



# **RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT NOTE**

DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES  
MARYLAND ▪ GENERAL ▪ ASSEMBLY

2025 Session  
HB1442

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## **Juveniles - Truancy Reduction Pilot Programs - Report**

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### **Bill Summary**

This bill requires the Judiciary to submit a comprehensive report (1) on the impact and effectiveness of Truancy Reduction Pilot Programs (TRPP) based on student GPA, graduation rate, and truancy rate and (2) make recommendations regarding whether a TRPP would be effective in the Eighth Judicial Circuit of Baltimore City. The report must be submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before December 1, 2026.

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### **Racial Equity Impact Statement**

The bill requires the Judiciary to report data measuring the effectiveness and impact of TRPPs in the State for purposes of program evaluation and to consult on the fit of such programming in Baltimore City. Truancy reduction is key to racial equity in education and the report would aid in future equity analysis by giving insight into the effectiveness of these programs. School attendance data shows that truancy reduction programs would benefit Black and Hispanic youth to the greatest extent. Baltimore City students in particular will benefit from the bill to the extent that an effective TRPP is developed from the research and recommendations contained in the report.

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### **Analysis**

The bill requires the Judiciary to submit a comprehensive report on the impact and effectiveness of TRPPs as measured by student GPA, graduation, and truancy rates. The report must include recommendations regarding whether a TRPP would be effective in the Eighth Judicial Circuit of Baltimore City.

Under § 7-301 of the Education Article, subject to limited exceptions, each child who resides in the State and is age 5 or older and younger than age 18 must attend a public school regularly during the entire school year. A child who is required by law to attend school and is habitually truant can be designated a child in need of supervision, which makes the child subject to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court under Title 3, Subtitle 8A of the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article. However, current law (Title 3, Subtitle 8C of the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article) also sets forth specific procedures for addressing truancy in jurisdictions in which a TRPP has been established. In a county in which a TRPP has been established, an authorized school official may file with the juvenile court a petition alleging that a child who is required to attend school failed to do so without lawful excuse, as specified.

Circuit Administrative Judges of the First, Second, Third, Sixth, and Seventh circuits may establish TRPPs in specified counties within their judicial circuits. Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Kent, Prince George's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester counties are currently authorized to have TRPPs.

When making a disposition on a petition that has been filed as part of a TRPP, the court may order the child to (1) attend school; (2) perform community service; (3) attend counseling, including family counseling; (4) attend substance abuse evaluation and treatment; (5) attend mental health evaluation and treatment; or (6) keep a curfew with the hours set by the court. The court must retain jurisdiction until every condition of the court's order is satisfied.

#### *Truancy Reduction Initiatives in Maryland*

TRPPs are also known as Truancy Reduction Court Programs. According to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), these programs use a nurturing approach to build relationships between families, school, and the court. Services typically include social workers, counselors, and case managers who work with families to identify factors contributing to poor school attendance.

Less formal voluntary truancy reduction programs that are not associated with the court are also in place around the State. Attendance mediation programs aim to improve student attendance through mediation and collaboration between families and school representatives to identify and address the complex factors contributing to truancy. These programs are typically aimed toward students in early grade levels and are conducted in school buildings during school hours at the request of a parent or guardian of a truant child.

The chronic absenteeism rate in Baltimore City during the 2023-2024 school year was 54%, the highest of any local jurisdiction during the period. There is a voluntary truancy intervention program operated in Baltimore City that focuses on "soft truants," which are students who have a minimum of 5 and maximum of 20 unexcused absences/tardies within the previous two marking periods. The program functions as a mechanism to address chronic truancy by working with students and families to identify and address root causes of absenteeism rather than solely relying on punitive measures.

## *Demographic Trends in Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism*

Truancy can have a range of negative effects on a student, including declining academic performance, increased risk of dropping out of school, potential for delinquency and involvement in criminal activity, decreased self-esteem, mental health issues, difficulty forming social connections, and limited future career opportunities due to lack of education.

Data from the Maryland State Department of Education suggests that Black and Hispanic students may face more significant challenges related to school attendance. Students are considered chronically absent when absent 10% or more of school days. In the 2022-2023 school year, Black and Hispanic student truancy rates were 42.9% and 47.8%, respectively, compared to truancy rates for white and Asian students of 26.7% and 17.7%, respectively.

The AOC's problem-solving courts annual report for fiscal 2024 indicates that 373 total students were actively involved in a TRPP throughout the State. Detailed demographic data specific to truancy reduction program participants is not readily available. The Office of the Public Defender and other groups have noted that involvement in a truancy court is not always the most effective intervention to achieve the goal of getting young people to thrive and engage in school and can have negative consequences in some instances. They note research showing that a single court appearance increases the chance that a young person will drop out of school.

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## **Conclusion**

The report generated by the bill would potentially aid in addressing the question of the effectiveness of TRPPs and could offer insight into meaningful truancy reduction and prevention approaches. The report's recommendations regarding a TRPP in Baltimore City could support much needed truancy reduction efforts in that jurisdiction to the extent that they outline an effective strategy for reducing its significantly high truancy rate.

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**Information Sources:** Maryland State Department of Education; Administrative Office of the Courts; First Judicial Court of Maryland; Circuit Court for Kent County; Prince George's County Courts; Garrett County Juvenile Review Board; University of Baltimore; Montgomery County State Attorney's Office; Department of Legislative Services

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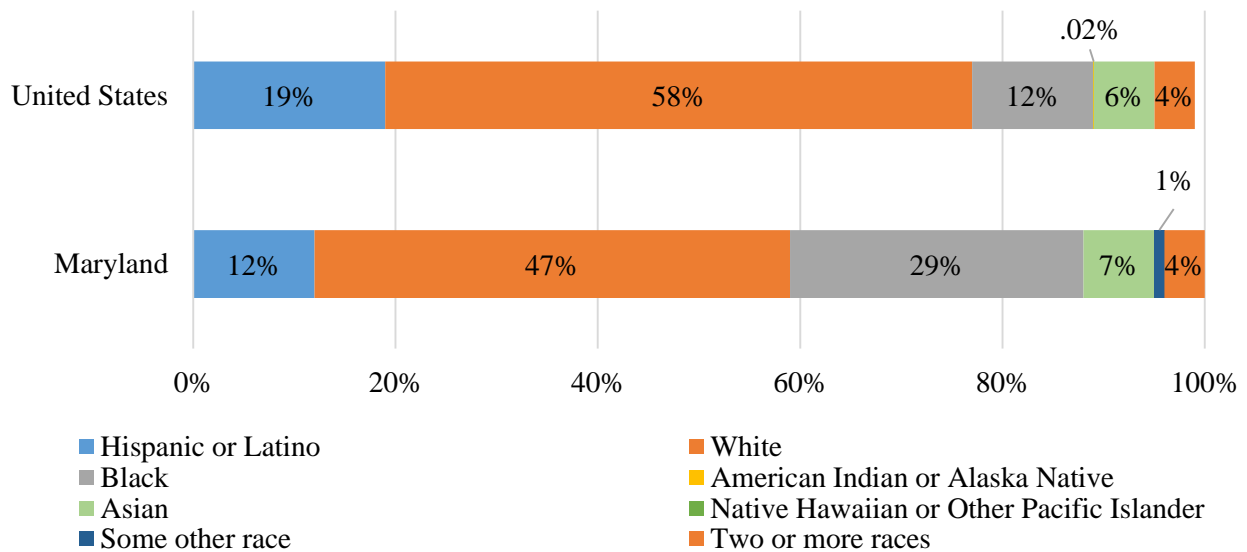
## Appendix – Maryland Demographics

### *Race and Ethnicity of the Maryland Population*

Maryland’s 2020 census population is 6,177,244, a 7% increase from the 2010 census count and approximately 2% higher than the 2019 census population estimates. In addition to an increase in population, Maryland’s racial demographics have become more diverse. Maryland is now a state in which racial minorities make up a majority of its total population. Notable changes relevant to this shift are the increase in groups who identify as “other” and “multiracial” (*i.e.*, two or more racial identities), which total 5% of the State’s population. Additionally, the change in demographics is due to the decrease in the number of individuals who only report “white” as their racial group. Despite this decrease, non-Hispanic whites remain the largest race demographic group in the State at 47% of the State’s population.

Compared to the U.S. population overall, Maryland’s population of individuals who identify as a single race is more diverse. Maryland is ranked as the fourth most diverse state by the U.S. Census Bureau’s [Diversity Index](#). As shown in **Exhibit 1**, in Maryland, 47% identify as white alone compared to 58% of the national population. Similarly, 51% of the population identify as non-white or multi-racial compared to 38% of the national population. In both the State and national populations, the largest shares of the non-white population are individuals who are Black, with 29% of the State population identifying only as Black and another 2.5% identifying as Black in combination with some other race. Maryland’s Asian population is 7%, which is slightly higher than the Asian share of the national population of 6%. The State’s overall population by ethnicity, however, is slightly less diverse than the U.S. population; 12% of the State’s population identified as Hispanic or Latino compared to 19% of the U.S. population.

**Exhibit 1**  
**U.S. and Maryland Population by Race and Ethnicity**  
**2020**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171), Table ID P2, HISPANIC OR LATINO, AND NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO BY RACE.