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DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES RELEASES STUDY ON THE ADEQUACY OF STAFFING IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF MARYLAND

Over the course of the 2016 and 2017 interims, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) conducted an analysis of the adequacy of staffing levels in the Executive Branch of Maryland. The number of employees in the Executive Branch in Maryland, exclusive of higher education employees, has decreased by over 6,500 positions between 2002 and 2018. Reductions in positions and the lack of increases in pay have been the result of years of post-recession cutbacks following economic downturns in 2001 and 2008; a trend not specific to Maryland. DLS reviewed laws, rules, regulations, caseload standards, and best practices related to agency staffing and quantified the need for 2,631 positions (1,126 new authorized positions and the need to fill 1,505 existing positions) in 11 agencies. The report also notes:

- high vacancy levels throughout State government and specific position classifications, due in part to high levels of budgeted turnover and uncompetitive compensation;
- low compensation levels, which impede the ability of the State to recruit and retain employees. State employees earn significantly less for comparable positions and while salary increases have kept pace with inflation since 2008, they have not kept pace with other levels of government; and
- adoption of extraordinary measures to make up for the loss of authorized positions while working to meet workloads, including interagency agreements with higher education institutions, hiring more contractual full-time equivalents, outsourcing to the private sector, and requiring direct service workers to assume more administrative duties.

This report includes recommendations to begin addressing the issues raised, including annual increases in employee compensation, selected salary increases for high vacancy positions, reviews of hiring standards, the provision of new positions, a review of the cost effectiveness of outsourcing to the private sector versus State employees, a review of interagency agreements with higher education institutions, and potential statutory changes.

The report will be presented by the Department to the House Appropriations Committee on and the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee on Wednesday, January 17, 2018. A full copy of the report can be found at <http://dls.maryland.gov/>.