|
| | | |
| 2015 | \$50,000 | General |
| 2016 | \$0 | |
| 2017 | \$0 | |
| 2018 | \$0 | |
| 2019 | \$0 | |
| 2020 | \$0 | |

8. Fiscal Implications:

For someone convicted of a Class 6 felony, a judge has the option of sentencing him to up to one year in jail, or 1 to 5 years in prison. Therefore, this proposal could result in an increase in the number of persons sentenced to jail or prison.

There is not enough information available to reliably estimate how many additional inmates in jail could result from this proposal. Any increase in jail population will increase costs to the state. The Commonwealth presently pays the localities \$4.00 a day for each misdemeanor or otherwise local responsible prisoner held in a jail and \$12.00 a day for each state responsible inmate. It also funds a considerable portion of the jails' operating costs, e.g. correctional officers. The state's share of these costs on a per prisoner, per day basis varies from locality to locality. However, according to the Compensation Board's most recent Jail Cost Report (November 2013), the estimated total state support for local jails averaged \$30.06 per inmate, per day in FY 2012.

Due to the lack of data, the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission has concluded, pursuant to §30-19.1:4 of the Code of Virginia, that the impact of the proposed legislation on state-responsible (prison) bed space cannot be determined. In such cases, Chapter 806 of the 2013 Acts of Assembly, requires that a minimum impact of \$50,000 be assigned to the bill.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:

Department of Corrections
Local and regional jails.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: None.

11. Other Comments: None.

Date: 1/27/2014

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