

SENATE BILL 257

E5

3lr0513

By: **Senators Waldstreicher and Carter**

Introduced and read first time: January 25, 2023

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 2, 2023

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force to Assess the Viability for ~~Free No-Charge~~ Phone Calls for State**
3 **Incarcerated Individuals**
4 **(Keeping Families Connected Act of 2023)**

5 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force to Assess the Viability for ~~Free No-Charge~~
6 Phone Calls for State Incarcerated Individuals; and generally relating to the Task
7 Force to Assess the Viability for Free Phone Calls for State Incarcerated Individuals.

8 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
9 That:

10 (a) There is a Task Force to Assess the Viability for ~~Free No-Charge~~ Phone Calls
11 for State Incarcerated Individuals.

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

13 (1) three members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President
14 of the Senate;

15 (2) three members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of
16 the House;

17 (3) the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services, or the
18 Secretary's designee;

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.



1 (4) the Public Defender, or the Public Defender's designee;

2 (5) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

3 (i) two individuals who were formerly incarcerated in a State
4 correctional facility;

5 (ii) one individual currently employed as a correctional officer at a
6 State correctional facility;

7 (iii) one individual who is the family member of a person who is
8 currently incarcerated in a State correctional facility; ~~and~~

9 (iv) one representative of the Maryland State's Attorneys'
10 Association, recommended by the President of the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association;
11 and

12 (v) one representative of the vendor that currently provides
13 telephone service for individuals confined in State correctional facilities.

14 (c) The Governor shall designate the chair of the Task Force.

15 (d) The Department of Legislative Services shall provide staff for the Task Force.

16 (e) A member of the Task Force:

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

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

20 (f) The Task Force shall:

21 (1) analyze data related to ~~free no-charge~~ prison phone call programs in
22 other states;

23 (2) evaluate the projected program cost to the State of Maryland; and

24 (3) evaluate and make recommendations to allow for phone calls to be
25 made ~~free-of~~ without charge by individuals confined in State correctional facilities while
26 minimizing financial cost to the State.

27 (g) On or before December 31, 2023, the Task Force shall report its findings and
28 recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State
29 Government Article, the General Assembly.

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
2 1, 2023. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the end of June
3 30, 2024, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be
4 abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.