

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 478

(Senator Sydnor, *et al.*)

Judicial Proceedings

Health and Government Operations

**Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission - Reporting and
Sunset Extension**

This bill extends, from June 30, 2024, to June 30, 2026, the termination date for the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The bill also extends until December 1, 2025, the deadline by which the commission must submit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The commission can continue its operations with existing resources. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The commission, as established by Chapter 41 of 2019, must:

- hold public regional hearings in areas where a lynching of an African American by a White mob has been documented;
- receive recommendations from the public, including from families and communities affected by racially motivated lynchings, for addressing, engaging, and reconciling affected communities, including the erection of memorial plaques or signage at or near sites of racially motivated lynchings; and

- make recommendations for addressing the legacy of lynching that are rooted in the spirit of restorative justice.

In conducting the required hearings, the commission may research (1) cases of racially motivated lynchings that are not documented but which are brought to the commission's attention and (2) the involvement of government entities and news media in cases of racially motivated lynching.

Bowie State University, in consultation with the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project, provides staff for the commission, and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) provides a staff member to assist the commission. The OAG staff member is authorized to issue subpoenas for a witness to testify or for the production of documents in connection with any investigation or hearing conducted by the commission.

A commission member may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses.

As originally enacted, the commission was to terminate June 30, 2022, and submit a final report by December 1, 2021. Chapter 92 of 2021 extended, until June 30, 2024, the termination date of the commission and required a final report to be submitted by December 1, 2023.

Additional Comments: A required [interim report](#) of the commission's findings and recommendations was submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly in September 2020.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 297 of 2021 (which was enacted as Chapter 92) and HB 1637 of 2020.

Designated Cross File: HB 339 (Delegate White, *et al.*) - Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): Maryland Commission on Civil Rights; Office of the Attorney General; University System of Maryland; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 21, 2023
js/jkb Third Reader - March 18, 2023

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