

# SENATE BILL 321

E4

5lr2048

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By: **Senator Nathan–Pulliam**

Introduced and read first time: February 5, 2015

Assigned to: Finance

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Baltimore City and Baltimore County – Police Mental Health Units – Pilot**  
3 **Program**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring, on or before a certain date, the Baltimore City and Baltimore  
5 County police departments to establish mental health units; requiring a mental  
6 health unit to consist of at least a certain number of officers who are specially trained  
7 to understand the needs of mentally ill individuals and in cultural sensitivity and  
8 cultural competency; requiring the training to be developed in consultation with the  
9 Behavioral Health Administration in the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene;  
10 establishing the purpose and goals of a mental health unit; requiring the Baltimore  
11 City and Baltimore County police departments to report to the General Assembly on  
12 or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally  
13 relating to police mental health units.

14 BY adding to  
15 Article – Public Safety  
16 Section 3–510  
17 Annotated Code of Maryland  
18 (2011 Replacement Volume and 2014 Supplement)

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

21 **Article – Public Safety**

22 **3–510.**

23 **(A) ON OR BEFORE JUNE 1, 2016, THE BALTIMORE CITY POLICE**  
24 **DEPARTMENT AND THE BALTIMORE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT EACH SHALL**  
25 **ESTABLISH A MENTAL HEALTH UNIT.**

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1           **(B) A MENTAL HEALTH UNIT SHALL CONSIST OF AT LEAST SIX OFFICERS**  
2 **WHO ARE SPECIALLY TRAINED:**

3                   **(1) TO UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF MENTALLY ILL INDIVIDUALS; AND**

4                   **(2) IN CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY.**

5           **(C) TRAINING FOR OFFICERS IN A MENTAL HEALTH UNIT SHALL BE**  
6 **DEVELOPED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION**  
7 **IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE.**

8           **(D) THE PURPOSE OF A MENTAL HEALTH UNIT IS TO RESPOND TO**  
9 **EMERGENCY CALLS INVOLVING AN INDIVIDUAL SUSPECTED OF HAVING A MENTAL**  
10 **ILLNESS.**

11           **(E) THE GOAL OF A MENTAL HEALTH UNIT IS TO DIVERT MENTALLY ILL**  
12 **INDIVIDUALS INTO TREATMENT INSTEAD OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.**

13           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before October 1, 2018,  
14 the Baltimore City Police Department and the Baltimore County Police Department shall  
15 report to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government  
16 Article, on the number of emergency calls that their mental health units responded to in  
17 2016, 2017, and 2018, and the disposition of those calls.

18           SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
19 October 1, 2015. It shall remain effective for a period 3 years and 9 months and, at the end  
20 of June 30, 2019, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall  
21 be abrogated and of no further force and effect.