

Judiciary Committee, the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, and the General Assembly. The final report is due by December 1, 2005.

The entire focus of this bill is to study the apparent gang problem in Prince George's County. Membership of the task force is designated primarily from Prince George's County's governmental units. In addition, staffing for the task force is to be provided by the Office of the State's Attorney for Prince George's County. No other county in the State has specific representation on the task force.

I believe that the most direct process to study youth gang activities in Prince George's County is for the County to undertake this analysis. If requested, I will cooperate with the County to provide access to State departments and agencies with expertise in this area, including persons from the Department of Juvenile Services and the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention. I have great respect for the local prerogative in such issues and therefore believe that it is inappropriate to sign statewide legislation.

There is another issue that I must address regarding task forces and study commissions that is not unique to this bill. There is a growing tendency within the Maryland General Assembly to reduce the number of members that would traditionally be appointed by the Governor to statutory task forces and study commissions. In dealing with issues of statewide importance, I believe that the Governor must have a greater role in deciding the membership of such study groups. I will be extremely reluctant to sign legislation creating study groups that does not provide an appropriate role for gubernatorial representation.

For the above stated reasons, I have vetoed House Bill 1285.

Very truly yours,
Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor

House Bill No. 1285

AN ACT concerning

~~Criminal Law — Criminal Group Enterprises — Penalties and Task Force~~ Task Force to Study Youth Gang Activities

FOR the purpose of ~~prohibiting a person from threatening another with physical violence with the intent to coerce, induce, or solicit the other to participate in or prevent the other from leaving a formal or informal ongoing group, club, organization, or association of individuals; prohibiting a person from using physical violence with the intent to coerce, induce, or solicit the other to participate in or prevent the other from leaving a formal or informal ongoing group, club, organization, or association of individuals; establishing certain penalties for certain violations of this Act; providing for the construction of this Act; requiring the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP) to establish and fund pilot programs to advance community-based intervention strategies in Baltimore City, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County; creating a Task Force to Study Youth Gang Activities; providing for the~~