

SENATE BILL 865

E3
HB 1190/23 – JUD

4lr2987

By: **Senators King, Feldman, Kagan, Kelly, Kramer, Smith, Waldstreicher, and Zucker**

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2024

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Juveniles – Truancy Reduction Pilot Program – Expansion**

3 FOR the purpose of expanding, renaming, and altering certain provisions relating to a
4 certain truancy reduction program in certain juvenile courts; authorizing a county
5 or circuit administrative judge to establish a certain Truancy Reduction and School
6 Reengagement Program as a problem-solving court in certain juvenile courts in
7 accordance with rules adopted by the Supreme Court of Maryland; requiring the
8 Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Maryland to annually report certain
9 information to the General Assembly; and generally relating to truancy reduction
10 programs in the juvenile courts.

11 BY adding to
12 Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings
13 Section 3–8C–01
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

16 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
17 Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings
18 Section 3–8C–01, 3–8C–02, 3–8C–06, 3–8C–07, 3–8C–10, and 3–8C–12
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

21 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
22 Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings
23 Section 3–8C–03, 3–8C–04, 3–8C–05, 3–8C–08, 3–8C–09, and 3–8C–11
24 Annotated Code of Maryland
25 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

26 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Article – Education
 2 Section 7–301(a–1)(1), (c), and (e)(1) and (2)
 3 Annotated Code of Maryland
 4 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

5 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
 6 Article – Education
 7 Section 7–301(e–1)
 8 Annotated Code of Maryland
 9 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

10 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
 11 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

12 **Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings**

13 **3–8C–01.**

14 (A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
 15 INDICATED.

16 (B) “COURT” MEANS THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR A COUNTY SITTING AS THE
 17 JUVENILE COURT.

18 (C) “PROGRAM” MEANS A TRUANCY REDUCTION AND SCHOOL
 19 REENGAGEMENT PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.

20 **[3–8C–01.] 3–8C–01.1.**

21 This subtitle applies only:

22 (1) In a county in which the circuit **OR COUNTY** administrative judge has
 23 established a [Truancy Reduction Pilot Program] **PROGRAM** under § 3–8C–02 of this
 24 subtitle; and

25 (2) To the extent that funds are provided in an annual State budget for a
 26 [Truancy Reduction Pilot Program] **PROGRAM**.

27 **3–8C–02.**

28 (a) [(1) The Circuit Administrative Judge of the First Circuit may establish a
 29 Truancy Reduction Pilot Program in one or more of the juvenile courts in Dorchester
 30 County, Somerset County, Wicomico County, and Worcester County.

31 (2) The Circuit Administrative Judge of the Second Circuit may establish
 32 a Truancy Reduction Pilot Program in the juvenile courts in Kent County and Talbot

1 County.

2 (3) The Circuit Administrative Judge of the Third Circuit may establish a
3 Truancy Reduction Pilot Program in the juvenile court in Harford County.

4 (4) The Circuit Administrative Judge of the Seventh Circuit may establish
5 a Truancy Reduction Pilot Program in the juvenile court in Prince George's County.]

6 (1) **A COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE MAY ESTABLISH A TRUANCY
7 REDUCTION AND SCHOOL REENGAGEMENT PROGRAM AS A PROBLEM-SOLVING
8 COURT IN THE JUVENILE COURT IN THE COUNTY IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULES
9 ADOPTED BY THE SUPREME COURT OF MARYLAND.**

10 (2) **A CIRCUIT ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE MAY ESTABLISH A TRUANCY
11 REDUCTION AND SCHOOL REENGAGEMENT PROGRAM AS A PROBLEM-SOLVING
12 COURT IN ONE OR MORE OF THE JUVENILE COURTS IN THE CIRCUIT IN ACCORDANCE
13 WITH RULES ADOPTED BY THE SUPREME COURT OF MARYLAND.**

14 (B) **THE PURPOSE OF A PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SUBTITLE IS
15 TO:**

16 (1) **ADJUDICATE CASES FILED WITH THE COURT UNDER § 7-301 OF
17 THE EDUCATION ARTICLE IN A MANNER THAT PROMOTES THE CHILD'S AND THE
18 CHILD'S PARENT'S OR GUARDIAN'S ENGAGEMENT OR REENGAGEMENT WITH
19 EDUCATION;**

20 (2) **IDENTIFY THE CAUSES OF TRUANCY AND SCHOOL
21 DISENGAGEMENT FOR A CHILD PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM;**

22 (3) **ASSIST THE CHILD, THE CHILD'S PARENTS OR GUARDIANS, AND
23 THE SCHOOLS IN AMELIORATING THE CAUSES OF TRUANCY AND SCHOOL
24 DISENGAGEMENT; AND**

25 (4) **REENGAGE THE CHILD IN FURTHERING THE CHILD'S EDUCATION.**

26 [(b)] (C) After consultation with [the] A CIRCUIT administrative [judges of the
27 first, second, third, and seventh circuits] JUDGE, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
28 of Maryland may accept a gift or grant [to implement the pilot programs] **FOR THE
29 PROGRAM** in [each respective] **THE** circuit.

30 3-8C-03.

31 (a) A child who is required under § 7-301 of the Education Article to attend school
32 may not fail to do so without lawful excuse.

1 (b) A violation of this section is a Code violation and is a civil offense.

2 (c) Adjudication of a Code violation under this section is not a criminal conviction
3 for any purpose and does not impose any of the civil disabilities ordinarily imposed by a
4 criminal conviction.

5 3-8C-04.

6 An authorized school official may file with the juvenile court a petition alleging a
7 violation of this subtitle.

8 3-8C-05.

9 (a) A petition under this subtitle shall allege that a child who is required to attend
10 school failed to attend school without lawful excuse and shall set forth in clear and simple
11 language the facts supporting the allegation.

12 (b) (1) Whenever a petition is filed under this subtitle the court shall hold an
13 adjudicatory hearing.

14 (2) The rules of evidence under Title 5 of the Maryland Rules shall apply
15 at an adjudicatory hearing under this section.

16 (3) The allegations in a petition under this subtitle shall be proved by a
17 preponderance of the evidence.

18 3-8C-06.

19 (a) Unless a petition filed under this subtitle is dismissed, the court shall hold a
20 separate disposition hearing after the adjudicatory hearing.

21 (b) The court shall hold a disposition hearing on the same day as the adjudicatory
22 hearing unless, on its own motion or motion of a party, the court finds good cause to delay
23 the disposition hearing to a later day.

24 (c) If the court delays a disposition hearing, it shall be held no later than 15 days
25 after the conclusion of the adjudicatory hearing unless good cause is shown.

26 (d) In making a disposition on a petition filed under this subtitle, the court may
27 [order the child to]:

28 **(1) ORDER THE CHILD TO:**

29 [(1)] **(I) Attend school, INCLUDING SUMMER SCHOOL, A CREDIT**
30 **RECOVERY PROGRAM, OR A VIRTUAL LEARNING PLATFORM;**

31 [(2)] **(II) [Perform community service] WITH THE CONSENT OF THE**

1 COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION, ATTEND A GED PROGRAM;

2 [(3)] (III) Attend counseling, including family counseling;

3 [(4)] (IV) Attend substance [abuse] USE DISORDER evaluation and
4 treatment SERVICES;

5 [(5)] (V) Attend mental health evaluation and treatment SERVICES; [or]

6 (VI) PERFORM COMMUNITY SERVICE; OR

7 [(6)] (VII) Keep a curfew with the hours set by the court;

8 (2) REFER THE CHILD OR THE CHILD'S PARENT OR GUARDIAN TO AN
9 APPROPRIATE AGENCY TO ADDRESS BEHAVIORS OR ISSUES THAT IMPACT THE
10 CHILD'S ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOL OR OTHER ISSUES RELEVANT TO SCHOOL
11 ATTENDANCE; OR

12 (3) ISSUE ANY OTHER ORDER THAT THE COURT DETERMINES IS
13 APPROPRIATE TO ACHIEVE THE PURPOSES SPECIFIED IN § 3-8C-02(B) OF THIS
14 SUBTITLE.

15 (e) Cases under this subtitle are eligible for family support services as provided
16 in the Maryland Rules.

17 3-8C-07.

18 A criminal defendant WHO IS ALLEGED TO HAVE VIOLATED § 7-301(E) OF THE
19 EDUCATION ARTICLE under this subtitle is subject to:

20 (1) Any conditions of probation authorized under § 6-220 of the Criminal
21 Procedure Article; and

22 (2) Any additional condition of probation that would promote the child's
23 attendance in school.

24 3-8C-08.

25 (a) (1) If a petition is filed under this subtitle in a county other than the county
26 where the child is living or domiciled, the court on its own motion, or on motion of a party,
27 may transfer the proceedings to the county of residence or domicile at any time prior to
28 final termination of jurisdiction.

29 (2) In its discretion, the court to which the case is transferred may take
30 further action.

1 (b) Every document, social history, and record on file with the clerk of the court
2 pertaining to the case shall accompany the transfer.

3 3-8C-09.

4 Except as otherwise provided in this subtitle, the Maryland Rules govern the format
5 of the petition and the procedures to be followed by the court and the parties under this
6 subtitle.

7 3-8C-10.

8 The court [shall] **MAY** retain jurisdiction under this subtitle until every condition of
9 the court's order is satisfied.

10 3-8C-11.

11 A party may appeal a final judgment entered under this subtitle as provided in Title
12 12 of this article and in the Maryland Rules.

13 3-8C-12.

14 (A) On or before November 1 of each year, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
15 of Maryland shall report to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State
16 Government Article, on each [Truancy Reduction Pilot Program] **PROGRAM** established
17 under this subtitle.

18 (B) **THE REPORT REQUIRED BY THIS SECTION SHALL INCLUDE:**

19 (1) **THE NUMBER OF PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS**
20 **SUBTITLE;**

21 (2) **THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN EACH PROGRAM;**

22 (3) **INFORMATION ON OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN**
23 **EACH PROGRAM; AND**

24 (4) **INFORMATION ON ANY CHANGES RECOMMENDED TO IMPROVE**
25 **THE FUNCTIONING OF THE PROGRAMS.**

26 (C) **THE REPORT REQUIRED BY THIS SECTION MAY NOT INCLUDE ANY**
27 **PERSONAL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION OF A CHILD WHO PARTICIPATES IN A**
28 **PROGRAM.**

29 **Article – Education**

30 7-301.

1 (a-1) (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, each child who resides in
2 this State and is 5 years old or older and under 18 shall attend a public school regularly
3 during the entire school year.

4 (c) Each person who has legal custody or care and control of a child who is 5 years
5 old or older and under 16 shall see that the child attends school or receives instruction as
6 required by this section.

7 (e) (1) Any person who induces or attempts to induce a child to be absent
8 unlawfully from school or employs or harbors any child who is absent unlawfully from
9 school while school is in session is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to
10 a fine not to exceed \$500 or imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, or both.

11 (2) Any person who has legal custody or care and control of a child who is
12 5 years old or older and under 16 who fails to see that the child attends school or receives
13 instruction under this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and:

14 (i) For a first conviction is subject to a fine not to exceed \$50 per day
15 of unlawful absence or imprisonment not to exceed 3 days, or both; and

16 (ii) For a second or subsequent conviction is subject to a fine not to
17 exceed \$100 per day of unlawful absence or imprisonment not to exceed 5 days, or both.

18 (e-1) (1) **IN THIS SUBSECTION, "PROGRAM" MEANS A TRUANCY**
19 **REDUCTION AND SCHOOL REENGAGEMENT PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER §**
20 **3-8C-02 OF THE COURTS ARTICLE.**

21 **(2)** This subsection applies only:

22 (i) In a county in which the circuit **OR COUNTY** administrative
23 judge has established a [Truancy Reduction Pilot Program under § 3-8C-02 of the Courts
24 Article] **PROGRAM**; and

25 (ii) To the extent that funds are provided in an annual State budget
26 for a [Truancy Reduction Pilot Program] **PROGRAM**.

27 **[(2)] (3)** A charge under this section may be filed in the juvenile court and
28 assigned to a truancy docket for disposition under Title 3, Subtitle 8C of the Courts Article.

29 **[(3)] (4)** The court may condition marking a charge under this section set
30 on participation of the defendant in the appropriate [Truancy Reduction Pilot Program
31 under Title 3, Subtitle 8C of the Courts Article] **PROGRAM**.

32 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED,** That this Act shall take effect
33 October 1, 2024.

