
By: **Delegate Finifter**
Introduced and read first time: February 8, 2002
Assigned to: Environmental Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Genetics Public Education Program**

3 FOR the purpose of providing legislative findings; requiring the Secretary of Health
4 and Mental Hygiene, in consultation with the Advisory Council on Hereditary
5 and Congenital Disorders, to develop and implement a certain genetics public
6 education program, to locate the program in a certain place within the
7 Department, and collect and disburse certain funds; requiring the Secretary to
8 adopt regulations to implement the program; requiring the Secretary to submit
9 a certain report to certain committees on or before a certain date; defining
10 certain terms; and generally relating to a genetics public education program.

11 BY adding to
12 Article - Health - General
13 Section 13-1601 through 13-1605, inclusive, to be under the new subtitle
14 "Subtitle 16. Genetics Public Education Program"
15 Annotated Code of Maryland
16 (2000 Replacement Volume and 2001 Supplement)

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

19 **Article - Health - General**

20 **SUBTITLE 16. GENETICS PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM.**

21 13-1601.

22 IN THIS SUBTITLE, "GENETIC KNOWLEDGE" MEANS INFORMATION ABOUT
23 CHROMOSOMES, GENES, GENE PRODUCTS, OR INHERITED CHARACTERISTICS THAT
24 MAY DERIVE FROM AN INDIVIDUAL OR A FAMILY MEMBER.

1 13-1602.

2 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT:

3 (1) ENHANCED UNDERSTANDING OF THE GENETIC FACTORS IN HEALTH
4 AND DISEASE OFFERS AN UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY TO PROTECT AND
5 IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF THE CITIZENS OF MARYLAND AND OF ALL PEOPLE;

6 (2) MOST, IF NOT ALL, DISEASES HAVE A GENETIC COMPONENT;

7 (3) GENETIC KNOWLEDGE AND GENETIC BIOTECHNOLOGY HAVE
8 ALREADY LED TO MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS IN PUBLIC HEALTH AND IMPROVEMENTS
9 IN THE COST EFFECTIVENESS OF PREVENTION AND TREATMENT SERVICES;

10 (4) GENETIC KNOWLEDGE AND GENETIC BIOTECHNOLOGY ARE
11 EXPANDING AT AN UNPRECEDENTED AND UNEVEN RATE;

12 (5) THERE IS A POTENTIAL FOR THE MISUSE OF GENETIC INFORMATION
13 AND GENETIC BIOTECHNOLOGY;

14 (6) GENETICS AND GENETIC BIOTECHNOLOGY ARE IMPORTANT TO THE
15 INTELLECTUAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE STATE;

16 (7) THE POLICIES OF THIS STATE ON GENETICS AND GENETIC
17 BIOTECHNOLOGY SHOULD BE MADE:

18 (I) WITH FULL PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE;

19 (II) WITH CONSIDERATION OF THE OPINIONS AND CONCERNS OF
20 THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND THE CITIZENS MOST AFFECTED BY ANY PARTICULAR
21 POLICY;

22 (III) IN LIGHT OF EXPERT OPINION; AND

23 (IV) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HIGHEST ETHICAL STANDARDS;

24 (8) AN INFORMED PUBLIC IS ESSENTIAL TO:

25 (I) ASSESSING THE BENEFITS AND RISKS OF ANY PARTICULAR
26 POLICY;

27 (II) MAKING PERSONAL DECISIONS ABOUT THE USE OF GENETIC
28 HEALTH SERVICES;

29 (III) A SUPPORTIVE AND ACCEPTING PUBLIC ATTITUDE TOWARD
30 CITIZENS WITH GENETIC DISORDERS, DISABILITIES, AND RISK FACTORS; AND

31 (IV) EFFECTIVE PUBLIC DEBATE LEADING TO APPROPRIATE POLICY
32 MAKING; AND

1 (9) A PROGRAM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION ABOUT GENETICS AND GENETIC
2 BIOTECHNOLOGY IS NEEDED.

3 13-1603.

4 THE SECRETARY, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
5 HEREDITARY AND CONGENITAL DISORDERS, SHALL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A
6 PROGRAM TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT GENETICS AND GENETIC
7 BIOTECHNOLOGY IN THE OFFICE FOR GENETICS AND FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL
8 HEALTH CARE NEEDS.

9 13-1604.

10 SUBJECT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION, THE SECRETARY SHALL
11 ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBTITLE.

12 13-1605.

13 ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2004, THE SECRETARY SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT
14 TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
15 AND THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS COMMITTEE, SUBJECT TO § 2-1246 OF
16 THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
17 PROGRAM.

18 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
19 October 1, 2002.