
By: **Delegates Benson, Bobo, Gaines, Griffith, and Haynes**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2005

Assigned to: Economic Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force to Study the Billing Practices of Public Service Companies -**
3 **Established**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force to Study the Billing Practices of
5 Public Service Companies in the State; providing for the membership of the
6 Task Force; requiring the Governor to appoint the chairman of the Task Force;
7 requiring the Task Force to examine the billing practices of and the regulatory
8 framework relating to certain public service companies and to make certain
9 recommendations; providing for reimbursement for the expenses of a member of
10 the Task Force; providing for the staff of the Task Force; requiring the Task
11 Force to report to the Governor and the General Assembly by a certain date;
12 providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the
13 establishment of the Task Force to Study the Billing Practices of Public Service
14 Companies in the State.

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
16 MARYLAND, That:

17 (a) There is a Task Force to Study the Billing Practices of Public Service
18 Companies in the State.

19 (b) The Task Force shall consist of the following 13 members:

20 (1) three members appointed by the Speaker of the Maryland House of
21 Delegates;

22 (2) three members appointed by the President of the Senate of Maryland;

23 (3) three members appointed by the Governor;

24 (4) a representative of the Public Service Commission, appointed by the
25 Chairman of the Commission;

26 (5) a representative of the Office of People's Counsel, appointed by the
27 People's Counsel;

1 (6) a representative of the American Association of Retired Persons
2 Maryland, appointed by the State President; and

3 (7) a representative of the Collective Banking Group, appointed by the
4 President of the Group.

5 (c) The Governor shall appoint the Chair of the Task Force.

6 (d) The Task Force shall:

7 (1) examine the billing practices of gas, electric, cable television,
8 telephone, and wireless telephone companies in the State, including how rates are
9 calculated and how different charges are presented on the bills;

10 (2) examine the regulatory authority of the federal, State, and local
11 governments over the billing practices of gas, electric, cable television, telephone, and
12 wireless telephone companies in the State; and

13 (3) recommend any changes that State and local governments should
14 pursue to make the bills of gas, electric, cable television, telephone, and wireless
15 telephone companies easier for the citizens of the State to understand.

16 (e) A member of the Task Force:

17 (1) may not receive compensation; 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 Office of People's Counsel shall provide staff support for the Task
21 Force.

22 (g) The Task Force shall issue a final report of its findings and
23 recommendations to the Governor and, subject to § 2-1246 of the State Government
24 Article, to the General Assembly on or before December 31, 2005.

25 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
26 June 1, 2005. It shall remain effective for a period of 7 months and, at the end of
27 December 31, 2005, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act
28 shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.