

SENATE BILL 531

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CF HB 336

By: **Senators Peters, Astle, Brochin, Colburn, Edwards, Garagiola, Glassman, Raskin, and Reilly**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2011

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force on Military Service Members, Veterans, and the Courts**

3 FOR the purpose of creating a Task Force on Military Service Members, Veterans, and
4 the Courts; providing for the composition, chair, and staffing of the Task Force;
5 providing that a member of the Task Force may not receive compensation but
6 may be reimbursed for certain expenses; requiring the Task Force to study the
7 military service–related mental health issues and substance abuse problems
8 that may apply or arise in certain court cases and to consider recommending the
9 establishment of a special court for eligible defendants who are veterans or
10 members of the armed services on active duty who appear to suffer from certain
11 problems related to military service; requiring the Task Force to make certain
12 recommendations; requiring the Task Force to report certain findings and
13 recommendations to the Governor, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, and the
14 General Assembly; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally
15 relating to the Task Force on Military Service Members, Veterans, and the
16 Courts.

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
18 MARYLAND, That:

19 (a) There is a Task Force on Military Service Members, Veterans, and the
20 Courts.

21 (b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

22 (1) three members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the
23 President of the Senate;

24 (2) three members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the
25 Speaker of the House;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (3) two members of the Judiciary, appointed by the Chief Judge of the
2 Court of Appeals;

3 (4) the Attorney General of Maryland, or the Attorney General's
4 designee;

5 (5) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or the Secretary's designee;

6 (6) the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, or the Secretary's
7 designee;

8 (7) the Executive Director of the Office of Problem Solving Courts; and

9 (8) three veterans or members of the United States armed forces,
10 appointed by the Governor.

11 (c) The Governor shall designate the chair of the Task Force.

12 (d) The Department of Veterans Affairs and the Administrative Office of the
13 Courts shall jointly provide staff for the Task Force.

14 (e) A member of the Task Force:

15 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but

16 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard
17 State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

18 (f) The Task Force shall:

19 (1) study military service-related mental health issues and substance
20 abuse problems of veterans and members of the armed services on deployment that
21 may appear in civil, family, and criminal cases;

22 (2) study ways the courts may address the incidence of violence, drug
23 use and addiction, alcohol use and addiction, mental health conditions, and crimes
24 committed by some veterans and members of the armed services on active duty,
25 particularly as these problems manifest themselves in cases filed in court; and

26 (3) make recommendations regarding the establishment of a special
27 court for eligible defendants who are military members or veterans and who appear to
28 suffer from mental illness, alcohol or drug abuse, or post-traumatic stress syndrome,
29 any of which appear to be related to military service and the readjustment to civilian
30 life which is necessary after combat service.

31 (g) On or before December 1, 2011, the Task Force shall report its findings
32 and recommendations to the Governor and the Chief Judge of the Maryland Court of

1 Appeals and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the
2 General Assembly.

3 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
4 October 1, 2011. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 3 months and, at
5 the end of December 31, 2012, with no further action required by the General
6 Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.