

# SENATE BILL 752

E2, E4

6lr1603  
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By: **Senators Sydnor and Augustine**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Commission to Review and Assess Racial Disparities in the State Criminal**  
3 **Justice System – Establishment**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Commission to Review and Assess Racial Disparities  
5 in the State Criminal Justice System to study and make recommendations on certain  
6 matters involving the disparate treatment of African Americans, Hispanics, and  
7 other non-White individuals in the State's criminal justice system and other  
8 criminal justice issues in the State; and generally relating to the Commission to  
9 Review and Assess Racial Disparities in the State Criminal Justice System.

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

12 (a) There is a Commission to Review and Assess Racial Disparities in the State  
13 Criminal Justice System.

14 (b) The Commission consists of the following members:

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

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

19 (3) the Public Defender of Maryland, or the Public Defender's designee;

20 (4) the Attorney General, or the Attorney General's designee;

21 (5) one representative of the Administrative Office of the Courts, appointed  
22 by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Maryland;

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(6) the President of the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association, or the President's designee;

(7) the Executive Director of the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy, or the Executive Director's designee;

9 (9) the following members appointed by the Governor:

(i) one representative of a nonprofit entity whose work involves justice reform, such as the Vera Institute of Justice; and

12 (ii) one representative of a crime victims' advocacy group.

13 (c) (1) The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House shall each  
14 designate one cochair of the Commission.

15 (2) The cochairs designated under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall  
16 each have experience:

17 (i) practicing criminal law in both a prosecutorial and defense  
18 capacity;

19 (ii) in judicial and administrative matters; and

20 (iii) in data-driven criminal justice research in an academic or  
21 nonprofit context.

22 (d) (1) The Department of Legislative Services, with assistance from an  
23 academic institution such as the University of Maryland or Morgan State University, shall  
24 provide staff for the Commission.

25 (2) To the extent practicable, the staff provided under paragraph (1) of this  
26 subsection shall have experience in data-driven criminal law research and expertise in  
27 criminal justice reform and other areas relevant to the work of the Commission.

28 (e) A member of the Commission:

29 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Commission; but

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

(f) (1) The Commission shall study and make recommendations on:

(i) the disparate treatment of African Americans, Hispanics, and other non-White individuals in the State's criminal justice system, including:

A. offenses involving firearms; and

B. individuals who are not alleged to be principals in the first

12 (ii) the need and alternative methods available to improve any racial  
13 disparities and lack of transparency in the State's criminal justice system;

14 (iii) improvements available to the systemic structures for  
15 race-neutral risk and needs assessments diversion, sentencing alternatives, rehabilitative  
16 sentencing, and reduction of recidivism;

17 (iv) the possibility of using resources of the Division of Parole and  
18 Probation in the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to conduct pretrial  
19 and presentence race-neutral risk and needs assessments that could be considered by  
20 parties at the time of plea discussions and by judges at the time of sentencing;

(v) the potential to increase judicial discretion at sentencing to allow judges to more closely consider as sentencing factors, including for individuals charged with or convicted of crimes of violence or sex offenses:

1. the intent of the individuals being sentenced; and

2. the possibility for rehabilitation and reduction in

27 (vi) the possibility of modifying or abolishing the State's felony  
28 murder doctrine for cases for individuals who are not alleged to be principals in the first  
29 degree;

30 (vii) the design and expansion of programs intended to:

1. reduce State prison populations;

2. be rehabilitative; and

3. further reduce the length of prison sentences in a manner  
that is consistent with public safety; and

3 (viii) data collection methods for the ongoing monitoring of racial  
4 disparities at each stage of the State's criminal justice system, including identifying gaps  
5 in existing data.

6 (2) The Commission shall:

(ii) hold at least four public hearings to examine, discuss, and review the items described in paragraph (1) of this subsection.

12       (g) (1) On or before October 1, 2027, the Commission shall submit an interim  
13 report of its findings and recommendations to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
14 and the House Judiciary Committee, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government  
15 Article.

20 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July  
21 1, 2026. It shall remain effective for a period of 3 years and, at the end of June 30, 2029,  
22 this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and  
23 of no further force and effect.