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Judicial Proceedings Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
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February 14, 2023  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
2 East Miller Senate Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: Senate Bill – 209 - Task Force to Study Crime Classification and Penalties**

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee,

I hope on this Valentine's Day, I'm presenting a bill that you'll fall in love with.

In 2019, the General Assembly created a task force to study the breadth of the State's criminal laws and the penalties associated with them. Unfortunately, COVID intervened, and the task force never got very far on its assigned tasks. Senate Bill 209 seeks to re-start the task force.

The task force will consist of 15 members, including three State Senators, three Delegates, the Executive Director of the Maryland Sentencing Commission, several experts on criminal sentencing, a state's attorney, a public defender, a representative of the Attorney General and several others. The assigned mission of the task force is to review the penalties for all criminal and civil violations throughout the Maryland Code, to study criminal classifications and penalty schemes in other states and how those classifications and schemes compare to those in Maryland and to make recommendations regarding the current statutory scheme for criminal and civil violations throughout the Maryland Code, including whether there are violations that should be reclassified as civil offenses, misdemeanors, or felonies and whether there are penalties that should be altered.

Following the study, the Task Force will report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2024.

In 2019, this Committee voted unanimously in favor of the task force.

I appreciate the Committee's consideration of Senate Bill 209 and will be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.