

HOUSE BILL 1227

E4
HB 1164/20 – JUD

11r0546
CF SB 864

By: **Delegate Rosenberg**

Introduced and read first time: February 8, 2021

Assigned to: Judiciary

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Safety – Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic
4 Terrorism; providing for the composition, chair, and staffing of the Task Force;
5 prohibiting a member of the Task Force from receiving certain compensation, but
6 authorizing the reimbursement of certain expenses; requiring the Task Force to
7 study and make recommendations regarding certain matters; requiring the Task
8 Force to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General
9 Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; and
10 generally relating to the Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic
11 Terrorism.

12 Preamble

13 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Homeland Security’s Strategic
14 Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence, published September 2019,
15 states “in an age of online radicalization to violent extremism and disparate threats, we
16 must not only counter foreign enemies trying to strike us from abroad, but also those
17 enemies, foreign and domestic, that seek to spur to violence our youth and our
18 disaffected—encouraging them to strike in the heart of our Nation”; and

19 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Homeland Security has warned that
20 violent white supremacy is “the most persistent and lethal threat in the Homeland” in the
21 October 2020 Homeland Threat Assessment; and

22 WHEREAS, In a foreword to that assessment, Chad F. Wolf, acting United States
23 Secretary of Homeland Security, declared, “I am particularly concerned about white
24 supremacist violent extremists who have been exceptionally lethal in their abhorrent,
25 targeted attacks in recent years”; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, The individuals accused of plotting to kidnap Governor Gretchen
2 Whitmer were charged under the Michigan Anti-Terrorism Act for providing material
3 support for terrorist acts; and

4 WHEREAS, The General Assembly is committed to defending democratic
5 institutions, the integrity of our elections, and the security of people and facilities that carry
6 out the democratic process; and

7 WHEREAS, The General Assembly is committed to ending the spread of hate,
8 bigotry, and harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex,
9 gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, or any other
10 protected characteristic as defined by law; and

11 WHEREAS, The General Assembly wishes to affirm its commitment to the
12 well-being and safety of all of its community members and to ensure that they will be
13 protected and their rights respected; and

14 WHEREAS, The General Assembly wishes to affirm its commitment to cultivating
15 an inclusive community, including within State operations and institutions; and

16 WHEREAS, The diversity of our community is beneficial to all within it, making us
17 stronger and more resilient; and

18 WHEREAS, Each of our elected leaders has the ability and obligation to promote
19 inclusiveness, celebrate diversity, work to ensure equitable opportunities in all major facets
20 of society, prevent the spread of misinformation and disinformation, and reject hate and
21 bias in all forms and should set a positive example for their constituents in this regard; and

22 WHEREAS, The January 6, 2021, domestic terrorism incident at our nation's Capitol
23 does not reflect the values of the State; and

24 WHEREAS, Disinformation, misinformation, and online conspiracy theories such as
25 QAnon are spreading and inspiring real-world violence; and

26 WHEREAS, The General Assembly supports the peaceful exercise of free speech, free
27 assembly, and freedom to worship safely for all people; now, therefore,

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

30 (a) There is a Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism.

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

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

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

3 (3) the Attorney General of Maryland, or the Attorney General's designee;

4 (4) the Director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security, or the
5 Director's designee;

6 (5) the Executive Director of the Maryland Emergency Management
7 Agency, or the Executive Director's designee;

8 (6) the Secretary of State Police, or the Secretary's designee; and

9 (7) the following members, appointed jointly by the President of the Senate
10 and the Speaker of the House:

11 (i) two representatives of civil rights organizations; and

12 (ii) one representative of the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association
13 or the Maryland Sheriffs' Association.

14 (c) The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House shall jointly
15 designate the chair of the Task Force.

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

17 (e) A member of the Task Force:

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

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

21 (f) The Task Force shall study and make recommendations regarding optimal
22 policies and practices for preventing and countering domestic terrorism, including:

23 (1) the role of the State;

24 (2) the level of resources to be expended;

25 (3) ways to provide transparency to the public;

26 (4) funding mechanisms;

27 (5) oversight measures; and

28 (6) ways to counter and prosecute online extremism while balancing First

1 Amendment concerns.

2 (g) On or before December 31, 2021, the Task Force shall report its findings and
3 recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State
4 Government Article, the General Assembly.

5 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
6 1, 2021. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of June 30, 2022, this
7 Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no
8 further force and effect.