
By: **Delegates Genn and Doory (Committee to Revise Article 27)**

Introduced and read first time: February 12, 1998

Assigned to: Judiciary

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Crimes - Disturbance of the Public Peace and Disorderly Conduct**

3 FOR the purpose of repealing and revising provisions of law related to disturbing the
4 peace and disorderly conduct; prohibiting certain obstructions or hindrances of
5 free passage in certain places; prohibiting persons from acting in a disorderly
6 manner to the disturbance of the public peace; prohibiting a person from
7 willfully failing to obey certain orders of law enforcement officers under certain
8 circumstances; prohibiting a person from disturbing the public peace by
9 unreasonably loud noise in certain places under certain circumstances;
10 prohibiting a person from acting in a disorderly manner under certain
11 circumstances; prohibiting certain fires in Worcester County under certain
12 circumstances; repealing provisions of law relating to interrupting or disturbing
13 certain religious organizations in a certain manner; providing that disturbing
14 the peace and disorderly conduct offenses may be charged by citation by a police
15 officer under certain circumstances; providing that the Committee Notes
16 contained in this Act are not law; defining certain terms; establishing certain
17 penalties; and generally relating to disturbing the public peace and disorderly
18 conduct.

19 BY repealing

20 Article 27 - Crimes and Punishments
21 Section 121 and 122 and the subheading "Disturbance of the Public Peace"; 123
22 and 124 and the subheading "Disorderly Conduct"; and 470 and the
23 subheading "Religious Meetings"
24 Annotated Code of Maryland
25 (1996 Replacement Volume and 1997 Supplement)

26 BY adding to

27 Article 27 - Crimes and Punishments
28 Section 121 to be under the new subheading "Disturbing the Public Peace and
29 Disorderly Conduct"
30 Annotated Code of Maryland
31 (1996 Replacement Volume and 1997 Supplement)

1 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
2 Article 27 - Crimes and Punishments
3 Section 121A and 121B to be under the new subheading "Harassment and
4 Stalking"; 125 and 594B-2
5 Annotated Code of Maryland
6 (1996 Replacement Volume and 1997 Supplement)

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

9 **Article 27 - Crimes and Punishments**

10 [Disturbance of the Public Peace]

11 [121.

12 Any person who shall wilfully obstruct or hinder the free passage of persons
13 passing along or by any public street or highway in any city, town or county of this
14 State, or who shall wilfully disturb any neighborhood in such city, town or county by
15 loud and unseemly noises, or shall profanely curse and swear or use obscene language
16 upon or near to any such street or highway within the hearing of persons passing by
17 or along such highway, or shall wilfully hinder or obstruct the free passage of persons
18 passing on or through or out of the station grounds of any railroad in the State, or who
19 shall wilfully act in a disorderly manner within such station grounds by making such
20 loud and unseemly noises, or by catching hold of and soliciting persons on said
21 grounds against the will of such person, shall, upon conviction thereof, be sentenced
22 to a fine of not less than one dollar and not more than \$500 or shall be subject to
23 imprisonment for not more than thirty days, or shall be subject to both such fine and
24 imprisonment, in the discretion of the court and shall pay costs of the prosecution.]

25 [122.

26 Any person who shall be acting in a disorderly manner to the disturbance of the
27 public peace, or who shall wilfully act in a disorderly manner by making loud and
28 unseemly noises or by profanely cursing, swearing or using obscene language, on or
29 about any public place or any steamboat wharf, dock or public waiting room, or in or
30 about the station grounds of any railroad in the State, or in or on any steamboat,
31 streetcar, electric car, railroad car, passenger train or other public conveyance, or on
32 the mall or adjacent parking areas of any combination of privately owned retail
33 establishments commonly known as a shopping center to which the general public is
34 invited for business purposes, or who shall wilfully catch hold of and solicit persons
35 against the will of said person, or obstruct their free passage to or through or out of
36 such public place, steamboat wharves, docks, public waiting rooms, railroad stations,
37 streetcars, electric cars, railroad cars, passenger trains or other public conveyances,
38 or on the mall or adjacent parking areas of any combination of privately owned retail
39 establishments commonly known as a shopping center to which the general public is
40 invited for business purposes, upon conviction thereof, is subject to a fine not
41 exceeding \$500 or imprisonment not exceeding 30 days, or both, with costs imposed in

1 the discretion of the court. Any fine shall be paid pursuant to the provisions of Article
2 38, § 4. Any person who shall commit any of the crimes, offenses or misdemeanors as
3 defined by this section may be arrested, tried and convicted as herein provided, in any
4 county or city in this State, where said public place or said shopping center may be
5 located, or in any county or city in this State, from, to or through which the said
6 streetcar, electric car, railroad car, passenger train, or other public conveyance may
7 run, or into which he may be brought by said car or other public conveyance; or in any
8 county or city in the State in which he may be found after said crimes, offenses or
9 misdemeanors have been committed. And any person who shall commit any of the
10 crimes, misdemeanors or offenses herein mentioned upon any steamboat, upon the
11 waters of the Chesapeake Bay, within the limits of this State, and without the body of
12 any county thereof, may be tried in any court of this State having jurisdiction of
13 similar crimes, offenses and misdemeanors of the county in which he may be arrested
14 or into which he may be first brought.]

15 [Disorderly Conduct]

16 [123.

17 (a) A person may not act in a disorderly manner to the disturbance of the
18 public peace, upon any public street, highway, alley, park or parking lot, or in any
19 vehicle that is in or upon any street, highway, alley, park or parking lot, in any city,
20 town, or county in this State, or at any place of public worship, or public resort or
21 amusement in any city, town or county in this State, or in any store during business
22 hours, or in any elevator, lobby or corridor of any office building or apartment house
23 having more than three separate dwelling units, or in any public building in any city,
24 town or county of this State.

25 (b) Any person violating the prohibitions of this section is guilty of a
26 misdemeanor, and upon conviction, shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$500, or
27 be confined in jail for a period of not more than 60 days or be both fined and
28 imprisoned in the discretion of the court.]

29 [124.

30 Any person who shall enter upon the land or premises of any other person,
31 whether such person be the owner or lessee of the land or premises and wilfully act in
32 a disorderly manner by making loud and unseemly noises, or by profanely cursing or
33 swearing or using obscene language or acting in any other disorderly manner while
34 thereon, shall upon conviction be subject to a fine not exceeding \$500. However, the
35 provisions of this section shall only apply to Allegany County, Anne Arundel County,
36 Calvert County, Caroline County, Cecil County, Charles County, Frederick County,
37 Garrett County, Harford County, Howard County, Montgomery County, Prince
38 George's County, St. Mary's County, Carroll County, Queen Anne's County,
39 Washington County, Worcester County, Talbot County, Wicomico County, Dorchester
40 County, Kent County and Somerset County. In Worcester County this section shall
41 also apply to beaches adjacent to residential riparian property and provided further
42 that no bonfires shall be built nor allowed to burn on any beach or other property in
43 Worcester County between the hours of 1:00 o'clock a.m. and 5:00 o'clock a.m.]

DISTURBING THE PUBLIC PEACE AND DISORDERLY CONDUCT

2 121.

3 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
4 INDICATED.

5 (2) (I) "PUBLIC CONVEYANCE" MEANS A CONVEYANCE TO WHICH THE
6 GENERAL PUBLIC OR A PORTION OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC HAS ACCESS AND A RIGHT
7 TO RESORT FOR TRANSPORTATION.

8 (II) "PUBLIC CONVEYANCE" IS NOT LIMITED TO A CONVEYANCE
9 DEVOTED SOLELY TO THE USES OF THE PUBLIC.

10 (III) "PUBLIC CONVEYANCE" INCLUDES AN AIRPLANE, BOAT OR
11 OTHER VESSEL, BUS, SCHOOL BUS OR SCHOOL VEHICLE, RAILWAY CAR, AND SUBWAY
12 CAR.

13 (3) (I) "PUBLIC PLACE" MEANS A PLACE TO WHICH THE GENERAL
14 PUBLIC OR A PORTION OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC HAS ACCESS AND A RIGHT TO
15 RESORT FOR BUSINESS, ENTERTAINMENT, DWELLING, OR OTHER LAWFUL PURPOSE.

16 (II) "PUBLIC PLACE" IS NOT LIMITED TO A PLACE DEVOTED SOLELY
17 TO THE USES OF THE PUBLIC.

18 (III) "PUBLIC PLACE" INCLUDES:

19 1. A SHOP, STORE, RESTAURANT, TAVERN, SHOPPING
20 CENTER, OR OTHER PLACE OF BUSINESS;

21 2. A PUBLIC BUILDING;

22 3. A PUBLIC PARKING LOT;

23 4. A PUBLIC STREET, SIDEWALK, OR RIGHT-OF-WAY;

24 5. A PUBLIC PARK OR OTHER PUBLIC GROUNDS;

25 6. THE COMMON AREAS OF ANY BUILDING CONTAINING
26 MORE THAN THREE SEPARATE DWELLING UNITS, INCLUDING A STAIRWELL,
27 ELEVATOR, LOBBY, AND CORRIDOR;

28 7. A HOTEL OR MOTEL;

29 8. A PLACE USED FOR PUBLIC RESORT OR AMUSEMENT,
30 INCLUDING A SPORTS ARENA, GOLF COURSE, SWIMMING POOL, RACE TRACK,
31 THEATER, AND AMUSEMENT PARK;

32 9. AN INSTITUTION OF ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY, OR
33 HIGHER EDUCATION;

1 10. A PLACE OF PUBLIC WORSHIP; AND

2 11. A PLACE OR BUILDING USED FOR ENTERING OR EXITING A
3 PUBLIC CONVEYANCE, INCLUDING AN AIRPORT TERMINAL, A BUS, RAILWAY, AND
4 SUBWAY STATION, AND A DOCK OR WHARF.

5 (IV) "PUBLIC PLACE" INCLUDES THE PARKING AREAS AND LOTS,
6 SIDEWALKS, AND OTHER GROUNDS AND STRUCTURES WHICH ARE PART OF A PUBLIC
7 PLACE.

8 (B) (1) A PERSON MAY NOT WILLFULLY AND WITHOUT LAWFUL PURPOSE
9 OBSTRUCT OR HINDER THE FREE PASSAGE OF ANOTHER IN A PUBLIC PLACE OR ON A
10 PUBLIC CONVEYANCE.

11 (2) A PERSON MAY NOT WILLFULLY ACT IN A DISORDERLY MANNER TO
12 THE DISTURBANCE OF THE PUBLIC PEACE.

13 (3) A PERSON MAY NOT WILLFULLY FAIL TO OBEY A REASONABLE AND
14 LAWFUL ORDER OF A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER MADE TO PREVENT A
15 DISTURBANCE TO THE PUBLIC PEACE.

16 (4) A PERSON WHO HAS ENTERED THE LAND OR PREMISES OF ANOTHER,
17 WHETHER THE OTHER IS THE OWNER OR LESSEE, OR A BEACH ADJACENT TO
18 RESIDENTIAL RIPARIAN PROPERTY MAY NOT WILLFULLY:

19 (I) DISTURB THE PEACE OF PERSONS ON THE LAND, PREMISES, OR
20 BEACH BY UNREASONABLY LOUD NOISE; OR

21 (II) ACT IN A DISORDERLY MANNER.

22 (5) A PERSON FROM ANY LOCATION MAY NOT BY UNREASONABLY LOUD
23 NOISE WILLFULLY DISTURB THE PEACE OF ANOTHER:

24 (I) ON THE OTHER'S LAND OR PREMISES;

25 (II) IN A PLACE OF BUSINESS;

26 (III) IN A PUBLIC PLACE; OR

27 (IV) ON A PUBLIC CONVEYANCE.

28 (6) IN WORCESTER COUNTY A PERSON MAY NOT BUILD OR ALLOW TO
29 BURN A BONFIRE ON ANY BEACH OR OTHER PROPERTY BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 1
30 A.M. AND 5 A.M.

31 (C) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES ANY PROVISION OF THIS SECTION IS GUILTY OF
32 A MISDEMEANOR AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO A FINE OF NOT MORE THAN
33 \$500 OR IMPRISONMENT FOR NOT MORE THAN 60 DAYS OR BOTH.

34 COMMITTEE NOTE (COMMITTEE TO REVISE ARTICLE 27): The definition
35 of "public place" includes "an institution of elementary, secondary, or higher

1 education". See also § 26-101 of the Education Article for additional prohibitions on
2 disturbances at institutions of elementary, secondary, or higher education.

3 Both the definition of "public conveyance" and "public place" include the phrase
4 "or a portion of the public". This phrase is intended to include in these definitions
5 those conveyances and places where there is an admission charge, a membership fee,
6 or some other sort of restriction that serves to limit the class of persons who are
7 entitled to entry. For example, movie theaters (admission charge), country clubs
8 (membership fee), and school buses (access limited to school children) would be public
9 places or public conveyances.

10 Subsection (b)(1) of this section is based on current provisions in Art. 27, §§ 121
11 and 122. Subsection (b)(2) is based on Art. 27, § 123.

12 Subsection (b)(3) of this section is intended to codify the common law on failure
13 to obey the lawful order of a police officer. See, e.g., *McIntyre v. State*, 1 Md. App. 586,
14 232 A.2d 279 (1968); *Bachelor v. State*, 3 Md. App. 626, 240 A.2d 623 (1968). No
15 substantive changes are intended.

16 Subsection (b)(4) of this section is based on Art. 27, § 124. The provisions
17 concerning beaches, currently applicable only in Worcester County, have been
18 broadened to apply statewide.

19 Subsection (b)(5)(i) of this section is based on current law in Art. 27, §§ 121 and
20 122. It prohibits a person by unreasonably loud noise from disturbing the peace of
21 another on the other's land or premises. The phrase "unreasonably loud noise" is
22 taken from the case of *Eanes v. State*, 318 Md. 436, 569 A.2d 604 (1990), interpreting
23 the phrase "loud and unseemly noise" in current Art. 27, §§ 121 and 122. This
24 prohibition is intended to cover a person who is making unreasonably loud noise from
25 another location, and is disturbing the peace of others in their homes or property on
26 another location. For instance, it is intended to prevent the tenant in one apartment
27 from playing a stereo so loudly as to disturb persons in other adjacent or nearby
28 apartments. This prohibition is not intended to prohibit a person who resides on a
29 premises from disturbing the peace of another resident of the same premises. The
30 provisions of subsection (b)(4)(i) of this section cover a person who does not have a
31 possessory interest in land or a premises, but enters the land or premises and uses
32 unreasonably loud noise or acts in a disorderly manner.

33 Subsection (b)(6) of this section is current law derived without substantive
34 change from Art. 27, § 124. No changes are intended.

35 [125.] 122.

36 Any person who shall keep a disorderly house shall on conviction thereof be
37 subject to a fine of not less than fifty dollars nor more than three hundred dollars, or
38 to imprisonment in jail for not less than ten days nor more than six months, or to both
39 fine and imprisonment.

HARASSMENT AND STALKING

1
2 [121A.] 123.

3 (a) In this section "course of conduct" means a persistent pattern of conduct,
4 composed of a series of acts over a period of time, that evidences a continuity of
5 purpose.

6 (b) This section does not apply to any peaceable activity intended to express
7 political views or provide information to others.

8 (c) A person may not follow another person in or about a public place or
9 maliciously engage in a course of conduct that alarms or seriously annoys another
10 person:

11 (1) With intent to harass, alarm, or annoy the other person;

12 (2) After reasonable warning or request to desist by or on behalf of the
13 other person; and

14 (3) Without a legal purpose.

15 (d) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon
16 conviction, is subject to a fine not exceeding \$500 or imprisonment for not more than
17 90 days or both.

18 [121B.] 124.

19 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

20 (2) "Course of conduct" means a persistent pattern of conduct, composed
21 of a series of acts over a period of time, that evidences a continuity of purpose.

22 (3) "Stalking" means a malicious course of conduct that includes
23 approaching or pursuing another person with intent to place that person in
24 reasonable fear:

25 (i) Of serious bodily injury or death; or

26 (ii) That a third person likely will suffer serious bodily injury or
27 death.

28 (b) A person may not engage in stalking.

29 (c) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on
30 conviction is subject to a fine of not more than \$5,000 or imprisonment for not more
31 than 5 years or both.

32 (d) A sentence imposed under this section may be imposed separate from and
33 consecutive to or concurrent with a sentence for any other offense based upon the act
34 or acts establishing a violation of this section.

[Religious Meetings]

1 [470.

2
3 Whosoever shall wilfully interrupt or disturb any religious congregation, society
4 or meeting, by blowing horns, exploding firearms, horse racing, noisy, riotous or
5 disorderly conduct or conversation shall, on conviction be fined not less than one
6 dollar nor more than twenty dollars, and may be committed to jail pursuant to the
7 provisions of Article 38, § 4.]

8 594B-2.

9 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

10 (2) "Citation" means a written charging document, other than an
11 indictment, an information, or a statement of charges, alleging that a defendant has
12 committed an offense, issued to a defendant by a police officer.

13 (3) "Police officer" has the meaning stated in § 594B of this subheading.

14 (b) Subject to the provisions of subsection (c) of this section, in addition to any
15 other provision of law or rule allowing an offense to be charged by citation, the
16 following offenses may be charged by citation:

17 (1) Malicious destruction of property under § 111(b) of this article, where
18 the amount of damage to the property is less than \$300;

19 [(2) Disturbing the peace under § 122 of this article;

20 (3) Disorderly conduct under § 123 of this article; or]

21 (2) DISTURBING THE PEACE AND DISORDERLY CONDUCT UNDER § 121
22 OF THIS ARTICLE; OR

23 [(4)] (3) Misdemeanor theft, as defined under § 342(f)(2) of this article.

24 (c) A police officer may charge a defendant with an offense specified under
25 subsection (b) of this section by citation if:

26 (1) The defendant furnishes satisfactory evidence of identity; and

27 (2) The police officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the
28 defendant will comply with the requirements of the citation.

29 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Committee Notes
30 contained in this Act are not law.

31 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
32 October 1, 1998.