

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 22

Unofficial Copy
F2

1998 Regular Session
(81r0949)

ENROLLED RESOLUTION

-- Appropriations/Economic and Environmental Affairs --

Introduced by **Delegates Muse, E. Burns, Nathan-Pulliam, C. Mitchell, D. Davis, and Fulton**

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

Proofreader.

Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this
____ day of _____ at _____ o'clock, ____ M.

Speaker.

RESOLUTION NO. _____

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Task Force to Study the Effects of Cult Activities on Public Senior Higher**
3 **Education Institutions**

4 FOR the purpose of providing for the establishment of a Task Force to Study the
5 Effects of Cult Activities on Public Senior Higher Education Institutions;
6 providing for the membership of the Task Force; and providing for a report to
7 the Governor and the General Assembly.

8 WHEREAS, A recent mass suicide in California, cult-motivated murders in
9 Mississippi and Florida, and a subway gassing incident in Japan have increased
10 national awareness of the destructive nature of cult activities; and

11 WHEREAS, It has been estimated that there are as many as 2,000 cults
12 operating within the United States with 4 million to 6 million members; and

13 WHEREAS, Cult recruitment activities are often directed towards students on
14 college campuses; and

1 WHEREAS, College students are particularly vulnerable to cult recruitment
 2 because they are often grappling with becoming independent, overwhelmed with new
 3 responsibilities and relationships, adjusting to new environments, and anxious about
 4 their futures; and

5 WHEREAS, College students who become involved with cults undergo
 6 personality changes, suffer academically and financially, are alienated from their
 7 families and friends, and are robbed of the very things universities were designed to
 8 encourage: freedom of thought, intellectual growth, and personal development; and

9 WHEREAS, Some college administrators have become concerned about cult
 10 activities on campus and have taken action to address the situation, but many others
 11 have failed to recognize the threat, have refused to deal with the problem, or are
 12 searching for policy directions as to how to deal with it; and

13 WHEREAS, Although the United States Constitution and the Maryland
 14 Constitution clearly and properly limit the ability of any government entity to
 15 interfere with the free exercise of religion by any person or group, the State of
 16 Maryland has a right and a responsibility to examine the behaviors of members of any
 17 group who violate State or local law or campus policies regarding deception,
 18 harassment, or fraud, or who threaten the mental, emotional, or physical well-being
 19 of the citizens of Maryland or students enrolled in the University System of
 20 Maryland, Morgan State University, and St. Mary's College; now, therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That there shall
 22 be a Task Force to Study the Effects of Cult Activities on Public Senior Higher
 23 Education Institutions ; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall be composed of:

25 (1) Two members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of
 26 the House;

27 (2) Two members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President
 28 of the Senate;

29 (3) The Chancellor of the University System of Maryland or the
 30 Chancellor's designee;

31 ~~(4)~~ (4) *The President of the University of Maryland, College Park or the*
 32 *President's designee;*

33 ~~(5)~~ (5) The President of St. Mary's College or the President's designee;

34 ~~(6)~~ (6) The President of Morgan State University or the President's
 35 designee;

36 ~~(7)~~ (7) A member of the Board of Regents of the University System of
 37 Maryland, appointed by the Governor;

1 ~~(7)~~ (8) A member of the Maryland Higher Education Commission,
2 appointed by the Governor;

3 ~~(8)~~ (9) Two parents of current or former cult members, appointed by
4 the Governor; ~~and~~

5 (10) Two parents representing the parent associations of the constituent
6 institutions; and

7 ~~(9)~~ (11) Two student government representatives from the University
8 System of Maryland, St. Mary's College, or Morgan State University, appointed by the
9 Governor; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the ~~Department of Legislative Services Maryland Higher~~
11 ~~Education Commission shall~~ Chancellor of the University System of Maryland shall
12 identify staff from the System office or from a constituent institution to provide
13 staffing for the Task Force; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall communicate with and obtain
15 information from cult awareness organizations, former cult members, college
16 administrators, campus security personnel, campus ministers, families of cult
17 members, and other interested parties regarding the recruitment and organizational
18 practices of cults, the extent of cult activities within the University System of
19 Maryland, St. Mary's College, and Morgan State University, the response of college
20 administrators in Maryland and around the nation to cult activities, and the effect of
21 cult involvement on students; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That no later than September 30, 1999, the Task Force shall
23 submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, pursuant to § 2-1246
24 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
26 Legislative Services to the Honorable Parris N. Glendening, Governor of Maryland;
27 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; the
28 Honorable Casper R. Taylor, Jr., Speaker of the House of Delegates; the Chancellor of
29 the University System of Maryland; the President of St. Mary's College; and the
30 President of Morgan State University.