

Substitute Senate Bill No. 327

Special Act No. 24-9

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE EFFECTS OF HATE SPEECH AND BULLYING ON CHILDREN.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to study the effects and social impact of hate speech and bullying on children. Such study shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) an analysis of the effects of hate speech and bullying on the mental and physical health and academic achievement of children, (2) an analysis of the settings and environments in which children are most likely to encounter and participate in hate speech or bullying, including whether such hate speech or bullying occurs in person or through Internet-based applications or forums, (3) an examination of whether children encounter hate speech or bullying that is perpetrated by children or adults, or both, in each such setting or environment, (4) an analysis of the factors that may contribute to a child's likelihood of encountering hate speech or bullying, and a child or adult's likelihood of perpetrating hate speech or bullying, and (5) recommendations for strategies to prevent, reduce and address the effects of hate speech and bullying in communities and schools in the state, including, but not limited to, the implementation of (A) school, community-based and state-wide programs (i) for the prevention and reduction of hate speech and bullying, and (ii) to reduce the effects on children of hate speech and

bullying, (B) public media campaigns, and (C) statutory changes concerning the prevention and reduction of and response to hate speech and bullying in schools. For the purposes of this section, "hate speech" means any form of expression through which a child or adult intends to vilify, humiliate or incite hatred against a child on the basis of such child's race, religion, skin color, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, body weight or body type or national origin, and "bullying" means unwanted and aggressive behavior among children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

(b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

(1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be a representative of an organization that works to improve the behavioral health and well-being of children and one of whom shall be a representative of an organization that advocates for special education equity for children;

(2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one of whom shall be a representative of an organization that works to eliminate discrimination based on religion, and one of whom shall be a representative of a state-wide association of school-based health centers;

(3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, who shall be a representative of an organization that works to eliminate discrimination based on race;

(4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who shall be a representative of an organization that works to eliminate discrimination based on sexual and gender identity;

(5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, who shall be a representative of a state chapter of a national association of providers of pediatric care;

(6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who shall be a representative of an organization that works to eliminate discrimination based on disability status;

(7) One appointed by the cochairpersons of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children, who shall be a representative of a state-wide association of boards of education;

(8) One appointed by the ranking members of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children, who shall be a representative of a state-wide association of public school superintendents;

(9) The Commissioner of Public Health, or the commissioner's designee;

(10) The Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or the commissioner's designee;

(11) The Commissioner of Children and Families, or the commissioner's designee;

(12) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee;

(13) The Chief State's Attorney, or the Chief State's Attorney's designee;

(14) The executive director of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, or the executive director's designee; and

(15) The executive director of the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, or the executive director's designee.

(c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1), (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member

of the General Assembly.

(d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority.

(e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force from among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

(f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

(g) Not later than January 1, 2025, the task force shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. The task force shall terminate on the date that it submits such report or January 1, 2025, whichever is later.