

HOUSE BILL 1163

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By: **Delegates Patterson, Hill, Kaufman, McComas, Schindler, Toles, and Turner**
Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2025
Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force to Study Fencing for Bodies of Water and Playgrounds – Established**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force to Study Fencing for Bodies of Water and
4 Playgrounds; and generally relating to the Task Force to Study Fencing for Bodies
5 of Water and Playgrounds.

6 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
7 That:

8 (a) There is a Task Force to Study Fencing for Bodies of Water and Playgrounds.

9 (b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

10 (1) one member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of
11 the Senate;

12 (2) one member of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the
13 House;

14 (3) the Secretary of Housing and Community Development, or the
15 Secretary's designee;

16 (4) the Secretary of Planning, or the Secretary's designee;

17 (5) the State Superintendent of Schools, or the State Superintendent's
18 designee;

19 (6) the Superintendent of the Maryland Park Service, or the
20 Superintendent's designee;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (7) the State Coordinator for Autism Strategy, or the State Coordinator's
2 designee;

3 (8) the Executive Director of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities
4 Council, or the Executive Director's designee;

5 (9) the Director of the Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks,
6 and Tourism, or the Director's designee;

7 (10) one representative of The Arc Maryland;

8 (11) one representative of the Charles County Parent Support Group;

9 (12) one representative of the Maryland Center for Developmental
10 Disabilities at the Kennedy Krieger Institute;

11 (13) one representative of Pathfinders for Autism; and

12 (14) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

13 (i) at least one representative of the residential construction
14 industry; and

15 (ii) one representative of a homeowners association or an entity that
16 represents homeowners associations.

17 (c) The State Coordinator for Autism Strategy, or the State Coordinator's
18 designee, shall chair the Task Force.

19 (d) The Maryland Autism Coalition shall provide staff for the Task Force.

20 (e) A member of the Task Force:

21 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but

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

24 (f) The Task Force shall:

25 (1) review best practices for fencing bodies of water, including man-made
26 bodies of water, and playgrounds;

27 (2) assess how fencing and similar environmental interventions can be
28 used to prevent injuries and fatalities that occur in or around bodies of water and
29 playgrounds;

1 (3) examine data and research related to incidents of wandering and
2 drowning, with an emphasis on incidents involving individuals with autism; and

3 (4) make recommendations on possible interventions to fence bodies of
4 water and playgrounds to prevent injuries and fatalities.

5 (g) On or before July 1, 2026, the Task Force shall report its findings and
6 recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State
7 Government Article, the General Assembly.

8 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
9 1, 2025. It shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and, at the end of June 30, 2027,
10 this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and
11 of no further force and effect.