

# SENATE BILL 522

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CF 2lr2391

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By: **Senators Hettleman and Elfreth**

Introduced and read first time: January 28, 2022

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State and Local Parks – Child Safe Zone Program – Establishment**  
3 **(Equitable Access to Safe Parks Act)**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Child Safe Zone Program in the Department of Natural  
5 Resources; establishing the Child Safe Zone Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund, to  
6 provide funding for capital and operating expenses associated with enhancing public  
7 safety in State and local parks; and generally relating to public safety at State and  
8 local parks.

9 BY adding to

10 Article – Natural Resources

11 Section 5–2001 through 5–2003 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 20. Child Safe  
12 Zone Program”

13 Annotated Code of Maryland

14 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

15 Preamble

16 WHEREAS, Enhancing access to public parks improves the physical and mental  
17 health of children and families; and

18 WHEREAS, Children who witness violence are more likely to suffer adverse health  
19 and social impacts; and

20 WHEREAS, Children and families are entitled to an expectation of safety in public  
21 spaces such as parks; and

22 WHEREAS, It is in the interest of children, their families, and all Marylanders for  
23 the State to encourage the safe and healthy utilization of parks on a regular basis; and

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, The designation of State and local parks as Child Safe Zones will  
2 communicate to the public that parks are intended to serve as safe community gathering  
3 spaces and thereby provide safe havens for children; now, therefore,

4 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
5 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

6 **Article – Natural Resources**

7 **SUBTITLE 20. CHILD SAFE ZONE PROGRAM.**

8 **5–2001.**

9 (A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS  
10 INDICATED.

11 (B) “CHILD SAFE ZONE” MEANS A DESIGNATION THAT COMMUNICATES THE  
12 EXPECTATION THAT AN AREA IS SAFE FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES.

13 (C) “FUND” MEANS THE CHILD SAFE ZONE FUND ESTABLISHED UNDER §  
14 5–2003 OF THIS SUBTITLE.

15 (D) “PROGRAM” MEANS THE CHILD SAFE ZONE PROGRAM ESTABLISHED  
16 UNDER § 5–2002 OF THIS SUBTITLE.

17 **5–2002.**

18 (A) THERE IS A CHILD SAFE ZONE PROGRAM IN THE DEPARTMENT.

19 (B) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO:

20 (1) IMPROVE AND ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY AT STATE AND LOCAL  
21 PARKS THROUGH MEASURES FUNDED UNDER § 5–2003 OF THIS SUBTITLE;

22 (2) INSTALL SIGNAGE IN PROMINENT AREAS OF EACH STATE PARK  
23 IDENTIFYING THE PARKS AS CHILD SAFE ZONES; AND

24 (3) FACILITATE COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL JURISDICTIONS TO  
25 DESIGNATE LOCAL PARKS AS CHILD SAFE ZONES.

26 (C) A CHILD SAFE ZONE DESIGNATED UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL  
27 INCLUDE THE AREA SURROUNDING THE PARK, WITHIN 50 FEET OF THE PARK’S  
28 BOUNDARIES.

1           (D) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL COMMUNICATE THE IDENTIFICATION OF  
2 STATE PARKS AS CHILD SAFE ZONES TO THE PUBLIC IN ITS MARKETING  
3 MATERIALS.

4 5-2003.

5           (A) THERE IS A CHILD SAFE ZONE FUND.

6           (B) THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND IS TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR CAPITAL AND  
7 OPERATING EXPENSES ASSOCIATED WITH ENHANCING PUBLIC SAFETY IN STATE  
8 AND LOCAL PARKS.

9           (C) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND.

10           (D) (1) THE FUND IS A SPECIAL, NONLAPSING FUND THAT IS NOT  
11 SUBJECT TO § 7-302 OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE.

12                   (2) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL HOLD THE FUND SEPARATELY,  
13 AND THE COMPTROLLER SHALL ACCOUNT FOR THE FUND.

14           (E) THE FUND CONSISTS OF:

15                   (1) MONEY APPROPRIATED IN THE STATE BUDGET TO THE FUND;  
16 AND

17                   (2) ANY OTHER MONEY FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE ACCEPTED FOR  
18 THE BENEFIT OF THE FUND.

19           (F) (1) THE FUND MAY BE USED ONLY FOR:

20                   (i) CAPITAL AND OPERATING EXPENSES OF THE DEPARTMENT  
21 ASSOCIATED WITH ENHANCING PUBLIC SAFETY IN STATE PARKS; AND

22                   (ii) GRANTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR CAPITAL AND  
23 OPERATING EXPENSES ASSOCIATED WITH ENHANCING PUBLIC SAFETY IN LOCAL  
24 PARKS.

25                   (2) PUBLIC SAFETY MEASURES ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING UNDER THIS  
26 SECTION INCLUDE:

27                   (i) INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS THAT ENHANCE PUBLIC  
28 SAFETY, SUCH AS ENHANCED LIGHTING, SECURITY AND SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS,  
29 LANDSCAPING, IMPROVED ACCESS, TRASH RECEPTACLES, AND OTHER

1 IMPROVEMENTS IDENTIFIED BY THE DEPARTMENT BASED ON NATIONAL INDUSTRY  
2 BEST PRACTICES; AND

3 (II) INCREASED STAFFING FOR GENERAL OPERATIONS,  
4 INCLUDING APPROPRIATE SECURITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL.

5 (G) (1) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL INVEST THE MONEY OF THE FUND  
6 IN THE SAME MANNER AS OTHER STATE MONEY MAY BE INVESTED.

7 (2) ANY INTEREST EARNINGS OF THE FUND SHALL BE CREDITED TO  
8 THE GENERAL FUND OF THE STATE.

9 (H) EXPENDITURES FROM THE FUND MAY BE MADE ONLY IN ACCORDANCE  
10 WITH THE STATE BUDGET.

11 (I) MONEY EXPENDED FROM THE FUND IS SUPPLEMENTAL TO AND IS NOT  
12 INTENDED TO TAKE THE PLACE OF FUNDING THAT OTHERWISE WOULD BE  
13 APPROPRIATED FOR PUBLIC SAFETY MEASURES IN STATE AND LOCAL PARKS.

14 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That for fiscal year 2024, the  
15 Governor shall include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of at least \$1,000,000 to  
16 the Child Safe Zone Fund.

17 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
18 October 1, 2022.