

the Annotated Code of Maryland, when the Board of County Commissioners of Cecil County or any other Cecil County governmental board or agency, including but not limited to the Cecil County Board of Education, negotiates to purchase real property, it shall first acquire an option, for a nominal consideration not to exceed one hundred dollars (\$100.00), to buy the property at any time within an agreed period, not to exceed six months at a fixed price. Until the option is signed by both parties, there shall be no public disclosure. After the option is signed by both parties, the County Commissioners or county board or agency shall cause a notice of the signing of the option to be published two times in two successive weeks in one newspaper of general circulation in the county; the notice shall specify the name of the optionor and optionee, the length of the option, and the proposed purchase price, and the time and place fixed by the board or agency for hearing upon the option which shall be not less than seven, nor more than thirty days after the last publication. At the time fixed by the notice for hearing upon the option, any person shall be heard on either side of the question. After the hearing, if the board or agency feels that the exercise of the option is not necessary or desirable, the option shall not be exercised, but if the board or agency feels that the exercise of the option is necessary or desirable, it shall be exercised as soon as legally permissible.

SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted, That this Act shall take effect on July 1, 1969.*

Approved April 23, 1969.

CHAPTER 257

(House Bill 124)

AN ACT to repeal and re-enact, with amendments, Section 7(a) of Article 88A of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1968 Supplement), title "State Department of Social Services," subtitle "In General," to provide that the Cecil County Department of Social Services may retain an attorney at law to represent it in all legal matters affecting it and generally relating thereto.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland, That Section 7(a) of Article 88A of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1968 Supplement), title "State Department of Social Services," subtitle "In General," be and it is hereby repealed and re-enacted, with amendments, to read as follows:*

7.

(a) It shall be the duty of the attorney to, or an attorney to be designated by, the local governing authority in each county of the State and in Baltimore City, as defined in Section 4 of this article, to institute and defend all civil cases in which its local department is an interested party *except that in Cecil County the local department may secure the services of attorneys at law to represent it in all legal matters affecting the local department.* All such suits shall be instituted in the name of the local department.