

SENATE BILL 257

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3lr0513

By: **Senators Waldstreicher and Carter**

Introduced and read first time: January 25, 2023

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force to Assess the Viability for Free Phone Calls for State Incarcerated**
3 **Individuals**
4 **(Keeping Families Connected Act of 2023)**

5 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force to Assess the Viability for Free Phone Calls
6 for State Incarcerated Individuals; and generally relating to the Task Force to Assess
7 the Viability for Free Phone Calls for State Incarcerated Individuals.

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

10 (a) There is a Task Force to Assess the Viability for Free Phone Calls for State
11 Incarcerated Individuals.

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

13 (1) three members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President
14 of the Senate;

15 (2) three members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of
16 the House;

17 (3) the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services, or the
18 Secretary's designee;

19 (4) the Public Defender, or the Public Defender's designee;

20 (5) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

21 (i) two individuals who were formerly incarcerated in a State
22 correctional facility;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (ii) one individual currently employed as a correctional officer at a
2 State correctional facility;

3 (iii) one individual who is the family member of a person who is
4 currently incarcerated in a State correctional facility; and

5 (iv) one representative of the Maryland State's Attorneys'
6 Association, recommended by the President of the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association.

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

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

9 (e) A member of the Task Force:

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

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

13 (f) The Task Force shall:

14 (1) analyze data related to free prison phone call programs in other states;

15 (2) evaluate the projected program cost to the State of Maryland; and

16 (3) evaluate and make recommendations to allow for phone calls to be
17 made free of charge by individuals confined in State correctional facilities while minimizing
18 financial cost to the State.

19 (g) On or before December 31, 2023, the Task Force shall report its findings and
20 recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State
21 Government Article, the General Assembly.

22 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
23 1, 2023. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the end of June
24 30, 2024, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be
25 abrogated and of no further force and effect.