

SENATE BILL 310

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5lr0916

By: **Senator Simonaire**

Introduced and read first time: January 13, 2025

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: February 25, 2025

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Education – Youth Suicide Prevention School Program – Revisions**

3 FOR the purpose of altering the requirements of the Youth Suicide Prevention School
4 Program to increase pupil awareness of the relationship between gambling and
5 youth suicide; and generally relating to the Youth Suicide Prevention School
6 Program.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
8 Article – Education
9 Section 7–501 and 7–504
10 Annotated Code of Maryland
11 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

12 Preamble

13 WHEREAS, Researchers at the National Institutes of Health found in 2024 that
14 rates of preteen suicide (ages 8–12) have been increasing by approximately 8% annually
15 since 2008; and

16 WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that suicide was
17 the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10–14 and 25–34,
18 and the third leading cause of death among individuals between 15–24; and

19 WHEREAS, Research out of the University of Glasgow in 2023 has shown that
20 gambling is linked to a heightened risk of suicide attempts among young adults (ages

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 16–24) who experienced an increase in severity of gambling problems and were 2.74 times
2 more likely to attempt suicide than those whose gambling was unchanged; and

3 WHEREAS, The first of Maryland’s six casinos opened in 2008 with slot machines,
4 table games for casinos were approved in 2012, and sports betting has been available online
5 and on mobile apps since 2022; and

6 WHEREAS, The Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey showed that youth gambling
7 is increasing as 17.5% of high school students reported gambling in the last year compared
8 to two years ago when 15.3% reported gambling; and

9 WHEREAS, The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling showed that
10 five of seven Maryland youth focus groups mentioned advertising as one of the biggest
11 reasons people gamble and Maryland youth are exposed to this general advertising on a
12 consistent basis; and

13 WHEREAS, The Maryland Youth Suicide Prevention School Program must continue
14 to adapt to the growing challenges facing youth suicide, especially with the increased
15 creation of conventional and online gambling in the State; and

16 WHEREAS, The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future works to help combat youth
17 suicide by recognizing student behavioral health issues and students experiencing trauma
18 or violence out of school and includes ways to provide these students with behavioral health
19 services; now, therefore,

20 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
21 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

22 **Article – Education**

23 7–501.

24 The General Assembly finds and declares that:

25 (1) A statewide Youth Suicide Prevention School Program is essential to
26 address the continuing problem of youth suicide throughout the State;

27 (2) The youth suicide problem often exists in combination with other
28 problems, including drug abuse [and], alcohol use, AND GAMBLING ADDICTION;

29 (3) A SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ~~MUST~~
30 SHOULD PROMOTE ~~RECOGNIZE~~ RECOGNIZING STUDENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
31 ISSUES, ~~RECOGNIZE~~ RECOGNIZING STUDENTS EXPERIENCING TRAUMA OR
32 VIOLENCE OUT OF SCHOOL, AND ~~REFER~~ REFERRING STUDENTS TO BEHAVIORAL
33 HEALTH SERVICES;

1 ~~[(3)] (4)~~ A suicide prevention program for young people must emphasize
2 a partnership between educational programs at the State and local levels and community
3 suicide prevention and crisis center agencies;

4 ~~[(4)] (5)~~ It is of vital importance that a statewide Youth Suicide
5 Prevention School Program be established with shared responsibility at both the State and
6 county levels, and that this cooperation shall be a major tool in efforts to achieve the
7 successful prevention of youth suicide; and

8 ~~[(5)] (6)~~ County suicide prevention and crisis center agencies along with
9 local education agencies are best suited for developing and implementing programs for
10 statewide youth suicide prevention.

11 7-504.

12 (a) (1) The Department shall adopt regulations that set eligibility guidelines
13 for State funding of Youth Suicide Prevention School Programs under this subtitle.

14 (2) The regulations shall:

15 (i) Establish procedures for developing local programs, in
16 cooperation with local education agencies, youth service bureaus, and community mental
17 health centers; and

18 (ii) Establish standards and policies for programs to offer:

19 1. Individual, family, and group counseling related to youth
20 suicide prevention;

21 2. Referral, crisis intervention, and information for students,
22 parents, and school personnel; and

23 3. Training for school personnel, and others responsible for
24 counseling or supervising student activities.

25 (b) A Youth Suicide Prevention School Program established under this subtitle
26 shall plan, fund, and implement educational programs, which may include any of the
27 following:

28 (1) Classroom instruction designed to achieve any of the following
29 objectives:

30 (i) Encourage sound decision making and promote ethical
31 development;

32 (ii) Increase pupils' awareness of the relationship between drug and
33 alcohol use, **GAMBLING**, and youth suicide;

- 1 (iii) Teach pupils to recognize signs of suicidal tendencies, and other
2 facts about youth suicide;
- 3 (iv) Inform pupils of available community youth suicide prevention
4 services;
- 5 (v) Enhance school climate and relationships between teachers,
6 counselors, and pupils; and
- 7 (vi) Further cooperative efforts of school personnel and community
8 youth suicide prevention program personnel;
- 9 (2) School or community based alternative programs outside of the
10 classroom, including:
- 11 (i) Positive peer group programs;
- 12 (ii) A 24-hour "hotline" telephone service, staffed by trained
13 professional counselors;
- 14 (iii) Programs to collect data on youth suicide attempts;
- 15 (iv) Intervention and follow-up;
- 16 (v) Mental health programs to promote mental health awareness
17 and encourage pupils to seek help as soon as it is needed; and
- 18 (vi) Parent education and training programs; and
- 19 (3) Teacher training programs.
- 20 (c) Any program established under this subtitle shall:
- 21 (1) Assist in increasing the awareness, among school personnel and
22 community leaders, of the incidence of teenage suicide;
- 23 (2) Train school personnel in individual and schoolwide strategies for
24 teenage suicide prevention;
- 25 (3) Develop and implement school-based teenage suicide prevention
26 programs and pilot projects;
- 27 (4) Develop and implement school-based pilot mental health programs and
28 peer-to-peer support to address the needs of students suffering from mental illness; and

1 (5) Through cooperative efforts, utilize community resources in the
2 development and implementation of teenage suicide prevention programs under this
3 subtitle.

4 (d) The Department may assist local school systems in implementing pilot
5 peer-to-peer mental health awareness programs.

6 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
7 1, 2025.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.