

HOUSE BILL 412

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(PRE-FILED)

By: **Delegate K. Young**

Requested: October 30, 2020

Introduced and read first time: January 13, 2021

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force to Study Increased Voter Participation**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force to Study Increased Voter Participation;
4 providing for the composition, chair, and staffing of the Task Force; prohibiting a
5 member of the Task Force from receiving certain compensation, but authorizing the
6 reimbursement of certain expenses; requiring the Task Force to evaluate policies
7 that have the potential to increase voter participation; requiring the Task Force to
8 report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly
9 on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally
10 relating to the Task Force to Study Increased Voter Participation.

11 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

12 That:

13 (a) There is a Task Force to Study Increased Voter Participation.

14 (b) The Task Force consists of:

15 (1) three members of the Senate of Maryland, one of whom shall be from
16 the minority party, appointed by the President of the Senate;

17 (2) three members of the House of Delegates, one of whom shall be from
18 the minority party, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

19 (3) the State Administrator of Elections, or the State Administrator's
20 designee; and

21 (4) the following members to be jointly appointed by the Speaker of the
22 House of Delegates and the President of the Senate:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



- 1 (i) three representatives of nonprofit organizations advocating for
2 fair elections;
- 3 (ii) two attorneys with expertise in election law;
- 4 (iii) one representative of a nonprofit civil rights organization;
- 5 (iv) one representative of the Maryland Association of Election
6 Officials; and
- 7 (v) one representative of a postal workers union.

8 (c) The Speaker of the House of Delegates and the President of the Senate shall
9 jointly designate the chair of the Task Force.

10 (d) The Department of Legislative Services and the State Board of Elections shall
11 provide staff for the Task Force.

12 (e) A member of the Task Force:

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

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

16 (f) The Task Force shall:

17 (1) evaluate whether the following policies have the potential to encourage
18 greater voter participation:

19 (i) expansion of early voting and same-day voter registration
20 during early voting to additional locations, days, and hours, especially the days
21 immediately preceding Election Day;

22 (ii) a vote-by-mail system under which all registered voters receive
23 a ballot by mail and may return the ballot by mail or by using a ballot drop box; and

24 (iii) greater utilization of the State's current opt-in vote-by-mail
25 system along with continued utilization of early voting centers and Election Day polling
26 places for in-person voting;

27 (2) identify any other policy changes that in the Task Force's estimation
28 have the potential to increase voter participation; and

29 (3) for each policy listed in paragraph (1) of this subsection and any other
30 policies the Task Force identifies that have the potential to increase voter participation:

1 (i) evaluate the impact of the policy on the security and integrity of
2 the electoral process;

3 (ii) estimate the cost to the State and local boards of elections of
4 implementing the policy;

5 (iii) identify any other important effects of implementing the policy;

6 (iv) identify any measures that should be taken to mitigate any
7 adverse effects of implementing the policy; and

8 (v) considering all the advantages and disadvantages of the policy,
9 determine whether the Task Force recommends adoption of the policy.

10 (g) On or before December 31, 2022, the Task Force shall report its findings and
11 recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State
12 Government Article, the General Assembly.

13 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
14 1, 2021. It shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and 1 month and, at the end of June
15 30, 2023, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be
16 abrogated and of no further force and effect.