

## Chapter 25

**(House Bill 1316)**

AN ACT concerning

**Task Force to Study State Alcohol Regulation, Enforcement, Safety, and Public Health**

FOR the purpose of establishing a Task Force to Study State Alcohol Regulation, Enforcement, Safety, and Public Health; providing for the chair and membership of the Task Force; providing for staff for the Task Force; requiring the Task Force to examine whether the State agency that now is assigned the tasks of regulating the State alcoholic beverages industry and enforcing State alcoholic beverages laws is the most appropriate agency to ensure the safety and welfare of the residents of Maryland, or whether those tasks should be assigned to another State agency or a new State agency; requiring the Task Force to review certain issues and make certain recommendations; requiring the Task Force to report to the General Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the Task Force to Study State Alcohol Regulation, Enforcement, Safety, and Public Health.

**Preamble**

WHEREAS, Excessive alcohol consumption is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States and is a risk factor leading to many health and societal problems; and

WHEREAS, Most people who drink excessively are not alcoholics or alcohol dependent; and

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that excessive alcohol use is responsible for approximately 88,000 deaths in the United States each year, including 1,321 deaths in Maryland, and \$5 billion in economic costs in Maryland; and

WHEREAS, The CDC reports that alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States, excessive drinking is responsible for 4,300 deaths among underage youth each year, people aged 12 to 20 years old drink 11% of all alcohol consumed in the United States, and underage drinkers consume more drinks per drinking occasion than adult drinkers; and

WHEREAS, The CDC estimates that 47% of all homicides and 23% of all suicides are attributable to alcohol use; and

WHEREAS, Alcohol is the leading drug among Maryland youth, with one in four Maryland high school students reporting drinking in the past month; and

WHEREAS, The CDC reports that excessive alcohol use is commonly involved in sexual assault; men consistently have higher rates of alcohol-related deaths and hospitalization than women; among drivers in fatal motor vehicle traffic crashes, men are almost twice as likely as women to have been intoxicated; and excessive alcohol consumption increases aggression and, as a result, can increase the risk of physical assaults on another person; and

WHEREAS, The Community Preventive Services Task Force found evidence of a positive association between outlet density and excessive alcohol consumption and related harms sufficient to recommend limiting alcohol outlet density through the use of regulatory authority as a means of reducing or controlling excessive alcohol consumption and related harms; and

WHEREAS, It is in the best interest of the public to review all alternatives to discover the entity best suited to ensure the safety and welfare of the residents of Maryland for purposes of regulating and enforcing laws concerning the distribution and sale of all alcohol products in the State; now, therefore,

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

(a) There is a Task Force to Study Alcohol Regulation, Enforcement, Safety, and Public Health in the State.

(b) The Task Force shall consist of:

(1) one member of the public, to be appointed by the Governor; and

(2) the following members, all to be appointed by the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Delegates:

(i) one member of the public, who shall serve as chairperson;

(ii) the Secretary of Health, or the Secretary's designee;

(iii) the Secretary of State Police, or the Secretary's designee;

(iv) one member of the Maryland Licensed Beverage Association;

(v) one member representing alcohol manufacturers;

(vi) one member representing alcohol distributors;

(vii) one member representing alcohol retailers;

(viii) one member representing craft brewers;

(ix) one member representing wineries;

(x) one member representing local law enforcement agencies or the National Liquor Law Enforcement Association;

(xi) one member who is an emergency room doctor or a public health policy researcher with expertise in alcohol policy;

(xii) one member of the Maryland Public Health Association;

~~(xiii)~~ (xiii) one department of liquor control administrator;

~~(xiii)~~ (xiv) one member representing the medical community;

~~(xiv)~~ (xv) one member representing Mothers Against Drunk Driving or a neighborhood coalition working on alcohol policy issues at a local level;

~~(xv)~~ (xvi) one member representing the Washington Regional Alcohol Program or the Maryland Chapter of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence;

~~(xvi)~~ (xvii) one member of the Senate of Maryland representing the majority party;

~~(xvii)~~ (xviii) one member of the Senate of Maryland representing the minority party;

~~(xviii)~~ (xix) one member of the House of Delegates representing the majority party; and

~~(xix)~~ (xx) one member of the House of Delegates representing the minority party.

(c) The Department of Legislative Services shall provide staff for the Task Force.

(d) (1) The Task Force shall examine whether the State agency that now is assigned the tasks of regulating the State alcoholic beverages industry and enforcing State alcoholic beverages laws is the most appropriate agency to ensure the safety and welfare of the residents of Maryland, or whether those tasks should be assigned to another State agency or to one created specifically to carry out those tasks.

(2) In conducting its examination under paragraph (1) of this subsection, the Task Force shall review:

- (i) Maryland alcohol laws in light of recent changes regarding alcohol production, distribution, and sale;
- (ii) the public health impact of alcohol in Maryland;
- (iii) the economic development and employment impact of alcohol in Maryland; and
- (iv) the enforcement at the State and local level of alcohol regulation and laws, including regulatory systems in other states, and the methods by which State and local enforcement agencies interact.

(3) The Task Force shall make recommendations regarding what additional policies should be implemented and the method for implementing the policies, with regard to:

- (i) alcohol laws in the State; and
- (ii) legislative proposals that would expand the availability of alcohol to the public.

(e) On or before December 1, 2018, the Task Force shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2018. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the end of June 30, 2019, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

**Enacted under Article II, § 17(b) of the Maryland Constitution, April 5, 2018.**