

# SENATE BILL 475

F1

71r1890

---

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

---

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 15, 2007

---

## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

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

---

**EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.**

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 Governor to ensure regional, ethnic, economic, and gender diversity in making  
2 certain appointments; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally  
3 relating to the policy and funding implications of requiring passage of the high  
4 school assessment for graduation.

5 Preamble

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
31 MARYLAND, That:

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

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

2 (1) two members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the  
3 President of the Senate;

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

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

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

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

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

13 (iii) one representative of the Maryland Association of Boards of  
14 Education (MABE);

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

16 (v) one representative of the Maryland State Teachers  
17 Association (MSTA);

18 (vi) one representative of the business community;

19 (vii) one public school student;

20 (viii) one representative who is an advocate for special education  
21 services; and

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

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

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

26 (e) A member of the Task Force:

- 1           (1)    may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but
- 2           (2)    is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard  
3 State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.
- 4           (f)    (1)    The Task Force may:
- 5                   (i)    invite academic experts and other witnesses to submit  
6 testimony;
- 7                   (ii)   hold hearings relating to students who are in jeopardy of not  
8 passing the high school assessment; and
- 9                   (iii)   in consultation with the Department of Budget and  
10 Management, contract with experts and consultants as necessary to inform its work  
11 and recommendations.
- 12           (2)    The Task Force shall:
- 13                   (i)    review and evaluate the use of the high school assessment as  
14 a Maryland diploma requirement, including both the policy and funding implications  
15 of this requirement;
- 16                   (ii)   develop short-term strategies and targeted interventions to  
17 increase the passage rate on the high school assessment for all students in all  
18 subgroups;
- 19                   (iii)   develop cost projections for each of the strategies and  
20 targeted interventions; and
- 21                   (iv)   make findings and recommendations as to whether the use  
22 of the high school assessment as a Maryland diploma requirement should be  
23 continued, modified, or discontinued.
- 24           (g)    On or before ~~November 1, 2007~~ January 1, 2008, the Task Force shall  
25 report its findings and recommendations to the State Department of Education, the  
26 Governor, and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the  
27 General Assembly.

28           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, to the extent  
29 practicable, the Governor shall ensure regional, ethnic, economic, and gender diversity

1 in making appointments to the Task Force on the Policy and Funding Implications of  
2 Requiring Passage of the High School Assessment for Graduation.

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

Approved:

---

Governor.

---

President of the Senate.

---

Speaker of the House of Delegates.