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By: **Delegate Marriott**

Introduced and read first time: February 15, 2001

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

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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 (1998 Replacement Volume and 2000 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

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

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

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

6 WHEREAS, Educators have found that schools with populations consisting of  
7 40% to 50% poor children require increased per pupil spending and specific  
8 school-wide approaches to address the problems associated with poverty; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6 39.

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

8 (B) THE COMMISSION SHALL BE COMPOSED OF 21 MEMBERS AS FOLLOWS:

9 (1) THREE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, APPOINTED BY  
10 THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE;

11 (2) THREE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE OF MARYLAND, APPOINTED BY  
12 THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE; AND

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

14 (I) ONE MEMBER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND  
15 MENTAL HYGIENE;

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

17 (III) ONE MEMBER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND  
18 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT;

19 (IV) ONE MEMBER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
20 AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES;

21 (V) ONE MEMBER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND  
22 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT;

23 (VI) ONE MEMBER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN  
24 RESOURCES;

25 (VII) ONE MEMBER FROM THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF  
26 COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES;

27 (VIII) ONE MEMBER FROM THE MARYLAND ALLIANCE FOR THE POOR;

28 (IX) ONE MEMBER FROM THE MARYLAND INTERFAITH  
29 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE;

30 (X) ONE MEMBER FROM THE MARYLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE;  
31 AND

1 (XI) FIVE MEMBERS FROM THE ACADEMIC AREAS OF ECONOMICS,  
2 SOCIOLOGY, PUBLIC POLICY, SOCIAL WORK, AND GOVERNMENT.

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

4 (D) THE COMMISSION SHALL HOLD ITS FIRST MEETING ON OR BEFORE  
5 OCTOBER 1, 2001.

6 (E) THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR SHALL PROVIDE STAFFING FOR THE  
7 COMMISSION.

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

9 (1) STUDY DATA AND OTHER RESEARCH MAINTAINED BY THE STATE,  
10 OTHER STATES, AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THAT RELATE TO CONCENTRATED  
11 POVERTY;

12 (2) DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF AND EVALUATE TRENDS IN  
13 CONCENTRATED POVERTY IN MARYLAND;

14 (3) DETERMINE AND ASSESS THE FACTORS, INCLUDING ECONOMIC AND  
15 DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND PUBLIC POLICIES, CAUSING INCREASES IN  
16 CONCENTRATED POVERTY IN MARYLAND;

17 (4) ASSESS THE CORRELATION BETWEEN VARIOUS INDICATORS OF  
18 SOCIAL DISTRESS, INCLUDING CRIME, JOB LOSS, EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE, AND  
19 CONCENTRATED POVERTY;

20 (5) ASSESS THE EFFECT OF CONDITIONS IN NEIGHBORHOODS WITH  
21 CONCENTRATED POVERTY ON CHILDREN AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS LIVING IN  
22 THOSE AREAS;

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

25 (II) ESTIMATE THE EFFECT ON THE TAX BASE THAT WILL OCCUR  
26 AND THE INCREASE IN STATE AND LOCAL EXPENDITURES THAT WILL BE REQUIRED  
27 IF TRENDS SHOWING INCREASES IN THE NUMBER OF NEIGHBORHOODS OF  
28 CONCENTRATED POVERTY AND PERCENTAGES OF POOR PEOPLE RESIDING IN  
29 NEIGHBORHOODS OF CONCENTRATED POVERTY CONTINUE;

30 (7) ASSESS THE IMPACT OF CONCENTRATED POVERTY ON SMALL  
31 BUSINESSES LOCATED IN NEIGHBORHOODS OF CONCENTRATED POVERTY AND ON  
32 ECONOMIC GROWTH IN REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT MARKETS;

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

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

1           (10)    DEVELOP ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THAT THE COMMISSION  
2 CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE FOR CHANGES IN STATUTES, REGULATIONS,  
3 ORGANIZATION, OR PROCEDURES THAT WILL PREVENT THE SPREAD OF  
4 CONCENTRATED POVERTY AND WILL ALLEVIATE EXISTING CONDITIONS; AND

5           (11)    STUDY AND DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING ANY  
6 OTHER ISSUES THAT THE COMMISSION DEEMS RELEVANT TO THE STUDY OF  
7 CONCENTRATED POVERTY.

8       (G)       ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2002, THE COMMISSION SHALL REPORT ITS  
9 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR AND, PURSUANT TO § 2-1246  
10 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

11       SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
12 July 1, 2001.