



## **Office of the Secretary of State**

*Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis and Recommended Actions*

**Fiscal Year 2017 Operating Budget Hearing**

**Senate Budget & Taxation Committee (B&T)**

**Health & Human Services Subcommittee**

**February 11, 2016**

**House Appropriations Committee (APP)**

**Public Safety & Administration Subcommittee**

**February 17, 2016**

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**Thank you for the opportunity to appear before your Committee as you review the proposed budget for the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS).**

**I would like to thank our assigned analyst, Ms. Sierra Boney, for her thorough analysis.**

**I am pleased that she has concluded that the OSOS has put forth a responsible spending plan for fiscal year 2017.**

**Recommended Actions:**

**1. Concur with Governor's Allowance**

Office of the Secretary of State response:

*The Office of the Secretary of State respectfully supports the recommended action.*



**Submitted by John C. Wobensmith, Secretary of State**

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Mister Chairman and members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to present the budget of the Office of the Secretary of State for Fiscal Year 2017.

The Committee was provided a packet of information that details some of the duties of the office. Our mission is to provide the citizens of Maryland with information, services and assistance relating to the constitutional, statutory and regulatory functions assigned to the office. We handle several Executive Functions within the State of Maryland. These include:

- Attesting to Executive Orders
- Extraditions & Requisitions
- Pardons & Commutations
- Public Disclosures with persons doing business with the State
- Service of Process
- Special Police & Railroad Police
- Custodian of the Great Seal

We proudly promote Maryland's expanding role in international affairs by representing the Executive Department and the State in diplomatic and related duties and fostering mutual economic development, educational, cultural, health/environmental and other areas of cooperation and exchange between Maryland and its international Sister States.

I would like to highlight some of the accomplishments of our divisions.

Significant accomplishments have been made by the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) in fulfilling our key performance goals. From the certification of international documents to the production of official publications containing Maryland regulations, to the registration of charitable organizations and the processing of applications for Notary Publics, the OSOS handled a broad scope of constitutional, statutory, and regulatory duties.

## **Charities and Legal Services:**

### **Notary of Public**

- The Division successfully eliminated a significant processing backlog of notary and charity applications to our current day to day processing status.
- Completed the implementation of the on-line Notary application system that will allow applicants to apply for new & renewing commissions, check status of application, and update notary information
- Continued conducting full in-house background checks for new applicants
  - The result - dozens of candidates with criminal or civil judgment backgrounds have been noted and denied commissions
- We are engaged in an information exchange program with the Department of Human Resources.
  - Information, such as social security numbers, are used to track and locate persons in arrears on their child support obligations and other legally bound duties.

### **Charity Division**

- There are currently more than 11,500 registered charitable organizations in the State of Maryland
- The agency hired an AAG to meet the requirements of HB1352 that directs the OSOS to support the enforcement of delinquent charities.

### **Address Confidentiality Program (ACP):**

- FY15 there were more than 1,300 active participants using the ACP service with 26 re-enrollments.
- HB 559 created the ability for victims of human trafficking to join the Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program along with victims of domestic violence.
- Hired a new Assistant Coordinator to manage the Human Trafficking Program.
- SOS chaired a taskforce on Domestic Violence during the summer/fall 2015
- ACP brochure is available in English and Spanish.

### **Division of State Documents (DSD):**

- DSD offers electronic subscriptions to COMAR in addition to print subscriptions.
- Supplements for print and electronic versions of COMAR are now offered twice per year rather than the previous once-per-year supplements.
- Maryland Register and COMAR are free online.

### **International Affairs:**

- The Office continues to work with various embassies, the Governor's Office and other state agencies on a number of different programs, including hosting international delegations and promoting business, educational, professional and cultural exchanges between Maryland and foreign countries through the Sister States Program. These activities include:
  - Establishing new Sister State partnership in January 2015 with KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.
  - Working towards creating a new Sister State partnership with Israel and South Korea in 2016.
  - Developing a strategic plan for the Sister States Program to align with the International Subcabinet mission and goals
  - Revitalizing dormant Sister State partnerships
  - Working to reconvene the Governor's Subcabinet for International Affairs for the purpose of developing, evaluating and coordinating a cohesive international strategy in order to enhance the State's competitiveness and stature in the global marketplace.

### **Other Accomplishments:**

- Migrated agency IT services to the DoIT Enterprise Information System (EIS).
- Implemented bilingual capabilities on the agency website using Google Translate
- Full-time operation of the Certification Desk with bilingual support for international document authentication