



END-OF-SESSION NEWSLETTER

April 19, 2021

Dear Constituents and Friends,

With the adjournment of the 2021 Maryland General Assembly legislative session one week ago, it would be fair to describe the 2021 legislative session as being like no other! Entering this year, it was not known if we would be able to stay the entire 90 days or need to adjourn unexpectedly - as we had done in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To avoid challenges on the constitutionality of enacted legislation, the development and implementation of protocols allowing members in both the Senate and the House to convene in-person for floor debates and voting was required. The technological adaptations and procedures developed during the preceding interim period for remote communication and coordination of briefings and committee work, and for collaboration amongst members, staff, agencies, and others, was modified for the accelerated pace and higher work volume of the session.

I am very appreciative of the planning and execution by House and Senate leadership and their staff, the Offices of Information Technology, Buildings and Grounds, and Security for successfully navigating the ship, while prioritizing the health of the general public, advocates, staff, and members. Because of their efforts, we not only met our minimal constitutional obligation of passing a balanced budget, but were also able to pass legislation addressing many of the problems specific to the pandemic, pre-pandemic policy objectives, current community and state concerns, and the evolving challenges to Maryland's economy. Continuing efforts to build a brighter future for all our residents, we acted meaningfully on issues of health equity and healthcare access, policing reform, systemic and institutional disparities, education, the economy, transit, and climate change. Considering the many challenges, I'm not only proud of all we achieved but am less reticent over what we did not.

The work of our federal delegation and other partners in getting financial relief to our state and local jurisdictions was a critical part of our success, and the decisions of the Appropriations and Budget and Taxation Committees, working with the administration, to target that money towards backfilling monies spent and lost in response to the pandemic, puts the State on good footing for the near and far future, as we continue to emerge.

Our work began with overriding Governor Hogan's 2020 vetoes on bills such as the **Blueprint for Maryland's Future** which, by virtue of the override, put into effect last year's **Build to Learn Act** plan for funding deferred **school building maintenance and construction** projects in every jurisdiction, and the bill settling the 15-year **Historically Black Colleges and Universities lawsuit**. Overriding the veto of HB498, my 2020 legislation appropriating grant support to not-

for-profits helping people to “age in place” was a personal victory, especially as the services these agencies provide have gained increased importance in the face of Covid 19 restrictions.

As this session wound to a close, we overrode the Governor’s 2021 vetoes of bills expanding the **prevailing wage** for contractual workers on 25% or greater state-funded projects under \$250,000 instead of \$500,000, and **policing reform** legislation that increased transparency, training, support, accountability, and civilian oversight. Specific changes to policing include narrowing criteria for use and execution of “no- knock” warrants, repealing and replacing the Maryland’s Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights with uniform disciplinary protocols and penalties, greater transparency and civilian input, increased and ongoing training and assessments, and prohibition on the expungement of misconduct and disciplinary records.

We passed key legislation to decrease the state’s high **infant and maternal mortality rates**; create **Health Equity Resource Communities** to target resources toward reducing health disparities, improve health outcomes and access to primary care, and reduce healthcare costs; increase weekly allowed earnings while receiving **unemployment insurance (UI)** for the remainder of the state-of-emergency from \$50 to \$200, thus allowing beneficiaries to seek an accept available part-time work to supplement their UI benefit; require flexible payments be implemented for employers to make their **UI contributions**; and direct the Department of Health to develop a comprehensive state plan for **COVID-19 testing and vaccine** administration through 2022.

We made permanent many of the policy changes that were initiated on a temporary basis during the state-of-emergency like **telemedicine** access and **remote notarization** of documents, expanded **behavioral health** supports, and mandated **dementia training** for certain healthcare workers and assisted living personnel. We took on underlying problems laid bare by the pandemic by such actions as establishing a **right to counsel** in certain eviction cases as a step in heading off what some have called an impending “eviction tsunami”, improving access for loved ones to persons living in **conjugate facilities** with balancing of public health and the individual's emotional and mental health concerns, and authorizing creation of **First Time Homeowners Savings Accounts** to assist prospective first time home buyers in accumulating the finances for down payment and closing costs, and established an annual tax deduction of up to \$5000 for up to ten years on the accounts.

Sports betting legislation was passed that balances competing interests and ensures small, minority, and women businesses fair access to the licenses. After audits and inquiries into procurement and employment practices revealed unrecognized deficiencies, we passed legislation to improve **state government accountability, transparency, and oversight**. And we moved forward on our transit, environmental and climate change agenda.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Maryland General Assembly passed a balanced \$52.4 billion budget, bolstered by a better than expected economic rebound and federal stimulus dollars; and, in a climate of the pandemic-related fiscal uncertainty, Maryland retained its AAA bond ratings with stable outlooks from each of the three major agencies.

To quote the House Appropriations Committee Chair, Maggie McIntosh, “this is one of the most conservative budgets I have ever been a part of. It has \$2.1 billion in cash reserves. What we did with this historic amount of money is not just spend it: we replenished our rainy day fund. We paid back the Blueprint fund ... We actually paid back a good portion of the relief plan we passed earlier this year. We put cash back into our accounts and we leave here this year with a budget that is not only fully balanced, but it erases any deficit for this year and next year. It gives us a path in Maryland to recovery that is unprecedented ... but it still helps those who need our help.”

The combination of legislative action, the Governor’s supplemental budgets, use of federal RELIEF dollars, and a less- than-anticipated pandemic fiscal impact, due to the diversity of our economic sectors whereby some sectors prospered while others suffered greatly, made it possible. Directed taxpayer relief actions include:

- Expanded the state refundable earned income tax credit for tax years 2020 through 2022, and extended it to ITIN filers.
- Exempted unemployment benefits received by individuals from the state income tax if the taxpayer has a federal adjusted gross income of \$75,000 or less (\$100,000 if married filing jointly) in tax years 2020 and 2021.
- Issued vendor sales tax credits up to \$3,000 for four months.

2021 SPONSORED BILLS

Passed

HB0290 Employment Discrimination - Time for Filing Complaints - Aligns state law with federal law by extending the time period that an individual can report workplace discrimination to the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights from 6 months to 300 days. This makes it less likely that the time to file with the MCCR will expire if good faith efforts to resolve disputes through internal processes should fail.

HB0322 Real Property - Restrictions on Use - Low-Impact Landscaping - While allowing for reasonable design and aesthetic guidelines, prohibits Homeowner Associations from imposing unreasonable restrictions on homeowner’s use of low-impact and sustainable landscaping, including techniques that conserve water, lower maintenance costs, provide pollution prevention, attract pollinators, and create a habitat for native wildlife.

HB0610 Homeowner’s Property Tax Credit - Eligibility of Surviving Family Member - One of my four bills introduced as a work-product of the Attorney General’s Access to Justice Task Force, Life and Health Planning (A2J LHP) Committee, makes it easier for surviving family members of a residential property owner to retain ownership of the home after the death of the homeowner by allowing, in certain situations, family heirs to apply the Homeowner’s Tax Credit for which they are income qualified, to the property that they can better afford the property tax obligation that must be paid before taking ownership. When the family home is the primary asset, allowing advanced application of the tax credit can stabilize neighborhoods.

HB0611 Public Health - Prohibition on Testing Cosmetics on Animals - Closes most remaining loopholes to stopping animal testing of cosmetic products by prohibiting manufacturers in the state from producing or selling cosmetics containing ingredients that have been tested on animals. It includes exemptions to ensure that human safety is not sacrificed as we continue to support the cosmetic industry's move to cruelty-free testing techniques that have largely proven to be effective, efficient, and less costly than animal testing models.

HB1180 Property Tax Credit - Airport Noise Zones - Authorizes local jurisdictions affected by the BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport NextGen flight patterns to expand a residential noise mitigation tax credit by allowing it to be offered at a lower noise threshold and the amount to be tiered based on the noise level.

Passed - Co-sponsored

HB0173 Institutions of Higher Education - State Funding - Revision - Clarifies and strengthens the funding connection between four-year and two-year schools by requiring all non-capital appropriations, regardless of where or how they are budgeted, be included in the annual calculation of community college aid under the Cade funding formula, correcting a long-standing inequity in its application.

HB0278 Economic Development - Job Creation Tax Credit - Qualified Position and Revitalization Area - Alters the definition of a "qualified position" and "revitalization area" to be included in the Job Creation Tax Credit Program to create better-paying and family-sustaining jobs which would set a higher standard for businesses in economic development areas and produce a good return for taxpayer's investments.

Other Action

HB0254 University of Maryland, Baltimore - Study on the Health Effects of Air Traffic Noise - After negotiations with the Maryland Department of Transportation and other stakeholders during the interim led to the study's funding and initiation as specified in HB0310 in 2020, which was passed and vetoed at the start of the pandemic, the bill was no longer needed and withdrawn.

HB0255 Department of Aging - Grants for Aging-in-Place Programs - Funding - By overriding Governor Hogan's veto of my identical 2020 legislation, HB498, base funding of \$100,000 was appropriated for in FY2021, with annual minimal funds budgeted thereafter, for this important grant program established in 2019 to support nonprofit organizations in their expansion of aging-in-place offerings and the number of residents served. This bill was therefore no longer necessary and was withdrawn.

HB0389 General Provisions - State Song - Repeal and Competition - The bill's primary goal of repealing "*Maryland, My Maryland*" as the state song was achieved with the passage of HB0667 by Delegate Sheree Sample-Hughes.

Passed House and Stalled in Senate

HB0236 Department of General Services - Energy Conserving Standard (Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2021) - required the Maryland Department of General Services to develop for State buildings energy conserving lighting directives and, in newly constructed,

acquired, or substantially altered state building, LEED 55 building design and materials standards, as a cost neutral way of reducing energy consumption, making state buildings more sustainable, and mitigating the ecologic impact of bird strikes.

HB0245/HB0257 Election Judges - Training and Signs - Accommodations for Votes in Need of Assistance - enhanced election judge training on the range of accommodations that can be offered to voters, required site-specific training on available accommodations, and posting of information at each particular voting site as to the accommodations available. Passed the House amended in its entirety into Del. Michele Guyton's HB0247.

HB0246 Higher Education - Returned Peace Corps Volunteers - In-State Tuition - allowed Maryland Peace Corps Volunteers who have spent two or more years of service abroad to receive in-state tuition upon their return rather than the much higher non-resident tuition rates. Although returned Peace Corps Volunteers maintain Maryland as their state of residency during their service abroad they no longer qualify for in-state tuition because they do not physically reside in the state for the year preceding the start of the academic studies.

HB0870 Maryland General and Limited Power of Attorney Act - Assistance with Governmental Benefits and Programs - One of my four introduced bills that was a work-product of the Attorney General's Access to Justice Task Force, Life and Health Planning (A2J LHP) Committee, by allowing a person to designate someone to assist with obtaining and managing financial resources and health records to qualify and apply for Medicaid and other government benefits it directly addressed a problem for many aging and vulnerable adults that the isolation restriction and COVID hospitalization exacerbated. I look to reintroduce in the next session.

HB1008 Failure to Pay Rent Proceedings - Sealing of Court Records – required sealing of records of eviction filings that did not result in a judgement for eviction, thus lessening the chances of an otherwise good tenant going through short-term or temporary financial challenges, who is able to satisfactorily resolve w rent dispute with the landlord, or who is subject to frivolous filings from being inappropriately labelled with the “scarlet E” and adversely impacted by spiraling effects on future housing opportunities, personal credit, work options, and the ability to get ahead.

No Action Taken

HB0102 Correctional Services - Inmates, Job Training, and Educational Courses - required an increase in inmate wages from the current \$.17-\$.30 per hour to a rate that would support rehabilitation and restitution goals. The minimal wage rate was specified, with wages garnished for victim restitution, child support, and other court ordered remittances, and savings for reclamation upon release. I plan to reintroduce a version of this legislation in the next session.

HB0938 Real Property - Transfer-on-Death Deed Task Force - a product of the A2J LHP committee, would have convened a stakeholders group to examine possible implementation of a TOD deed for real property, to determine if and how it could be safely implemented in Maryland. While disappointed that committee discussion over moving the bill as a task force amending it into policy led to no action on either point, I will meet with stakeholders over the

interim to achieve the legislative goal and, hopefully, introduce in 2022 specific policy legislation to establish a Maryland Real Property Transfer on Death Deed that will be effective, accessible, and prioritize protection from exploitation.

HB1015 Real Property - Transfer to Heir - Exemption From Prepayment of Taxes would have helped retain family wealth between generations by creating an exception to the requirement for prepayment of real property taxes, allowing instead for owed taxes to be paid after certain transfers of a residence from a decedent to their heir is completed. This was also a product of the A2J LHP. After reviewing the anticipated net effect of 2021 enacted legislation and other approaches with primary stakeholders, it will be determined whether to reintroduce this legislation or something similar in 2022.

HB1071 Health - Health and Wellness Standards - Correctional Facilities and Health Care Facilities - Seeks to improve the health of inmates in Maryland's correctional and health care facilities by requiring plant-based meal options be incorporated into the standard menu offerings. Maryland spends \$150 million per year on inmate health care for chronic degenerative diseases which can be improved and reversed with health plant-based meals. It is yet to be determined if this bill will be reintroduced for the 2022 session.

HB1107 Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Supplemental Rebate Program - Subscription Model for Hepatitis C Therapies - with amendments, would have directed the relevant Departments to negotiate with manufacturers for volume pricing to ensure that all healthcare beneficiaries covered under state plans are able to receive appropriate treatment for Hepatitis C at even the earliest disease stages.

HB1146 Environment - Office of Recycling - Mattresses and Box Springs - with offered amendments would have established the Maryland Mattress Stewardship Program requiring inclusion of mattresses and box springs in local solid waste stream management plans, phased out their landfill deposition and incineration, and promoting composite recycling and alternative waste management programs. I plan to work with stakeholders and key members during the interim to draft legislation that will receive enough support for passage in 2022.

HB1172 Higher Education - Pay-It-Forward Program and Pay-It-Forward Fund - Established - would have helped address the growing college debt crises by establishing, using philanthropic dollars, a pilot program for students financing of Maryland higher education through Income Share Agreements instead of the unsustainable debt-finance model that is the current default.

HB1323 Algorithmic Decision Systems - Procurement and Discriminatory Acts - would have required the State, through enhanced vendor procurement requirements, be deliberate in the implementation and use of algorithmic systems in our policies and programs to begin prospective avoidance of artificial intelligence (AI) and automated screening and selection tools that carry, and thus reinforce, inherent biases which are counter to the State's values and goals and to the tenets of responsible AI. This is an evolving policy area and I will be working with experts in the field to return in 2022 with actionable and effective policy legislation.

BALTIMORE AND HOWARD COUNTY LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

The federal American Rescue Plan secured \$160.5 million dollars for Baltimore County and \$63.2 million dollars for Howard County to help respond to the COVID-19 state-of-emergency, make improvements to vital infrastructure, and assist eligible essential workers with premium pay.

Legislative Bond Initiatives

As the chair of the *Baltimore County* House Delegation, Legislative Bond Initiatives Subcommittee, I can report that the Delegation members were able to secure over \$6.7 million in grants so that the capital projects of local organizations throughout the county can move forward. This includes a \$200,000 grant secured for the **600 Frederick Road Facility** in Southwest Baltimore County (the Christadelphian Church building) to create affordable art studio space as part of fulfilling the vision of Baltimore County's first designated Arts & Entertainment District through a public/private partnership with the Baltimore County Arts Guild. The Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park also received \$340,000 for the **Patapsco Trail Center** and \$400,000 for the **Simpkins Site** renovations, roads, and parking, as well as \$100,000 for the **Maryland Council for Special Equestrians** infrastructure improvements.

Howard County received over \$3.8 million in local bond grants including the following in or of impact to the residents in District 12: \$750,000 for ongoing renovations to the **Harriet Tubman Cultural Center** and \$200,000 capital cost and equipment for the center's **Playground**, \$500,000 for the construction and equipping of the **Patuxent Commons** which would provide supportive independent housing for adults with disabilities, and \$500,000 to Main Street Ellicott City for **Caplan's Facade Restoration**, \$75,000 for the **Community Ecology Institute** barn building upgrades, and \$1 million for the **East Columbia 50+ Center** renovations and upgrades.

Additional Baltimore and Howard County Local

Impact

While there are still people struggling and very real problems to address, Baltimore and Howard county residents should benefit from the operational and capital budgets that we passed and the policy initiatives mentioned. We worked with both counties' administrations to ensure that, where ever possible, the state support to address the needs of county residents was given

Baltimore County - local legislation was passed to:

- Provide that detention and correctional officers be considered and compensated as other public safety employees for workers' compensation of permanent partial disability.
- Establish a collective bargaining process for full or part-time non-management employees of the Baltimore County Public Library.

Howard County - local legislation was passed to:

- Require the Howard County Board of Education include the program capacity of each school, based on the target utilization rates set by the Board, in its annual report to the State Delegation and General Assembly and report on specific plans or the initiation of specific processes for redistricting or an explanation and a plan if redistricting is assessed to not be needed.

- Require that residents whose homes were not included in the School Superintendent’s proposed redistricting plan, but are in the plan which the Howard County Board of Education is to vote on, be given an opportunity to provide public testimony before a vote is taken.
- Limit to six the number of Class A liquor licenses that can be issued within each of the five Howard County election districts unless the number of licenses does not exceed 1 per 4,000 residents in the district.
- Authorize the Howard County Police Department to employ inspectors to investigate alcoholic beverage licensee violations and give the inspectors the authorization to issue civil citations.
- Allow food establishments with certain beer, wine, and liquor licenses can sell such alcoholic beverages, with prepared food, for take-out or off-premises consumption, provided the customer is of legal age and the alcoholic beverage is in a sealed container, and retailers holding certain Class A liquor license to deliver alcoholic beverages in Howard County. Both practices were authorized temporarily during the pandemic and will now be able to continue beyond.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Pandemic restrictions notwithstanding, there are a number of ways that you can learn more, get, and stay involved. Assuming the “new” normal will mostly resemble the “old”, here are some suggestions to consider:

Legacy Leadership Institute on Public Policy: Open to state residents aged 50+ seeking new careers as Legacy Service Leaders during retirement. Applicants apply and interviews are conducted each June. In the fall, participants attend classes and receive training at the University of Maryland College Park to work with members as Legacy Leaders in the General Assembly’s upcoming session. For more information go to <https://sph.umd.edu/departement/hlsa/ca/about-legacy-leadership-institute-public-policy-program>.

Shadow a Delegate: Contact my office if you would like to shadow me in Annapolis for all or part of a day during Session 2022. This includes attending floor sessions, committee, delegation, caucus, and stakeholder meetings, and seeing the inner workings of my office.

Maryland General Assembly: The MGA has an excellent website, <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov>, which allows you to learn anything you’d want to know about your legislators, committees, legislative actions, the legislative process and more. You can hit the [MyMGA](#) link to create an account to track legislation that matters to you!

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Page Program: Pages serve two non-consecutive weeks during session. This year pages worked remotely, but the 2022 format has not yet been determined. Class of 2022 high school seniors who are interested in being a page in the General Assembly during the 90-day 2022 session, which runs from January to April, should contact the county’s Page Coordinator regarding the application and selection process.

Baltimore County: Dr. Dani Biancolli dbiancolli@bcps.org, 410-809-4017

Howard County: Ms. C. Renee Bos christina_bos@hcpss.org, 410-313-6632

For additional questions, or if unable to reach your county coordinator, contact Annapolis Page/Intern Coordinator, Dr. Tawana Offer at Tawana.Offer@mlis.state.md.us, 410-946-5120.

Legislative Intern Program: If you're a college student interested in interning during the 2022 session, which runs from January to April, contact your school's intern coordinator, career counselor, or department dean for an application. Placements are made during the fall semester. Applications should be sent to the Maryland General Assembly Human Resources Department by October 31, 2021. Contact Ms. Carolyn Pelli at 410-946-5120 or Carolyn.Pelli@mlis.state.md.us with questions, see <http://dls.maryland.gov/careers/legislative-intern-program/>.

Scholarships: To help lessen the financial burden that higher education can impose, Maryland General Assembly members offer Senatorial and Delegate scholarships to Maryland residents pursuing post-secondary education at a two- or four-year Maryland college, university or private career school. My scholarships are awarded each spring to students based on a demonstrated combination of aptitude, drive, need, and commitment. Applications are closed for 2021, but I encourage those interested to check my newsletter, webpage (freindsofterrihill.org) or contact my office in December for information on how to apply for 2022.

THANKS

Thanks to my Legislative Director, Amber Potter, and session interns, Tayyiaba Farooq and Mehnaz Islam, for their commitment, hard work, and flexibility to bring this most unique legislative session to a successful conclusion. I owe a debt of gratitude to Andrea Cochran, Marilyn Collins, Tony Davenport, and Yetta Roggerson, for their countless hours of diligent work evaluating over a hundred scholarship applications in 2020 and to former Legislative Director, John Michael Gudger, who coordinated. I will be forever grateful to John Michael, Amber, and volunteers Cynthia Williams and Alan Schneider, for their valued assistance in 2020.

CONTACT ME

I am always interested in your state legislative concerns and hope you will get in touch with me to share them. If you are having difficulty working with state agencies or have local concerns, I or my Legislative Director, Amber Potter, may be able to assist you in reaching a resolution or will do our best to put you in contact with someone who can. You may reach us by phone at 410-841-3378 or email at terri.hill@house.state.md.us.

Be well and stay safe,

