

HOUSE BILL 281

E4, D4

EMERGENCY BILL
(PRE-FILED)

6lr0098
CF 6lr0097

By: **Chair, Judiciary Committee (By Request – Departmental – Public Safety and Correctional Services)**

Requested: September 16, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Judiciary

Committee Report: Favorable

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 6, 2026

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Family Law – Child Care Providers – Criminal Background Investigations**

3 FOR the purpose of altering provisions relating to criminal background investigations for
4 certain individuals who care for or supervise children; requiring certain facilities to
5 apply to the Criminal Justice Information System Central Repository for a national
6 and State criminal history records check for each employee, employer, individual, or
7 volunteer; altering provisions relating to the process under which a certain State or
8 local law enforcement agency conducts a certain name-based check on certain
9 individuals; and generally relating to child care and criminal background
10 investigations.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
12 Article – Family Law
13 Section 5–551(a) and (b), 5–555, and 5–559
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

18 **Article – Family Law**

19 5–551.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 (a) The following facilities shall require employees and employers to obtain a
2 criminal history records check under this Part V of this subtitle:

3 (1) a child care center required to be licensed under Title 9.5, Subtitle 4 of
4 the Education Article;

5 (2) a family child care home or large family child care home required to be
6 registered under Title 9.5, Subtitle 3 of the Education Article;

7 (3) a child care home required to be licensed [under this subtitle or] under
8 Title 9 of the Human Services Article;

9 **(4) A CHILD CARE INSTITUTION REQUIRED TO BE LICENSED UNDER**
10 **THIS SUBTITLE BY AN ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT;**

11 ~~[(4)]~~ **(5)** a child care institution required to be licensed [under this
12 subtitle or] under Title 9 of the Human Services Article;

13 ~~[(5)]~~ **(6)** a juvenile detention, correction, or treatment facility provided for
14 in Title 9 of the Human Services Article;

15 ~~[(6)]~~ **(7)** a public school as defined in Title 1 of the Education Article;

16 ~~[(7)]~~ **(8)** a private or nonpublic school required to report annually to the
17 State Board of Education under Title 2 of the Education Article;

18 ~~[(8)]~~ **(9)** a foster care family home or group facility as defined under this
19 subtitle;

20 ~~[(9)]~~ **(10)** a recreation center or recreation program operated by the State,
21 a local government, or a private entity primarily serving minors;

22 ~~[(10)]~~ **(11)** a day or residential camp, as defined in Title 10, Subtitle 16 of
23 the Code of Maryland Regulations, primarily serving minors; or

24 ~~[(11)]~~ **(12)** a home health agency or residential service agency licensed by
25 the Maryland Department of Health and authorized under Title 19 of the Health – General
26 Article to provide home– or community–based health services for minors.

27 (b) The following individuals shall obtain a criminal history records check under
28 this Part V of this subtitle:

29 (1) an individual who is seeking to adopt a child through a child placement
30 agency;

1 (2) an individual who is seeking to become a guardian through a local
2 department;

3 (3) an individual whom the juvenile court appoints as a guardian of a child;

4 (4) an adult relative with whom a child, committed to a local department,
5 is placed by the local department;

6 (5) any adult known by a local department or the State Department of
7 Education to be residing in:

8 (i) a family child care home or large family child care home required
9 to be registered under this title;

10 (ii) a home where informal child care, as defined in child care subsidy
11 regulations adopted under Title 13A of the Code of Maryland Regulations, is being provided
12 or will be provided to a child who does not reside there;

13 (iii) a home of an adult relative of a child with whom the child,
14 committed to a local department, is placed by the local department;

15 (iv) a foster care home or child care home required to be approved
16 under this title;

17 (v) a home of an individual seeking to adopt a child through a child
18 placement agency; or

19 (vi) a home of an individual seeking to become a guardian through a
20 local department;

21 (6) an individual who agrees to provide, or to continue providing, informal
22 child care, as defined in child care subsidy regulations, adopted under Title 13A of the Code
23 of Maryland Regulations; **[and]**

24 (7) if requested by a local department:

25 (i) a parent or guardian of a child who is committed to the local
26 department and is or has been placed in an out-of-home placement within the past year;
27 and

28 (ii) any adult known by the local department to be residing in the
29 home of the parent or guardian; **AND**

30 **(8) AN ADULT OR AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS NOT A RELATIVE AND WHO**
31 **AGREES TO PROVIDE CARE AS A RESULT OF A SUDDEN UNAVAILABILITY OF THE**
32 **CHILD’S PRIMARY CARETAKER, INCLUDING:**

- 1 (I) A NEIGHBOR;
- 2 (II) A FRIEND;
- 3 (III) AN ACQUAINTANCE;
- 4 (IV) A COMMUNITY MEMBER; OR
- 5 (V) A COLLEAGUE OR COWORKER OF THE CHILD'S PRIMARY
- 6 CARETAKER.

7 5-555.

8 (a) The Department shall conduct the criminal history records checks required

9 under this Part V of this subtitle.

10 (b) (1) The facilities identified in § 5-551(a) of this subtitle shall apply to the

11 Central Repository for a national and State criminal history records check for each

12 employee, employer, individual, or volunteer.

13 (2) As part of an application for a criminal history records check, a facility

14 identified in § 5-551(a) of this subtitle shall submit to the Central Repository:

15 (i) a legible set of the employee's, employer's, individual's, or

16 volunteer's fingerprints taken in a format approved by the Director of the Central

17 Repository and the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

18 (ii) the fee authorized under § 10-221(b)(7) of the Criminal

19 Procedure Article for access to State criminal history records; and

20 (iii) the mandatory processing fee required by the Federal Bureau of

21 Investigation for a national criminal history records check.

22 (3) In accordance with §§ 10-201 through 10-229 of the Criminal

23 Procedure Article, the Central Repository shall forward the employee's, employer's,

24 individual's, or volunteer's [criminal history record information to]:

25 (i) **STATE CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD INFORMATION TO** the

26 employee, employer, individual, or volunteer; and

27 (ii) **NATIONAL CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD INFORMATION TO**

28 the authorized agencies required to license, register, approve, or certify the facility

29 identified in § 5-551(a) of this subtitle.

1 (c) The Department shall update an initial criminal history records check for an
2 employee, employer, or individual identified in § 5–551(b), (c), (d), or (e) of this subtitle and
3 issue an updated records check in accordance with this subsection.

4 (d) The Department shall provide an applicant's initial and updated State
5 criminal history record to:

6 (1) the recipients of the State criminal history record specified in
7 subsection (e) of this section; and

8 (2) the State Department of Education if the applicant is:

9 (i) an employee of or an adult resident in a child care center that is
10 required to be licensed or to hold a letter of compliance under Title 9.5, Subtitle 4 of the
11 Education Article;

12 (ii) an employee of or an adult resident in a family child care home
13 or large family child care home that is required to be registered under Title 9.5, Subtitle 3
14 of the Education Article; or

15 (iii) an individual who provides or agrees to provide informal child
16 care or an adult who resides in a home where informal child care is being provided or will
17 be provided to a child who does not reside there.

18 (e) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, on receiving a
19 written request from an employee, the Department shall disseminate the national and
20 State criminal history records check to authorized agencies if the criminal history records
21 check was completed during the prior 180 days.

22 (2) On receiving a written request from a student teacher employed under
23 § 6–107 of the Education Article, the Department shall disseminate the national and State
24 criminal history records check to authorized agencies if the criminal history records check
25 was completed during the prior 365 days.

26 (f) Information obtained from the Central Repository under this subtitle:

27 (1) is confidential;

28 (2) may not be disseminated; and

29 (3) may be used only for the purposes authorized by this subtitle.

30 (g) The subject of a criminal history records check under this subtitle may contest
31 the contents of the national and State criminal history records check issued by the Central
32 Repository as provided in § 10–223 of the Criminal Procedure Article.

33 5–559.

1 (a) In this section, “emergency out-of-home placement” means an out-of-home
2 placement in which a local department places a child in the home of [a private individual,
3 including a neighbor, friend, or relative,] **AN INDIVIDUAL DESCRIBED IN § 5-551(B) OF**
4 **THIS SUBTITLE** as a result of a sudden unavailability of the child’s primary caretaker.

5 (b) (1) **[If] IN ADDITION TO THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER § 5-551(B) OF**
6 **THIS SUBTITLE, IF** a child is placed in an emergency out-of-home placement, a local
7 department may request that a designated State or local law enforcement agency in the
8 State [perform] **CONDUCT** a [federal] **NATIONAL** name-based check on any individual
9 described in [**§ 5-551(b)(4), (5)(iii), and (7)(ii)**] **§ 5-551(B)** of this subtitle.

10 (2) The designated **STATE OR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT** agency
11 described in paragraph (1) of this subsection may provide the results of the name-based
12 check to the local department.

13 (3) Within 15 calendar days after the [local department receives the results
14 of] **DATE ON WHICH THE STATE OR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY PROVIDES**
15 the name-based check, the local department shall submit a complete set of fingerprints to
16 the Department for each individual described in paragraph (1) of this subsection on whom
17 a name-based check was [performed] **CONDUCTED**.

18 (4) **[Within 15 calendar days after the name-based check] ON RECEIPT**
19 **OF THE COMPLETE SET OF FINGERPRINTS DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH (3) OF THIS**
20 **SUBSECTION**, the Department shall perform a **NATIONAL** criminal history records check,
21 in accordance with § 5-555 of this subtitle.

22 (c) A child shall be removed immediately from an emergency out-of-home
23 placement if any individual required to submit to a name-based check refuses to submit
24 the follow-up fingerprints.

25 (d) When the placement of a child in a home is denied as a result of a name-based
26 criminal history records check of an individual and the individual contests that denial, the
27 individual shall submit to the local department:

28 (1) a complete set of fingerprints; and

29 (2) written permission allowing the local department to forward the
30 fingerprints to the Department for submission to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

31 (e) An individual who is required to submit to a criminal history records check
32 under this section shall pay the fees required under § 5-551(g) of this subtitle.

33 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED**, That this Act is an emergency
34 measure, is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety, has
35 been passed by a yea and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members elected to

1 each of the two Houses of the General Assembly, and shall take effect from the date it is
2 enacted.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.