

# SENATE BILL 864

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CF HB 1227

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By: **Senator Hettleman**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2021

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Safety – Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic  
4 Terrorism; providing for the composition, chair, and staffing of the Task Force;  
5 prohibiting a member of the Task Force from receiving certain compensation, but  
6 authorizing the reimbursement of certain expenses; requiring the Task Force to  
7 study and make recommendations regarding certain matters; requiring the Task  
8 Force to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General  
9 Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; and  
10 generally relating to the Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic  
11 Terrorism.

12 Preamble

13 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Homeland Security’s Strategic  
14 Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence, published September 2019,  
15 states “in an age of online radicalization to violent extremism and disparate threats, we  
16 must not only counter foreign enemies trying to strike us from abroad, but also those  
17 enemies, foreign and domestic, that seek to spur to violence our youth and our  
18 disaffected—encouraging them to strike in the heart of our Nation”; and

19 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Homeland Security has warned that  
20 violent white supremacy is “the most persistent and lethal threat in the Homeland” in the  
21 October 2020 Homeland Threat Assessment; and

22 WHEREAS, In a foreword to that assessment, Chad F. Wolf, acting United States  
23 Secretary of Homeland Security, declared, “I am particularly concerned about white  
24 supremacist violent extremists who have been exceptionally lethal in their abhorrent,  
25 targeted attacks in recent years”; and

26 WHEREAS, The individuals accused of plotting to kidnap Governor Gretchen

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Whitmer were charged under the Michigan Anti-Terrorism Act for providing material  
2 support for terrorist acts; and

3 WHEREAS, The General Assembly is committed to defending democratic  
4 institutions, the integrity of our elections, and the security of people and facilities that carry  
5 out the democratic process; and

6 WHEREAS, The General Assembly is committed to ending the spread of hate,  
7 bigotry, and harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex,  
8 gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, or any other  
9 protected characteristic as defined by law; and

10 WHEREAS, The General Assembly wishes to affirm its commitment to the  
11 well-being and safety of all of its community members and to ensure that they will be  
12 protected and their rights respected; and

13 WHEREAS, The General Assembly wishes to affirm its commitment to cultivating  
14 an inclusive community, including within State operations and institutions; and

15 WHEREAS, The diversity of our community is beneficial to all within it, making us  
16 stronger and more resilient; and

17 WHEREAS, Each of our elected leaders has the ability and obligation to promote  
18 inclusiveness, celebrate diversity, work to ensure equitable opportunities in all major facets  
19 of society, prevent the spread of misinformation and disinformation, and reject hate and  
20 bias in all forms and should set a positive example for their constituents in this regard; and

21 WHEREAS, The January 6, 2021, domestic terrorism incident at our nation's Capitol  
22 does not reflect the values of the State; and

23 WHEREAS, Disinformation, misinformation, and online conspiracy theories such as  
24 QAnon are spreading and inspiring real-world violence; and

25 WHEREAS, The General Assembly supports the peaceful exercise of free speech, free  
26 assembly, and freedom to worship safely for all people; now, therefore,

27 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
28 That:

29 (a) There is a Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism.

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

31 (1) two members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of  
32 the Senate;

33 (2) two members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of

1 the House;

2 (3) the Attorney General of Maryland, or the Attorney General's designee;

3 (4) the Director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security, or the  
4 Director's designee;

5 (5) the Executive Director of the Maryland Emergency Management  
6 Agency, or the Executive Director's designee;

7 (6) the Secretary of State Police, or the Secretary's designee; and

8 (7) the following members, appointed jointly by the President of the Senate  
9 and the Speaker of the House:

10 (i) two representatives of civil rights organizations; and

11 (ii) one representative of the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association  
12 or the Maryland Sheriffs' Association.

13 (c) The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House shall jointly  
14 designate the chair of the Task Force.

15 (d) The Department of Legislative Services shall provide staff for the Task Force.

16 (e) A member of the Task Force:

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

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

20 (f) The Task Force shall study and make recommendations regarding optimal  
21 policies and practices for preventing and countering domestic terrorism, including:

22 (1) the role of the State;

23 (2) the level of resources to be expended;

24 (3) ways to provide transparency to the public;

25 (4) funding mechanisms;

26 (5) oversight measures; and

27 (6) ways to counter and prosecute online extremism while balancing First  
28 Amendment concerns.

1 (g) On or before December 31, 2021, the Task Force shall report its findings and  
2 recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State  
3 Government Article, the General Assembly.

4 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July  
5 1, 2021. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of June 30, 2022, this  
6 Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no  
7 further force and effect.