

HOUSE BILL 823

O4, C8

3lr2639
CF SB 764

By: **Delegates M. Washington, Anderson, Braveboy, Carter, Clippinger, Conaway, Cullison, Donoghue, Griffith, Gutierrez, Hucker, Kaiser, Lee, McIntosh, A. Miller, Oaks, Olszewski, Pena-Melnyk, B. Robinson, Stukes, Tarrant, Valentino-Smith, Waldstreicher, and Walker**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2013

Assigned to: Appropriations

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 17, 2013

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force to Study Housing and Supportive Services for Unaccompanied**
3 **Homeless Youth**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force to Study Housing and Supportive
5 Services for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth; providing for the composition,
6 chair, and staffing of the Task Force; prohibiting a member of the Task Force
7 from receiving certain compensation, but authorizing the reimbursement of
8 certain expenses; establishing the duties of the Task Force; requiring the Task
9 Force to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the
10 General Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of
11 this Act; and generally relating to the Task Force to Study Housing and
12 Supportive Services for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth.

13 Preamble

14 WHEREAS, Each year, over 1.6 million youth throughout the nation, and an
15 increasing number of youth in Maryland, find themselves without stable housing and
16 outside the care of a parent or guardian; and

17 WHEREAS, Many of these youth have become homeless and unaccompanied
18 due to being rejected by their families because of their sexual orientation, gender
19 identity, pregnancy, physical or sexual abuse, or severe conflict in the home, or

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 because they have aged out of the foster care system without the skills and resources
2 to support themselves; and

3 WHEREAS, Unaccompanied homeless youth are a largely invisible population,
4 most of whom are “couch surfing” with friends and extended family, living on the
5 streets, or squatting in vacant buildings; and

6 WHEREAS, Unaccompanied homeless youth are disproportionately likely to
7 turn to delinquency, become victims of crime, commit suicide, suffer from physical and
8 mental health impairments, engage in risky sexual behaviors, and drop out of school
9 in order to survive on the street; and

10 WHEREAS, There is a general lack of knowledge about the public and private
11 sector programs and resources available to assist unaccompanied homeless youth,
12 ~~including a lack~~ such as the availability of shelter and permanent housing; case
13 management; medical, mental health, and substance abuse treatment; education and
14 job training; food and clothing; financial counseling; legal advice and representation;
15 and other supportive services; and

16 WHEREAS, ~~The foster care system is~~ Current systems are not adequately
17 meeting the needs of many unaccompanied homeless youth, particularly those who do
18 not come to the attention of ~~child welfare~~ child-serving agencies, those who are ~~too old~~
19 ~~to enter foster care~~ not eligible for existing programs and services, those who have
20 lived independently for so long that they are unlikely to form successful relationships
21 with ~~foster or adoptive parents~~ parental figures, and those who have had particularly
22 negative experiences while in ~~foster~~ congregate care; and

23 WHEREAS, These youth are urgently in need of safe, secure, affordable, and
24 stable housing as well as supportive services that will prevent them from becoming
25 permanently homeless and, instead, set them on a path towards self-sufficiency; now,
26 therefore,

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

29 (a) In this section, “unaccompanied homeless youth” means an individual
30 who:

31 (1) is between the ages of 14 and 25 years;

32 (2) lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and

33 (3) is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

34 (b) There is a Task Force to Study Housing and Supportive Services for
35 Unaccompanied Homeless Youth.

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

2 (1) one member of the Senate ~~Budget and Taxation~~ Education, Health,
3 and Environmental Affairs Committee, appointed by the President of the Senate;

4 (2) one member of the House Appropriations Committee, appointed by
5 the Speaker of the House of Delegates;

6 (3) the Secretary of Housing and Community Development, or the
7 Secretary's designee;

8 (4) the Secretary of Human Resources, or the Secretary's designee;

9 (5) the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, or the Secretary's
10 designee;

11 (6) the Secretary of Juvenile Services, or the Secretary's designee; ~~and~~

12 (7) the State Superintendent of Schools, or the State Superintendent's
13 designee; and

14 ~~(7)~~ (8) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

15 (i) one representative from the Governor's Office for Children;

16 (ii) two representatives from the Baltimore Homeless Youth
17 Initiative, one of whom is a service provider and one of whom is a youth or young adult
18 who has experienced homelessness;

19 (iii) two representatives from the Prince George's County
20 Homeless Youth Work Group, one of whom is a service provider and one of whom is a
21 youth or young adult who has experienced homelessness; and

22 (iv) one representative from the Maryland Affordable Housing
23 Coalition.

24 ~~(e) The Task Force shall elect a chair from among its members.~~

25 (d) The representative from the Governor's Office for Children shall serve as
26 Chair of the Task Force.

27 ~~(d)~~ (e) ~~The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene~~ Governor's Office for
28 Children shall provide staff for the Task Force.

29 ~~(e)~~ (f) A member of the Task Force:

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

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

3 ~~(f)~~ (g) The Task Force shall:

4 (1) compile existing information on and identify ~~and study~~ the unique
5 needs of unaccompanied homeless youth ~~between 13 and 25 years of age~~, and ~~evaluate~~
6 identify the public and private sector programs and resources currently available to
7 meet those needs;

8 (2) identify gaps in public and private sector programs and resources
9 currently available to meet the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth;

10 ~~(2)~~ (3) collect and ~~evaluate~~ compile data on the unaccompanied homeless
11 youth population in the State, including the causes of homelessness in this population
12 and the number of unaccompanied homeless youth in each jurisdiction of the State;

13 ~~(3)~~ (4) make recommendations on:

14 (i) legislation and policy initiatives to address the needs of
15 unaccompanied homeless youth in the State; and

16 (ii) funding requirements and budgetary priorities to address
17 the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth in the State; and

18 ~~(4)~~ (5) make recommendations on any other relevant issues or
19 considerations identified by the Task Force.

20 ~~(g)~~ (h) On or before ~~September~~ November 1, 2013, the Task Force shall report
21 its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of
22 the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

23 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
24 June 1, 2013. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the
25 end of June 30, 2014, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this
26 Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.