

# HOUSE BILL 1278

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CF 6lr3606

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By: **Delegate Smith**

Introduced and read first time: February 12, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission and Fund – Establishment**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Positive Youth Development Commission in  
4 the State Department of Education to make grant awards to certain eligible  
5 organizations that provide positive youth development programming to certain  
6 youth; establishing the Maryland Positive Youth Development Fund as a special,  
7 nonlapsing fund; requiring interest earnings of the Fund to be credited to the Fund;  
8 and generally relating to the establishment of the Maryland Positive Youth  
9 Development Commission and the Maryland Positive Youth Development Fund.

10 BY adding to

11 Article – Education

12 Section 7–455

13 Annotated Code of Maryland

14 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

15 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

16 Article – State Finance and Procurement

17 Section 6–226(a)(2)(i) and (ii)

18 Annotated Code of Maryland

19 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

20 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

21 Article – State Finance and Procurement

22 Section 6–226(a)(2)(iii)212. and 213.

23 Annotated Code of Maryland

24 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

25 BY adding to

26 Article – State Finance and Procurement

27 Section 6–226(a)(2)(iii)214.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Annotated Code of Maryland  
2 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

3 Preamble

4 WHEREAS, The General Assembly of Maryland finds that the health, safety, and  
5 well-being of Maryland's children and young adults is essential to the long-term social,  
6 educational, and economic success of the State; and

7 WHEREAS, A growing body of research demonstrates that excessive and  
8 unregulated social media use is associated with increased risk to youth mental health,  
9 social isolation, anxiety, depression, and disrupted development; and

10 WHEREAS, The State is currently engaged in litigation seeking restitution from  
11 social media companies to address harms caused to children and young adults; and

12 WHEREAS, Afterschool programs, summer learning programs, mentoring  
13 programs, and other community-based youth development initiatives provide  
14 evidence-based opportunities for children and young adults to build positive peer and adult  
15 relationships, engage in meaningful learning, participate in physical activity, and develop  
16 critical social and emotional skills; and

17 WHEREAS, These programs offer safe, developmentally appropriate alternatives to  
18 excessive screen time and help disrupt negative cycles of social media dependency by  
19 fostering connection, belonging, and real-world engagement; and

20 WHEREAS, The State currently lacks a dedicated, sustainable funding mechanism  
21 to support positive youth development programs operating outside of traditional school  
22 hours, despite the demonstrated need for and impact of these programs; and

23 WHEREAS, It is the intent of the General Assembly to establish a Maryland Positive  
24 Youth Development Fund to leverage legal settlement proceeds and other revenue sources  
25 to prevent harm, promote youth well-being, and expand access to high-quality,  
26 community-based youth development opportunities across the State; now, therefore,

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

29 **Article – Education**

30 **7-455.**

31 **(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS**  
32 **INDICATED.**

33 **(2) “COMMISSION” MEANS THE MARYLAND POSITIVE YOUTH**

1 **DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION.**

2           **(3) “ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS” MEANS COMMUNITY-BASED**  
3 **ORGANIZATIONS, STATEWIDE YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS, LOCAL**  
4 **GOVERNMENTS, AND SCHOOLS DELIVERING YOUTH PROGRAMS OUTSIDE REGULAR**  
5 **SCHOOL HOURS.**

6           **(4) “FUND” MEANS THE MARYLAND POSITIVE YOUTH**  
7 **DEVELOPMENT FUND.**

8           **(5) “POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING” MEANS**  
9 **STRUCTURED, DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES THAT:**

10                   **(I) ARE GROUNDED IN EVIDENCE-BASED OR**  
11 **EVIDENCE-INFORMED PRACTICES;**

12                   **(II) INCLUDE CONSISTENT, ENGAGED ADULT MENTORS OR**  
13 **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS;**

14                   **(III) ARE PROVIDED BEFORE SCHOOL, AFTER SCHOOL, DURING**  
15 **SUMMER, OR AT OTHER TIMES OUTSIDE REGULAR SCHOOL HOURS; AND**

16                   **(IV) INCLUDE PROGRAMMING DESIGNED TO SUPPORT FAMILY**  
17 **ENGAGEMENT.**

18           **(6) “YOUTH” MEANS INDIVIDUALS FROM BIRTH THROUGH 25 YEARS.**

19           **(B) (1) THERE IS A MARYLAND POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**  
20 **COMMISSION IN THE DEPARTMENT.**

21           **(2) THE COMMISSION CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:**

22                   **(I) THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT, OR THE**  
23 **SUPERINTENDENT’S DESIGNEE;**

24                   **(II) FOUR MEMBERS, APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR, WHO:**

25                           **1. ARE AT LEAST 14 YEARS OLD AND UNDER THE AGE OF**  
26 **25 YEARS AT THE TIME OF APPOINTMENT;**

27                           **2. COLLECTIVELY REFLECT THE GEOGRAPHIC, RACIAL,**  
28 **AND SOCIOECONOMIC DIVERSITY OF THE STATE; AND**

1                                   **3.     HAVE PARTICIPATED IN OR HAVE BEEN IMPACTED BY**  
2 **COMMUNITY–BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS;**

3                                   **(III)   ONE MEMBER WHO IS A PARENT OF A YOUTH WHO RESIDES**  
4 **IN A RURAL JURISDICTION, APPOINTED BY THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT;**

5                                   **(IV)   ONE MEMBER WHO IS A PARENT OF A YOUTH WHO RESIDES**  
6 **IN AN URBAN JURISDICTION, APPOINTED BY THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT;**

7                                   **(V)    ONE MEMBER, APPOINTED BY THE SECRETARY OF THE**  
8 **GOVERNOR’S OFFICE FOR CHILDREN;**

9                                   **(VI)   ONE MEMBER, APPOINTED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL;**

10                                  **(VII)  ONE MEMBER, APPOINTED BY THE SECRETARY OF**  
11 **JUVENILE SERVICES;**

12                                  **(VIII) ONE MEMBER, APPOINTED BY THE SECRETARY OF HUMAN**  
13 **SERVICES;**

14                                  **(IX)   ONE MEMBER, APPOINTED BY THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH;**

15                                  **(X)    ONE MEMBER WHO IS A LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST OR**  
16 **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL WITH EXPERTISE IN ADOLESCENT MENTAL**  
17 **HEALTH AND THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE, APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR;**

18                                  **(XI)   ONE MEMBER, APPOINTED BY THE COMPTROLLER;**

19                                  **(XII)  TWO MEMBERS REPRESENTING THE LOCAL MANAGEMENT**  
20 **BOARDS, APPOINTED BY THE COCHAIRS OF THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF**  
21 **LOCAL MANAGEMENT BOARDS; AND**

22                                  **(XIII) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS, WHO SHALL ACT IN AN**  
23 **ADVISORY CAPACITY:**

24                                   **1.     ONE MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES,**  
25 **APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE;**

26                                   **2.     ONE MEMBER OF THE SENATE OF MARYLAND,**  
27 **APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE;**

28                                   **3.     TWO MEMBERS FROM DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHIC**  
29 **REGIONS OF THE STATE WHO REPRESENT STATEWIDE YOUTH–SERVING**

1 ORGANIZATIONS, APPOINTED BY STATEWIDE YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS;  
2 AND

3 4. ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING A STATEWIDE  
4 AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK, APPOINTED BY THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT.

5 (3) (I) THE TERM OF A MEMBER IS 2 YEARS.

6 (II) AT THE END OF A TERM, A MEMBER CONTINUES TO SERVE  
7 UNTIL A SUCCESSOR IS APPOINTED.

8 (III) A MEMBER WHO IS APPOINTED AFTER A TERM HAS BEGUN  
9 SERVES ONLY FOR THE REST OF THE TERM AND UNTIL A SUCCESSOR IS APPOINTED.

10 (IV) THE TERMS SHALL BE STAGGERED WITH 50% OF THE  
11 INITIAL MEMBERS SERVING 2 YEARS AND THE REMAINING INITIAL MEMBERS  
12 SERVING 3 YEARS.

13 (4) THE COMMISSION SHALL BE COCHAIRLED BY:

14 (I) THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT; AND

15 (II) A MEMBER APPOINTED UNDER PARAGRAPH (2)(II) OF THIS  
16 SUBSECTION WHO HAS BEEN SELECTED BY OTHER MEMBERS APPOINTED UNDER  
17 PARAGRAPH (2)(II) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

18 (5) (I) THE COMMISSION SHALL MEET AT LEAST TWO TIMES PER  
19 CALENDAR YEAR.

20 (II) THE COMMISSION IS SUBJECT TO THE OPEN MEETINGS  
21 ACT.

22 (III) A MAJORITY OF THE VOTING MEMBERS OF THE  
23 COMMISSION SHALL CONSTITUTE A QUORUM FOR THE TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS.

24 (IV) A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION:

25 1. MAY NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION AS A MEMBER OF  
26 THE COMMISSION; BUT

27 2. IS ENTITLED TO REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES  
28 UNDER THE STANDARD STATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS, AS PROVIDED IN THE STATE  
29 BUDGET.

1           **(C) THE COMMISSION SHALL:**

2                   **(1) ESTABLISH A GRANT APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS FOR**  
3 **ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS;**

4                   **(2) MAKE GRANT AWARDS TO SUPPORT POSITIVE YOUTH**  
5 **DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING ACROSS THE STATE;**

6                   **(3) MONITOR AND EVALUATE ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE**  
7 **RECEIVED A GRANT;**

8                   **(4) ENSURE THE QUALITY AND POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF A GRANT;**  
9 **AND**

10                   **(5) ENSURE MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT OF YOUTH IN ALL ASPECTS**  
11 **OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK, INCLUDING FUNDING PRIORITIES, GRANT REVIEW,**  
12 **AND EVALUATION OF GRANTS.**

13           **(D) (1) THERE IS A MARYLAND POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FUND.**

14                   **(2) THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND IS TO PROVIDE GRANTS TO ELIGIBLE**  
15 **ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING**  
16 **TO YOUTHS.**

17                   **(3) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND.**

18                   **(4) (I) THE FUND IS A SPECIAL, NONLAPSING FUND THAT IS NOT**  
19 **SUBJECT TO § 7-302 OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE.**

20                   **(II) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL HOLD THE FUND**  
21 **SEPARATELY, AND THE COMPTROLLER SHALL ACCOUNT FOR THE FUND.**

22                   **(5) THE FUND CONSISTS OF:**

23                   **(I) ALL REVENUES CONSISTING OF FUNDS RECEIVED BY THE**  
24 **STATE FROM ANY SOURCE RESULTING, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, FROM ANY**  
25 **JUDGMENT AGAINST OR SETTLEMENT WITH SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES FOUND TO**  
26 **HAVE HARMED YOUTH;**

27                   **(II) MONEY APPROPRIATED IN THE STATE BUDGET TO THE**  
28 **FUND;**

1 (III) INTEREST EARNINGS; AND

2 (IV) ANY OTHER MONEY FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE ACCEPTED  
3 FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FUND.

4 (6) THE FUND MAY BE USED ONLY AS FOLLOWS:

5 (I) UP TO 10% OF THE FUNDS FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS  
6 OF THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR LITIGATION AGAINST SOCIAL  
7 MEDIA COMPANIES;

8 (II) UP TO 10% OF THE FUNDS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF  
9 THE COMMISSION AND GRANTS AUTHORIZED BY THE COMMISSION, INCLUDING  
10 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY-BUILDING SUPPORT FOR ELIGIBLE  
11 ORGANIZATIONS; AND

12 (III) THE REMAINING FUNDS FOR GRANTS TO ELIGIBLE  
13 ORGANIZATIONS UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION.

14 (7) (I) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL INVEST THE MONEY OF THE  
15 FUND IN THE SAME MANNER AS OTHER STATE MONEY MAY BE INVESTED.

16 (II) ANY INTEREST EARNINGS OF THE FUND SHALL BE  
17 CREDITED TO THE FUND.

18 (8) EXPENDITURES FROM THE FUND MAY BE MADE ONLY IN  
19 ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATE BUDGET.

20 (9) MONEY EXPENDED FROM THE FUND FOR GRANTS TO ELIGIBLE  
21 ORGANIZATIONS IS SUPPLEMENTAL TO AND IS NOT INTENDED TO TAKE THE PLACE  
22 OF FUNDING THAT OTHERWISE WOULD BE APPROPRIATED FOR PROVIDING  
23 POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING TO YOUTHS.

24 (E) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1 EACH YEAR, THE COMMISSION SHALL  
25 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE  
26 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON:

27 (1) REVENUES DEPOSITED INTO THE FUND;

28 (2) GRANTS AWARDED AND POPULATIONS SERVED BY THE GRANTS;

29 (3) THE OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS OF THE GRANTS; AND



1 2 of this Act, this Act shall take effect July 1, 2026.