

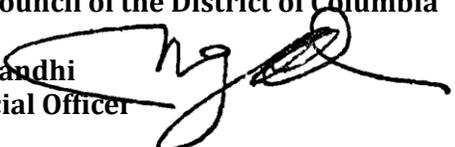
Government of the District of Columbia  
Office of the Chief Financial Officer



**Natwar M. Gandhi**  
Chief Financial Officer

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** The Honorable Phil Mendelson  
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia

**FROM:** Natwar M. Gandhi  
Chief Financial Officer 

**DATE:** September 25, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Fiscal Impact Statement – “Parent and Student Empowerment Amendment Act of 2013”

**REFERENCE:** Bill 20-314 – Draft Committee Print provided to the Office of Revenue Analysis on September 12, 2013

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**Conclusion**

Funds are not sufficient in the FY 2014 through FY 2017 budget and financial plan to implement the bill. The bill establishes the Office of the Student Advocate, which is estimated to cost \$297,170 in FY 2014 and approximately \$1.2 million over the four-year financial period.

**Background**

The bill makes several changes to the current law regarding the intended purpose, limitations and duties of the Office of the Ombudsman for Education<sup>1</sup> (“Ombudsman”), including: requiring the development of a database to track complaints and concerns, providing complaint resolution services, and requiring reporting of recommendations to the State Board of Education (“Board”).

The bill also creates an Office of the Student Advocate (OSA) within the Board, to be headed by a “Chief Advocate” appointed by the Board for a term of five years. The bill outlines responsibilities, qualifications and duties of OSA, including:

- Operation of a public education “hotline,” answering questions and referring to appropriate agencies;
- Facilitation of school enrollment processes by providing information on enrollment policies and procedures;
- Supporting parents and guardians in interactions with public school personnel;
- Helping students to access education resources offered by public schools;
- Conducting at least eight information sessions annually, one in each Ward;

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<sup>1</sup> D.C. Official Code § 38-351.

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FIS: Bill 20-314, "Parent and Student Empowerment Amendment Act of 2013," Draft Committee Print provided to the Office of Revenue Analysis on September 12, 2013.

- Developing a database to track issues raised to the attention of OSA;
- Serving as an advocate, upon request, for a student in conflict resolution proceedings before the Ombudsman; and
- Submitting an annual report to the Board.

Additionally, the bill authorizes, but does not require, the Chief Advocate to establish resource centers throughout the District to provide information about educational programs and school choice.

### Financial Plan Impact

Funds are not sufficient in the FY 2014 through FY 2017 budget and financial plan to implement the bill.

The establishment of the Office of the Student Advocate will cost \$297,170 in FY 2014 and \$1,226,667 over the four-year financial period. This includes salaries for the Chief Advocate and two support staff, as well as non-personal services funding for office support and the purchase of computers and supplies. The estimate does not include cost of establishing resource centers in District schools.<sup>2</sup>

The changes to the law regarding the Ombudsman's purpose and duties do not have a fiscal impact.

<b>Fiscal Impact of Bill 20-314, the Parent and Student Empowerment Amendment Act of 2013</b>					
	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>	<b>FY2014- FY2017</b>
Personal Services costs to establish the Office of the Student Advocate <sup>1</sup>	\$277,970	\$286,309	\$294,898	\$303,745	\$1,162,923
Non-Personal Services costs to establish the Office of the Student Advocate <sup>2</sup>	\$19,200	\$14,416	\$14,844	\$15,285	\$63,745
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$297,170</b>	<b>\$300,725</b>	<b>\$309,742</b>	<b>\$319,030</b>	<b>\$1,226,667</b>

#### Table Notes

<sup>1</sup>Personnel costs include salaries and fringe benefits of the Chief Advocate (Level ES9), a Program Analyst (Level ES4), and an administrative assistant (Level ES2).

<sup>2</sup>Non-personnel services include purchasing of computers, service for computers, establishment of a hot-line and outreach materials.

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<sup>2</sup> There is insufficient information at this time to determine what these centers would look like or how they would function. The bill does not specify details regarding these centers; it simply authorizes, but does not require, the Chief Advocate to establish them.