

Fred Thomas, Public Safety Director, stated that the County Executive supports this legislation. It will be a tool to deal with juveniles in the community. Also, there is a need for more after school and recreational programs but parents need to take care of their children.

Roy Gilmore, Chief of Police for Laurel, stated that statistics will show that there is an increase in juvenile activity and complaints. This bill is not a tool to harass juveniles. It places the responsibility on the parent.

Darlene Gray of the Suitland Business Association expressed their support for this legislation. The Suitland business district is presently being revitalized.

Councilman Gourdine expressed concern for the lack of adequate notification to the juvenile and the inclusion of a curfew during school hours in this legislation.

William Welsh, Executive Director, Human Relations Commission stated that it is vital that we manage this effort in a manner that in no way does injury to juveniles and thus do irreparable harm to the community at large.

The bill was amended as follows:

1. On Page 3:

Line 16, delete "four", insert "three".

Line 19, delete "establishment", insert "place open to the public".

2. On Page 4:

Line 26, delete "each calendar month", insert "every six months";
delete "not more than 45 days".

Line 27, delete "previously".

3. On Page 5:

Line 15, delete "completely indifferent", insert "without knowledge of".

4. On Page 6:

Line 16, delete "certified", insert "regular".

There may be some positive fiscal impact on the County as related to the penalties imposed for violation of this Section of the Code.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION/FISCAL IMPACT

(Includes reason for proposal, as well as any unique statutory requirements)

The County's existing curfew law was first enacted in 1967. Since that time, courts reviewing juvenile curfew laws have established a number of criteria to protect the rights of juveniles engaged in lawful and constitutionally protected activities. The proposed legislation is based upon a model ordinance prepared by the National Institute of Municipal Law Officers which, in turn, was based upon laws upheld by various reviewing courts.

The proposed legislation imposes a general curfew on persons under the age of 17 between midnight and 5:00 A.M. on weekends and 10:00 P.M. and 5:00 A.M. on weeknights. Exceptions are provided to enhance parental control, allow a minor to be employed, to allow minors to freely participate in religious and political activities, and to participate in other adult-supervised activities. The legislation establishes a system of civil monetary penalties which imposes the costs of parental responsibility on the parents of juveniles unable to conform to the curfew.

CODE INDEX TOPICS: