

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 864

(Senator Hettleman)

Judicial Proceedings

Public Safety - Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism

This bill establishes the Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism to be staffed by the Department of Legislative Services (DLS). The task force is required to study and make recommendations regarding optimal policies and practices for preventing and countering domestic terrorism. The task force must submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2021. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2021, and terminates June 30, 2022.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for DLS are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The task force must study and make recommendations regarding optimal policies and practices for preventing and countering domestic terrorism, including:

- the role of the State;
- the level of resources to be expended;
- ways to provide transparency to the public;

- funding mechanisms;
- oversight measures; and
- ways to counter and prosecute online extremism while balancing First Amendment concerns.

The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates must jointly designate the chair of the task force. Task force members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations.

Current Law: Under federal law (18 U.S.C. § 2331), domestic terrorism means activities that (1) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States; (2) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any state; and (3) appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: HB 1227 (Delegate Rosenberg) - Judiciary.

Information Source(s): Harford, Talbot, and Wicomico counties; Governor's Office; Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Office of the Public Defender; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of Legislative Services

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