

SENATE BILL 764

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CF 3lr2639

By: **Senator Conway**

Introduced and read first time: February 1, 2013

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

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

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

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

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

25 WHEREAS, Unaccompanied homeless youth are disproportionately likely to
26 turn to delinquency, become victims of crime, commit suicide, suffer from physical and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 mental health impairments, engage in risky sexual behaviors, and drop out of school
2 in order to survive on the street; and

3 WHEREAS, There is a lack of public and private sector programs and resources
4 available to assist unaccompanied homeless youth, including a lack of shelter and
5 permanent housing; case management; medical, mental health, and substance abuse
6 treatment; education and job training; food and clothing; financial counseling; legal
7 advice and representation; and other supportive services; and

8 WHEREAS, The foster care system is not adequately meeting the needs of
9 many unaccompanied homeless youth, particularly those who do not come to the
10 attention of child welfare agencies, those who are too old to enter foster care, those
11 who have lived independently for so long that they are unlikely to form successful
12 relationships with foster or adoptive parents, and those who have had particularly
13 negative experiences while in foster care; and

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

18 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
19 MARYLAND, That:

20 (a) There is a Task Force to Study Housing and Supportive Services for
21 Unaccompanied Homeless Youth.

22 (b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

23 (1) one member of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,
24 appointed by the President of the Senate;

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

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

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

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

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

33 (7) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

- 1 (i) one representative from the Governor's Office for Children;
- 2 (ii) two representatives from the Baltimore Homeless Youth
3 Initiative, one of whom is a service provider and one of whom is a youth or young adult
4 who has experienced homelessness;
- 5 (iii) two representatives from the Prince George's County
6 Homeless Youth Work Group, one of whom is a service provider and one of whom is a
7 youth or young adult who has experienced homelessness; and
- 8 (iv) one representative from the Maryland Affordable Housing
9 Coalition.
- 10 (c) The Task Force shall elect a chair from among its members.
- 11 (d) The Department of Housing and Community Development shall provide
12 staff for the Task Force.
- 13 (e) A member of the Task Force:
- 14 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but
- 15 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard
16 State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.
- 17 (f) The Task Force shall:
- 18 (1) identify and study the unique needs of unaccompanied homeless
19 youth between 13 and 25 years of age, and evaluate the public and private sector
20 programs and resources currently available to meet those needs;
- 21 (2) collect and evaluate data on the unaccompanied homeless youth
22 population in the State, including the number of unaccompanied homeless youth in
23 each jurisdiction of the State;
- 24 (3) make recommendations on:
- 25 (i) legislation and policy initiatives to address the needs of
26 unaccompanied homeless youth in the State; and
- 27 (ii) funding requirements and budgetary priorities to address
28 the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth in the State; and
- 29 (4) make recommendations on any other relevant issues or
30 considerations identified by the Task Force.

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

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