

SENATE BILL 475

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By: **Senators Pinsky, Britt, Conway, Currie, DeGrange, Della, Dyson, Forehand, Garagiola, Gladden, Hogan, Jones, Kasemeyer, Kelley, Klausmeier, Kramer, Lenett, Madaleno, McFadden, Middleton, Munson, Muse, Peters, Raskin, and Robey**

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2007

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force on the Policy and Funding Implications of Requiring Passage of**
3 **the High School Assessment for Graduation**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force on the Policy and Funding
5 Implications of Requiring Passage of the High School Assessment for
6 Graduation; providing for the membership of the Task Force; requiring the
7 Governor to designate the chair of the Task Force; requiring the Department of
8 Legislative Services to provide staff for the Task Force; providing that a
9 member of the Task Force may not receive compensation but is entitled to
10 certain reimbursement; authorizing the Task Force to invite certain experts and
11 other witnesses to submit testimony, hold certain hearings, and in consultation
12 with the Department of Budget and Management, contract with certain experts
13 and consultants; requiring the Task Force to review and evaluate the use of the
14 high school assessment as a Maryland diploma requirement, develop certain
15 strategies and interventions, develop certain cost projections, and make certain
16 findings and recommendations; requiring the Task Force to report certain
17 findings and recommendations to the State Department of Education, the
18 Governor, and the General Assembly on or before a certain date; requiring the
19 Governor to ensure regional, ethnic, economic, and gender diversity in making
20 certain appointments; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally
21 relating to the policy and funding implications of requiring passage of the high
22 school assessment for graduation.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Preamble

2 WHEREAS, The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has required
3 Maryland to adopt and implement numerous new student performance assessments to
4 increase accountability in the public schools; and

5 WHEREAS, The General Assembly enacted the landmark Bridge to Excellence
6 in Public Schools Act of 2002 to provide significant increases in State funding for
7 public education with the goal of enabling all students to meet the State's rigorous
8 academic standards; and

9 WHEREAS, In 2003 the State Board of Education adopted regulations to make
10 graduation with a Maryland State Diploma contingent on the passage of the high
11 school assessments in four subject areas (English, Algebra/Data Analysis, Biology, and
12 Government); and

13 WHEREAS, The State Department of Education has not developed alternative
14 or modified high school assessments to be offered to students with disabilities; and

15 WHEREAS, The 2006 high school assessment results reveal that of the 63,000
16 students who constitute the class of 2009, as many as 25,000 are at risk of failing one
17 or more of the high school assessments; and

18 WHEREAS, The 25,000 students who are at risk of failing one or more of the
19 high school assessments are not in only a few select school districts, but rather are in
20 all 24 school districts in Maryland; and

21 WHEREAS, A large achievement gap persists, evidenced by the fact that the
22 passage rate on high school assessments for low-income students, those receiving Free
23 and Reduced Priced Meals (FARM), and specifically African American and Hispanic
24 students, is on average as much as 30% lower than the passage rate of the more
25 affluent, white, or Asian students; now, therefore,

26 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
27 MARYLAND, That:

28 (a) There is a Task Force on the Policy and Funding Implications of
29 Requiring Passage of the High School Assessment for Graduation.

30 (b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

31 (1) two members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the
32 President of the Senate;

1 (2) two members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker
2 of the House;

3 (3) the State Superintendent of Schools, or the Superintendent's
4 designee; and

5 (4) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

6 (i) two local superintendents, one of whom is from a school
7 district with over 50,000 students;

8 (ii) two parents of public school students, one of whom is a
9 member of the Maryland Parents and Teachers Association (MDPTA);

10 (iii) one representative of the Maryland Association of Boards of
11 Education (MABE);

12 (iv) one principal who represents secondary school principals;

13 (v) one representative of the Maryland State Teachers
14 Association (MSTA);

15 (vi) one representative of the business community;

16 (vii) one public school student;

17 (viii) one representative who is an advocate for special education
18 services; and

19 (ix) two members appointed at the discretion of the Governor.

20 (c) The Governor shall designate the chair of the Task Force.

21 (d) The Department of Legislative Services shall provide staff for the Task
22 Force.

23 (e) A member of the Task Force:

24 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but

25 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard
26 State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

1 (f) (1) The Task Force may:

2 (i) invite academic experts and other witnesses to submit
3 testimony;

4 (ii) hold hearings relating to students who are in jeopardy of not
5 passing the high school assessment; and

6 (iii) in consultation with the Department of Budget and
7 Management, contract with experts and consultants as necessary to inform its work
8 and recommendations.

9 (2) The Task Force shall:

10 (i) review and evaluate the use of the high school assessment as
11 a Maryland diploma requirement, including both the policy and funding implications
12 of this requirement;

13 (ii) develop short-term strategies and targeted interventions to
14 increase the passage rate on the high school assessment for all students in all
15 subgroups;

16 (iii) develop cost projections for each of the strategies and
17 targeted interventions; and

18 (iv) make findings and recommendations as to whether the use
19 of the high school assessment as a Maryland diploma requirement should be
20 continued, modified, or discontinued.

21 (g) On or before November 1, 2007, the Task Force shall report its findings
22 and recommendations to the State Department of Education, the Governor, and, in
23 accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

24 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, to the extent
25 practicable, the Governor shall ensure regional, ethnic, economic, and gender diversity
26 in making appointments to the Task Force on the Policy and Funding Implications of
27 Requiring Passage of the High School Assessment for Graduation.

28 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
29 June 1, 2007. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the
30 end of June 30, 2008, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this
31 Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.