

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2021 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader - Revised**

House Bill 297

(Delegate Pena-Melnyk)

Health and Government Operations

Judicial Proceedings

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**Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission - Reporting and  
Sunset Extension**

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This bill extends, from June 30, 2022, to June 30, 2024, the termination date for the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The bill also extends until December 1, 2023, the deadline by which the commission must submit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** It is anticipated that the commission can continue its operations with existing resources, as discussed below.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** The commission must:

- hold public regional hearings in areas where a lynching of an African American by a white mob has been documented;
- receive recommendations from the public, including from families and communities affected by racially motivated lynchings, for addressing, engaging, and reconciling affected communities, including the erection of memorial plaques or signage at or near sites of racially motivated lynchings; and

- make recommendations for addressing the legacy of lynching that are rooted in the spirit of restorative justice.

In conducting the required hearings, the commission may research (1) cases of racially motivated lynchings that are not documented but which are brought to the commission's attention and (2) the involvement of government entities and news media in cases of racially motivated lynching.

Bowie State University, in consultation with the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project, provides staff for the commission, and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) provides a staff member to assist the commission. The OAG staff member is authorized to issue subpoenas for a witness to testify or for the production of documents in connection with any investigation or hearing conducted by the commission.

A commission member may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses.

A final report of the commission's findings and recommendations is due to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1, 2021.

**State Fiscal Effect:** In October 2020, the commission was awarded a \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to support the commission's work. It is assumed that this funding will facilitate the commission's work through the new termination date established under the bill.

**Additional Comments:** A required [interim report](#) of the commission's findings and recommendations was submitted to the Governor and General Assembly in September 2020.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** HB 1637 of 2020 was referred to the House Judiciary Committee, but no further action was taken.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Commission on Civil Rights; Office of the Attorney General; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:**  
rh/jkb

First Reader - January 18, 2021

Third Reader - March 12, 2021

Revised - Amendment(s) - March 12, 2021

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