

WHEREAS, The severity of abuse and neglect has increased significantly resulting in 23 child fatalities in Maryland in 1982 compared with 10 in 1981 and 6 in 1980; and

WHEREAS, Many cases of child abuse and neglect, especially sexual abuse, go undetected by those who could provide help; and

WHEREAS, There is a pressing need to implement a comprehensive strategy in the State of Maryland for the prevention, detection, and treatment of child abuse and neglect; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Governor is requested to appoint a Task Force to examine the State's current response to the problems of child abuse and neglect; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Task Force examine and report on:

(1) The availability of models for the prevention of child abuse and neglect and a review of successful programs in other states and the potential for their utilization in Maryland;

(2) The coordination and effectiveness of existing community resources for the detection and treatment of child abuse and sexual abuse of children, including reimbursement of emergency medical treatment for suspected victims of child abuse, and training programs for professionals who work with children or families;

(3) The ability of the State to respond to increasing demands for child welfare and family services necessitated by the increase in child abuse and neglect;

(4) The effectiveness of Maryland's judicial and legislative efforts to deal with child abuse and neglect;

(5) The relationship between the agencies responsible for custody, placement and treatment of abused or neglected children and their families;

(6) Whether current staffing levels within the division that provides protective services for children at the local level and in foster care are adequate;

(7) The manner in which child welfare policies affect children who are at risk of abuse or neglect; and

(8) Existing barriers that may inhibit the reporting of incidents of child abuse and neglect and the development of recommendations to realistically encourage reporting; and be it further