

HOUSE BILL 14

F1

(PRE-FILED)

6lr0720
CF 6lr0722

By: **Delegate Foley**

Requested: August 22, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 7, 2026

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **County Boards of Education – Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation –**
3 **Information Collection and Reporting Requirements**

4 FOR the purpose of altering the contents of a certain bullying, harassment, or intimidation
5 form to require the identification of certain information; requiring each county board
6 of education to report information about groups with certain characteristics under
7 certain circumstances; requiring each county board ~~of education~~ to post certain
8 information on its website in a certain manner on or before a certain date each year;
9 and generally relating to bullying, harassment, or intimidation and county boards of
10 education.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
12 Article – Education
13 Section 7–424
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

18 **Article – Education**

19 7–424.

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.



(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) “Bullying, harassment, or intimidation” means intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication, that:

(i) Creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological well-being and is:

1. Motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability;

2. Sexual in nature, including descriptions or depictions of a student with the student’s intimate parts exposed or while engaged in an act of sexual contact; or

3. Threatening or seriously intimidating; and

(ii) 1. Occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or

2. Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

(3) “Electronic communication” means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

(4) “Intimate parts” means the naked genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or female nipple.

(5) “Sexual contact” means sexual intercourse, including genital–genital, oral–genital, anal–genital, or oral–anal, whether between persons of the same or opposite sex.

(b) (1) The Department shall require a county board to report incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation against students attending a public school under the jurisdiction of the county board.

(2) An incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation may be reported by:

(i) A student;

(ii) The parent, guardian, or close adult relative of a student; or

(iii) A school staff member.

(c) (1) The Department shall create a standard victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation report form.

(2) Each victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation report form shall:

(i) Identify the victim and the alleged perpetrator, if known;

(ii) Indicate the age of the victim and alleged perpetrator;

(iii) Describe the incident, including alleged statements made by the alleged perpetrator;

(IV) IF THE INCIDENT IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED IN WHOLE OR IN SUBSTANTIAL PART BY ANY OF THE ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (A)(2)(I)1 OF THIS SECTION, INDICATE THOSE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS, IF KNOWN;

[(iv)] (V) Indicate the location of the incident;

[(v)] (VI) Identify any physical injury suffered by the victim and describe the seriousness and any permanent effects of the injury;

[(vi)] (VII) Indicate the number of days a student is absent from school, if any, as a result of the incident;

[(vii)] (VIII) Identify any request for psychological services initiated by the victim or the victim's family due to psychological injuries suffered; and

[(viii)] (IX) Include instructions on how to fill out the form and the mailing address to where the form shall be sent.

(3) A county board shall distribute copies of the victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation report form to each public school under the county board's jurisdiction.

(d) (1) A county board may establish an anonymous two-way electronic tip program to allow the reporting of an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation of a student.

(2) The purpose of the anonymous two-way electronic tip program is for a student, a parent, guardian, or close adult relative of a student, or a school staff member to report acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

(3) Each county board that establishes an anonymous two-way electronic tip program shall publicize the anonymous two-way electronic tip program in student handbooks, school system websites, and other locations that the county board determines are necessary or appropriate.

(4) On receipt of a report of an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation from an anonymous two-way electronic tip, the recipient of the report or the recipient's designee shall:

(i) Complete a victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation report form in accordance with subsection (c) of this section; and

(ii) Provide a transcript of the conversation to a designated person in the school.

(5) The Governor may include funding in the State budget to provide grants to county boards to establish an anonymous two-way electronic tip program.

(e) (1) ~~Each~~ **SUBJECT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SUBSECTION, EACH** county board shall submit summaries of report forms filed with the county board to the State Board on or before January 31 each year.

(2) A county board shall delete any information that identifies an individual.

(3) A COUNTY BOARD SHALL INCLUDE IN ITS REPORT INCIDENTS OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION THAT, AFTER A THOROUGH AND IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION, ARE DETERMINED TO HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED IN WHOLE OR IN SUBSTANTIAL PART BY PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (A)(2)(I)1 OF THIS SECTION OF MEMBERS OF A PARTICULAR GROUP, IF:

(I) THERE HAS BEEN A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN INCIDENTS OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION FOR STUDENTS IN THAT GROUP OVER THE PREVIOUS SCHOOL YEAR; OR

(II) THERE IS A DISPROPORTIONATE INCIDENT RATE OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION FOR STUDENTS IN THAT GROUP.

(F) ~~ON (1)~~ SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 31 EACH YEAR, EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL POST IN A PROMINENT LOCATION ON ITS WEBSITE ~~INFORMATION ABOUT THE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION REPORTED TO THE STATE BOARD BY THE COUNTY BOARD UNDER SUBSECTION (E) OF THIS SECTION THAT WERE DETERMINED TO BE MOTIVATED BY AN ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC OF AN INDIVIDUAL OR A GROUP, DISAGGREGATED BY~~

~~THE MOTIVATING PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC INFORMATION DESCRIBED UNDER~~
~~SUBSECTION (E)(3) OF THIS SECTION.~~

(2) A COUNTY BOARD MAY NOT PUBLISH ANY INFORMATION THAT
COULD BE USED TO IDENTIFY AN INDIVIDUAL STUDENT.

[(f)] (G) The information contained in a victim of bullying, harassment, or
intimidation report form in accordance with subsection (c) of this section or received from
an anonymous two-way electronic tip in accordance with subsection (d) of this section:

(1) Is confidential and may not be redisclosed except as otherwise provided
under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or this section; and

(2) May not be made a part of a student's permanent educational record.

[(g)] (H) (1) The Department shall submit a report on or before March 31 each
year to the Senate Education, [Health, and Environmental Affairs] **ENERGY, AND THE**
ENVIRONMENT Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee, in accordance
with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, consisting of a summary of the information
included in the victim of bullying, harassment, or intimidation report forms filed with the
county boards the previous year.

(2) The report submitted by the Department shall include, to the extent
feasible:

(i) A description of the act constituting the bullying, harassment, or
intimidation;

(ii) The age of the victim and alleged perpetrator;

(iii) The allegation of the alleged perpetrator's motive;

(iv) A description of the investigation of the complaint and any
corrective action taken by the appropriate school authorities;

(v) The number of days a student is absent from school, if any, as a
result of the incident; and

(vi) The number of false allegations reported.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
1, 2026.