

SENATE BILL 764

J1, O4

2lr1784
CF 2lr1780

By: **Senator Sydnor**

Introduced and read first time: February 7, 2022

Assigned to: Finance

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Childhood Exposure to Violence – Health and Social Impacts – Public**
3 **Awareness Campaign Workgroup**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Childhood Exposure to Violence Public Awareness
5 Campaign Workgroup to develop a public awareness and prevention campaign
6 relating to the health and social impacts of children exposed to violence; and
7 generally relating to the Childhood Exposure to Violence Public Awareness
8 Campaign Workgroup.

9 Preamble

10 WHEREAS, Exposure to violence of any kind inflicts trauma on witnesses, especially
11 on children; and

12 WHEREAS, A 2009 U.S. Department of Justice study showed that more than 60%
13 of the children surveyed were exposed to violence within the past year either directly or
14 indirectly; and

15 WHEREAS, Children’s exposure to violence, whether as victims or witnesses, is often
16 associated with long-term health and social impacts, including physical, psychological, and
17 emotional harm, and further, such exposure puts them at a higher risk of engaging in
18 criminal behavior later in life and becoming part of a cycle of violence; and

19 WHEREAS, Childhood exposure to violent crimes costs American society \$496 billion
20 a year; and

21 WHEREAS, Early identification of children who have witnessed violence and early
22 response to those events are critical to decreasing poor health and social outcomes from
23 those experiences; and

24 WHEREAS, Public education about the impact of witnessing violence and about

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 effective interventions and preventative measures is lacking because violence occurs
2 without warning in any setting and yet is often difficult to predict, thus putting children at
3 risk for witnessing it in any setting; and

4 WHEREAS, Maryland needs a coordinated and comprehensive campaign to educate
5 the public on the need to prevent situations that expose children to violence and on tools to
6 respond once violence has occurred in the presence of a child; now, therefore,

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

9 (a) There is a Childhood Exposure to Violence Public Awareness Campaign
10 Workgroup.

11 (b) The Workgroup consists of:

12 (1) the following members, appointed by the Secretary of Health:

13 (i) two individuals who witnessed violence as a child or have a
14 family member who witnessed violence as a child;

15 (ii) two representatives of hospitals;

16 (iii) one State-licensed emergency medicine physician;

17 (iv) one State-licensed primary care physician;

18 (v) one State-licensed pediatrician;

19 (vi) one State-licensed mental health provider;

20 (vii) one representative of a local health department;

21 (viii) one representative from the Maryland Department of Health;

22 (ix) two violence intervention community health workers;

23 (x) one representative of a Boys and Girls Club in the State; and

24 (xi) one individual with expertise in public communication;

25 (2) the following members, appointed by the Secretary of Education:

26 (i) one representative of the State Department of Education; and

27 (ii) one teacher who works in the State;

1 (3) one representative of the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth,
2 and Victim Services, designated by the Executive Director of the Governor’s Office of Crime
3 Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services; and

4 (4) one representative of an accredited child advocacy center, designated
5 by the Maryland Children’s Alliance.

6 (c) The Workgroup shall elect the chair of the Workgroup by a majority vote at
7 the first meeting.

8 (d) The Maryland Department of Health shall provide staff for the Workgroup.

9 (e) A member of the Workgroup:

10 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Workgroup; but

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

13 (f) The Workgroup shall:

14 (1) develop a public awareness and prevention campaign on child exposure
15 to violence that includes:

16 (i) the types of violence that pose risks to children;

17 (ii) the types of responses that children experience from being
18 exposed to violence;

19 (iii) the health and social risks associated with children being
20 exposed to violence;

21 (iv) the signs and symptoms of trauma and health and social impacts
22 associated with children being exposed to violence; and

23 (v) appropriate responses to learning that a child has been exposed
24 to violence;

25 (2) identify, review, and evaluate resources that can be used to educate the
26 public on child exposure to violence; and

27 (3) identify cost-effective methods for the Maryland Department of Health
28 to disseminate information to the public about the health and social impacts of children
29 being exposed to violence and actions to take to address the occurrence of such events.

30 (g) On or before December 1, 2022, the Workgroup shall report on its findings and
31 recommendations for the public awareness and prevention campaign to the Senate Finance

1 Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee, in accordance
2 with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article.

3 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
4 1, 2022. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the end of June
5 30, 2023, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be
6 abrogated and of no further force and effect.