
By: **Delegates Marriott, Watson, Kirk, Branch, McHale, T. Murphy, Jones,
Muse, Patterson, C. Davis, Bobo, Howard, Grosfeld, Benson, Oaks, and
Rosenberg**

Introduced and read first time: February 13, 1998
Assigned to: Commerce and Government Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Commission on Concentrated Poverty in Maryland**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a Commission on Concentrated Poverty in Maryland;
4 providing for the membership, powers, and duties of the Commission; and
5 generally relating to the study of concentrated poverty in Maryland.

6 BY adding to
7 Article 49D - Office for Children, Youth, and Families
8 Section 39
9 Annotated Code of Maryland
10 (1994 Replacement Volume and 1997 Supplement)

11 **Preamble**

12 WHEREAS, The increasing concentration of poor people in neighborhoods with
13 high levels of poverty is among the trends of most concern in Maryland; and

14 WHEREAS, Social scientists agree that the number of neighborhoods of
15 concentrated poverty has grown in recent years and that the poor living in these
16 neighborhoods have become increasingly isolated from the social and economic
17 mainstream; and

18 WHEREAS, The concentration of poor people living in poverty generates a wide
19 array of social problems, including joblessness, low levels of academic achievement,
20 high rates of students dropping out of school, teen pregnancy, poor health, abandoned
21 housing, drug abuse, and crime, that are different in magnitude and kind than the
22 problems poor people face in less isolated environments; and

23 WHEREAS, There are 90,000 Maryland children growing up and attending
24 school in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty, and substantial evidence exists
25 that the life chances of these children are diminished; and

1 WHEREAS, One of the most consistent findings in education research is the
2 powerful relationship between concentrated poverty and academic results; and

3 WHEREAS, Schools with high proportions of children living in poverty show
4 poor performance regardless of the school system in which they are located; and

5 WHEREAS, Maryland has 255 such schools located in 16 school systems,
6 including 148 in Baltimore City, 41 in Prince George's County, 12 in Allegany County,
7 and 10 in Montgomery County; and

8 WHEREAS, Educators have found that schools with populations consisting of
9 40-50% poor children require increased per pupil spending and specific school-wide
10 approaches to address the problems associated with poverty; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1994, the Governor's Commission on School Funding estimated
12 these additional costs at \$1,500 per year for every child approved for free or
13 reduced-price lunch and recommended that priority be given to schools with the
14 highest concentrations of children living in poverty; and

15 WHEREAS, The social problems that correlate with concentrated poverty also
16 require increased State and local expenditures for social services, public health, law
17 enforcement, corrections, and other public services, and that these expenditures erode
18 the tax base; and

19 WHEREAS, There is substantial evidence that concentrated poverty and the
20 resulting disparities in income within a metropolitan area negatively impact on job
21 growth for the entire metropolitan employment market and hamper economic
22 progress; and

23 WHEREAS, The concentration of poor families in areas that have lost large
24 numbers of entry-level and blue collar jobs due to the decline of manufacturing and
25 other changes in the economy jeopardizes the success of State welfare reform
26 initiatives; and

27 WHEREAS, The movement of the middle class away from the problems and tax
28 burdens generated by concentrated poverty fuels sprawl development and loss of open
29 space, and requires costly public investment in new infrastructure; and

30 WHEREAS, Trends show that the concentration of poverty in Maryland is
31 increasing dramatically even while State and regional poverty rates have been
32 falling; and

33 WHEREAS, Since 1970, the poverty rate in metropolitan Baltimore has fallen
34 from 11.3% to 10.1% but the number of neighborhoods with concentrated poverty,
35 census tracts with 20% or more of the population in poverty, has increased from 70 to
36 90 in Baltimore City and from 3 to 11 in the metropolitan counties; and

37 WHEREAS, The number and percentage of the poor that live in these
38 concentrated poverty areas have also increased; and

1 WHEREAS, Baltimore, depending on the measurement used, ranks among the
2 top three or four cities, among major metropolitan areas in the nation, on indices that
3 measure the extent and intensity of poverty concentration; and

4 WHEREAS, The growing problem of concentrated poverty diminishes the
5 quality of life for all Marylanders; now, therefore,

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

8 **Article 49D - Office for Children, Youth, and Families**

9 39.

10 (A) THERE IS A COMMISSION ON CONCENTRATED POVERTY IN MARYLAND.

11 (B) THE COMMISSION SHALL BE COMPOSED OF 19 MEMBERS AS FOLLOWS:

12 (1) THREE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, APPOINTED BY
13 THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE;

14 (2) THREE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE OF MARYLAND, APPOINTED BY
15 THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE; AND

16 (3) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR:

17 (I) ONE MEMBER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
18 MENTAL HYGIENE;

19 (II) ONE MEMBER FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION;

20 (III) ONE MEMBER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND
21 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT;

22 (IV) ONE MEMBER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
23 AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES;

24 (V) ONE MEMBER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND
25 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT;

26 (VI) ONE MEMBER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
27 RESOURCES; AND

28 (VII) SEVEN MEMBERS FROM THE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES OF
29 ECONOMICS, SOCIOLOGY, URBAN STUDIES, SOCIAL POLICY, AND PSYCHOLOGY.

30 (C) THE GOVERNOR SHALL DESIGNATE THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION.

31 (D) THE COMMISSION SHALL HOLD ITS FIRST MEETING ON OR BEFORE
32 OCTOBER 1, 1998.

1 (E) THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR SHALL PROVIDE STAFFING FOR THE
2 COMMISSION.

3 (F) THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMISSION IS TO:

4 (1) STUDY DATA AND OTHER RESEARCH MAINTAINED BY THE STATE,
5 OTHER STATES, AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THAT RELATE TO CONCENTRATED
6 POVERTY;

7 (2) DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF AND EVALUATE TRENDS IN
8 CONCENTRATED POVERTY IN MARYLAND;

9 (3) DETERMINE AND ASSESS THE FACTORS, INCLUDING ECONOMIC AND
10 DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND PUBLIC POLICIES, CAUSING INCREASES IN
11 CONCENTRATED POVERTY IN MARYLAND;

12 (4) ASSESS THE CORRELATION BETWEEN VARIOUS INDICATORS OF
13 SOCIAL DISTRESS, INCLUDING CRIME, JOB LOSS, EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE, AND
14 CONCENTRATED POVERTY;

15 (5) ASSESS THE EFFECT OF CONDITIONS IN NEIGHBORHOODS WITH
16 CONCENTRATED POVERTY ON CHILDREN AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS LIVING IN
17 THOSE AREAS;

18 (6) (I) QUANTIFY THE FISCAL IMPACT OF CONCENTRATED POVERTY
19 ON LOCAL AND STATE BUDGETS; AND

20 (II) ESTIMATE THE EFFECT ON THE TAX BASE THAT WILL OCCUR
21 AND THE INCREASE IN STATE AND LOCAL EXPENDITURES THAT WILL BE REQUIRED
22 IF TRENDS SHOWING INCREASES IN THE NUMBER OF NEIGHBORHOODS OF
23 CONCENTRATED POVERTY AND PERCENTAGES OF POOR PEOPLE RESIDING IN
24 NEIGHBORHOODS OF CONCENTRATED POVERTY CONTINUE;

25 (7) ASSESS THE IMPACT OF CONCENTRATED POVERTY ON SMALL
26 BUSINESSES LOCATED IN NEIGHBORHOODS OF CONCENTRATED POVERTY AND ON
27 ECONOMIC GROWTH IN REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT MARKETS;

28 (8) EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC POLICIES AND STATE
29 PROGRAMS IN ADDRESSING AND ALLEVIATING CONCENTRATIONS OF POVERTY;

30 (9) HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS FOR THE PURPOSE OF COLLECTING DATA;

31 (10) DEVELOP ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THAT THE COMMISSION
32 CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE FOR CHANGES IN STATUTES, REGULATIONS,
33 ORGANIZATION, OR PROCEDURES THAT WILL PREVENT THE SPREAD OF
34 CONCENTRATED POVERTY AND WILL ALLEVIATE EXISTING CONDITIONS; AND

35 (11) STUDY AND DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING ANY
36 OTHER ISSUES THAT THE COMMISSION DEEMS RELEVANT TO THE STUDY OF
37 CONCENTRATED POVERTY.

1 (G) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 1999, THE COMMISSION SHALL REPORT ITS
2 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR AND, PURSUANT TO § 2-1246
3 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

4 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
5 July 1, 1998.