A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning Workgroup to Study Trial in Absence

FOR the purpose of establishing the Workgroup to Study Trial in Absence to study and make recommendations regarding the implementation of trial in absence for certain nonserious misdemeanors and traffic–related offenses; and generally relating to the Workgroup to Study Trial in Absence.

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

(a) There is a Workgroup to Study Trial in Absence.

(b) The Workgroup consists of the following members:

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

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

(3) one member appointed by the Chief Judge of the District Court of Maryland;

(4) the Public Defender, or the Public Defender’s designee; and

(5) the President of the Maryland State’s Attorneys’ Association, or the President’s designee.

(c) The Workgroup shall elect a chair from among its members.

(d) A member of the Workgroup:
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(1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Workgroup; but

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

(e) The Administrative Office of the Courts shall provide staff for the Workgroup.

(f) The Workgroup shall:

(1) study other jurisdictions that have implemented trial in absence;

(2) determine the feasibility of implementing trial in absence in Maryland;

(3) determine which nonserious misdemeanors and traffic–related offenses would be eligible for trial in absence;

(4) determine the conditions under which a trial in absence would be authorized; and

(5) determine how any penalties incurred through a trial in absence would be collected.

(g) On or before December 1, 2022, the Workgroup shall report its findings and legislative recommendations to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2022. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of June 30, 2023, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.