

SENATE BILL 764

O4, C8

(3lr3104)

ENROLLED BILL

— *Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs/Appropriations* —

Introduced by **Senator Conway**

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

Proofreader.

Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this

_____ day of _____ at _____ o'clock, _____ M.

President.

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force to Study Housing and Supportive Services for Unaccompanied**
3 **Homeless Youth**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force to Study Housing and Supportive
5 Services for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth; providing for the composition,
6 chair, and staffing of the Task Force; prohibiting a member of the Task Force
7 from receiving certain compensation, but authorizing the reimbursement of
8 certain expenses; establishing the duties of the Task Force; requiring the Task
9 Force to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the
10 General Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of
11 this Act; and generally relating to the Task Force to Study Housing and
12 Supportive Services for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth.

13 Preamble

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.

Italics indicate opposite chamber/conference committee amendments.



1 WHEREAS, Each year, over 1.6 million youth throughout the nation, and an
 2 increasing number of youth in Maryland, find themselves without stable housing and
 3 outside the care of a parent or guardian; and

4 WHEREAS, Many of these youth have become homeless and unaccompanied
 5 due to being rejected by their families because of their sexual orientation, gender
 6 identity, pregnancy, physical or sexual abuse, or severe conflict in the home, or
 7 because they have aged out of the foster care system without the skills and resources
 8 to support themselves; and

9 WHEREAS, Unaccompanied homeless youth are a largely invisible population,
 10 most of whom are “couch surfing” with friends and extended family, living on the
 11 streets, or squatting in vacant buildings; and

12 WHEREAS, Unaccompanied homeless youth are disproportionately likely to
 13 turn to delinquency, become victims of crime, commit suicide, suffer from physical and
 14 mental health impairments, engage in risky sexual behaviors, and drop out of school
 15 in order to survive on the street; and

16 WHEREAS, There is a general lack of knowledge about the public and private
 17 sector programs and resources available to assist unaccompanied homeless youth,
 18 ~~including a lack~~ such as the availability of shelter and permanent housing; case
 19 management; medical, mental health, and substance abuse treatment; education and
 20 job training; food and clothing; financial counseling; legal advice and representation;
 21 and other supportive services; and

22 WHEREAS, ~~The foster care system is~~ Current systems are not adequately
 23 meeting the needs of many unaccompanied homeless youth, particularly those who do
 24 not come to the attention of ~~child welfare~~ child-serving agencies, those who are ~~too old~~
 25 ~~to enter foster care~~ not eligible for existing programs and services, those who have lived
 26 independently for so long that they are unlikely to form successful relationships with
 27 ~~foster or adoptive parents~~ parental figures, and those who have had particularly
 28 negative experiences while in ~~foster~~ congregate care; and

29 WHEREAS, These youth are urgently in need of safe, secure, affordable, and
 30 stable housing as well as supportive services that will prevent them from becoming
 31 permanently homeless and, instead, set them on a path towards self-sufficiency; now,
 32 therefore,

33 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
 34 MARYLAND, That:

35 (a) In this section, “unaccompanied homeless youth” means an individual
 36 who:

37 (1) is between the ages of 14 and 25 years;

1 (2) lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and

2 (3) is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

3 (b) There is a Task Force to Study Housing and Supportive Services for
4 Unaccompanied Homeless Youth.

5 ~~(b)~~ (c) The Task Force consists of the following members:

6 (1) one member of the Senate ~~Budget and Taxation~~ Education, Health,
7 and Environmental Affairs Committee, appointed by the President of the Senate;

8 (2) one member of the House Appropriations Committee, appointed by
9 the Speaker of the House of Delegates;

10 (3) the Secretary of Housing and Community Development, or the
11 Secretary's designee;

12 (4) the Secretary of Human Resources, or the Secretary's designee;

13 (5) the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, or the Secretary's
14 designee;

15 (6) the Secretary of Juvenile Services, or the Secretary's designee; ~~and~~

16 (7) the State Superintendent of Schools, or the State Superintendent's
17 designee; and

18 ~~(7)~~ (8) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

19 (i) one representative from the Governor's Office for Children;

20 ~~(ii) two representatives from the State Department of~~
21 ~~Education;~~

22 ~~(ii)~~ ~~(iii)~~ (ii) two representatives from the Baltimore Homeless
23 Youth Initiative, one of whom is a service provider and one of whom is a youth or
24 young adult who has experienced homelessness;

25 ~~(iii)~~ ~~(iv)~~ (iii) two representatives from the Prince George's County
26 Homeless Youth Work Group, one of whom is a service provider and one of whom is a
27 youth or young adult who has experienced homelessness; and

28 ~~(iv)~~ ~~(v)~~ (iv) one representative from the Maryland Affordable
29 Housing Coalition.

30 (c) ~~The Task Force shall elect a chair from among its members.~~

1 (d) The representative from the Governor's Office for Children shall serve as
 2 Chair of the Task Force.

3 ~~(d) (e) The Department of Housing and Community Development Health and~~
 4 ~~Mental Hygiene~~ Governor's Office for Children shall provide staff for the Task Force.

5 ~~(e) (f)~~ A member of the Task Force:

6 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but

7 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard
 8 State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

9 ~~(f) (g)~~ The Task Force shall:

10 (1) compile existing information on and identify ~~and study~~ the unique
 11 needs of unaccompanied homeless youth ~~between 13 and 25 years of age~~, and ~~evaluate~~
 12 identify the public and private sector programs and resources currently available to
 13 meet those needs;

14 (2) identify gaps in public and private sector programs and resources
 15 currently available to meet the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth;

16 ~~(g) (3)~~ collect and ~~evaluate~~ compile data on the unaccompanied homeless
 17 youth population in the State, including the causes of homelessness in this population
 18 and the number of unaccompanied homeless youth in each jurisdiction of the State;

19 ~~(3) (4)~~ make recommendations on:

20 (i) legislation and policy initiatives to address the needs of
 21 unaccompanied homeless youth in the State; and

22 (ii) funding requirements and budgetary priorities to address
 23 the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth in the State; and

24 ~~(4) (5)~~ make recommendations on any other relevant issues or
 25 considerations identified by the Task Force.

26 ~~(g) (h)~~ On or before ~~December~~ November 1, 2013, the Task Force shall report its
 27 findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of
 28 the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

29 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
 30 June 1, 2013. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the
 31 end of June 30, 2014, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this
 32 Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.