

HOUSE BILL 969

E1, J1

3lr2022

By: Delegates George, Hixson, Afzali, Anderson, Arora, Aumann, Barnes, Barve, Bates, Beidle, Beitzel, Boteler, Burns, Cane, Carter, Cluster, DeBoy, Donoghue, Eckardt, Elliott, Feldman, Fisher, Frank, Frick, Gilchrist, Glass, Haddaway–Riccio, Hershey, Hogan, Holmes, Hough, Howard, Ivey, Jacobs, James, Kach, K. Kelly, Kipke, Krebs, Lafferty, Love, McComas, McConkey, McDermott, McDonough, McMillan, A. Miller, W. Miller, Minnick, Nathan–Pulliam, Norman, O’Donnell, Olszewski, Otto, Parrott, Proctor, Ready, Reznik, B. Robinson, Schuh, Schulz, Serafini, Sophocleus, Stein, Stifler, Stocksdales, Stukes, Szeliga, F. Turner, Valentino–Smith, Vitale, Walker, Weir, Wilson, Wood, and Zucker

Introduced and read first time: February 7, 2013

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Commission to Consider Mental Health–Related Ways to Limit Mass Violence by Individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorders, Depressive Disorders, or Other Mental Illness

FOR the purpose of establishing a Commission to Consider Mental Health–Related Ways to Limit Mass Violence by Individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorders, Depressive Disorders, or Other Mental Illness; providing for the composition, chair, and staffing of the Commission; prohibiting a member of the Commission from receiving certain compensation, but authorizing the reimbursement of certain expenses; requiring the Commission to study and make recommendations regarding the prevention of mass violence perpetrated by individuals with mental illness; requiring the Commission to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the Commission to Consider Mental Health–Related Ways to Limit Mass Violence by Individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorders, Depressive Disorders, or Other Mental Illness.

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

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



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(a) There is a Commission to Consider Mental Health–Related Ways to Limit Mass Violence by Individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorders, Depressive Disorders, or Other Mental Illness.

(b) The Commission consists of the following members:

(1) one member of the Senate of Maryland from the Republican party and one member of the Senate of Maryland from the Democratic party, appointed by the President of the Senate;

(2) one member of the House of Delegates from the Republican party and one member of the House of Delegates from the Democratic party, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(3) the Attorney General, or the Attorney General’s designee;

(4) the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, or the Secretary’s designee; and

(5) the following individuals, appointed by the Governor:

(i) two licensed psychologists representing the Maryland Psychological Association;

(ii) two school psychologists, representing the Maryland School Psychologists’ Association;

(iii) one school resource officer; and

(iv) one psychiatrist.

(c) The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House jointly shall designate the chair of the Commission.

(d) The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene shall provide staff for the Commission.

(e) A member of the Commission:

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

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

(f) The Commission shall:

(1) hear professional testimony on pertinent topics, including the effects of violent video games on individuals who are socially withdrawn and cognitively involved with the games, and warning signs that individuals who are at risk of becoming violent may display;

(2) create a process for the identification and referral of at-risk mentally ill individuals by professional psychologists, school counselors, and teachers for risk assessment and treatment;

(3) create a plan for providing assistance to individuals who may be in early stages of regression, as evidenced by identifiable personality changes, increased aggression, worsening grades, increased absence from work, and social withdrawal, and for providing security to those to whom the individuals may have access;

(4) create a system whereby individuals in schools or colleges who display a negative or “dark” affect can be identified and monitored; and

(5) consider and study options for:

(i) establishing a toll-free number to give anonymous help and support to parents who feel they have tried all other options and are concerned that their child:

1. displays antisocial behavior or a negative or “dark” affect;
2. may be at risk of becoming violent; or
3. displays addictive behavior toward violent video games;

(ii) restricting access by minors and certain mentally ill individuals to violent video games;

(iii) educating parents on risks associated with the use of violent video games; and

(iv) encouraging and helping schools to run violence prevention programs that teach students:

1. alternatives to violence;
2. peaceful conflict resolution;
3. positive interpersonal relationship skills; and

4. positive evidence–based interventions and behavioral supports.

(g) On or before December 31, 2013, the Commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2013. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of May 31, 2014, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.