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April 27, 2018

Dear Friend,

Thank you for visiting delegateneilparrott.org and reading about the 2018 General Assembly Session. Your interest in state government and support for what we do in Annapolis is so important, and I appreciate your study of the issues. Before reporting on notable bills that passed and failed, I want to explain the general philosophy that I aim to follow when voting on various bills.

When I took the oath to serve in Annapolis as a Delegate, I swore “to support the Constitution of the United States; and that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the State of Maryland, and support the Constitution and Laws thereof.” The oath goes on, but I want to focus on my duty to serve the citizens by upholding the US Constitution, and its foundation, the Declaration of Independence.

The Declaration indicates that, “*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*”

There is so much packed into those statements. First, the initial sentence acknowledges that there is a defined truth of right and wrong, that we are created, and that we answer to a higher being. Like most of the founding fathers, I believe in the Bible and the standards of right or wrong that it describes.

When talking about the nation of Israel, Deuteronomy 15 indicates that one way God will show his blessing on a nation is when they, “...Will lend to many nations, but they will not borrow; and they will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.” There is also a Biblical proverb that states, “The borrower is slave to the lender.” **This is one reason why I work to minimize our state’s debt and not to spend taxpayer money casually.**

The Declaration also talks about how we are created equal. We are not all the same, but we should all be treated fairly and have an equal chance for success. For this reason, I try to work to pass laws that treat people equally and laws that create equal opportunities.

The Declaration goes on to say that the, “...Creator has given us certain unalienable rights.” It defined a portion of those rights as “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” This phrase was surely inspired by John

Locke who wrote that we had the rights to life, liberty, and property. In the founders' minds, the pursuit of happiness hinged on the ability to have private property. Written earlier, the Virginia Declaration of Rights indicates that among the natural rights are, "the Enjoyment of Life and Liberty, with the Means of acquiring and possessing Property, and pursuing and obtaining Happiness and Safety."

Our founders believed that these rights to life, liberty, and property were granted to us from God, not from the Government. The Declaration indicates that the purpose of the government is to "work to secure these rights." **That is just one of the reasons that I believe that the right to defend yourself and your property by use of the 2nd Amendment rights to bear arms is so important.**

Property rights, religious freedom, and freedom of speech: These are all rights that I believe, as a Maryland State Delegate, I should work to secure or to maintain for citizens of the Free State. Unfortunately, not all bills result in maintaining our freedoms. Mark Twain got it right when he indicated that, "No man's life, liberty, or property are safe while the legislature is in session."

While cynical, Mr. Twain was onto something. Efforts this year to limit the magazine rounds that a gun can hold to 10 or fewer thankfully failed; this bill would have made a criminal of anyone who had higher magazines currently in their possession. Efforts to remove freedom from business owners and even to restrict what kind of counseling people can get unfortunately passed.

In the 2018 General Assembly, many good bills passed, many bad bills were stopped, but unfortunately, not all of them. For me personally, this was a busy session as I introduced and worked on over 20 common-sense bills - the most I have ever done. While I do not place value on simply "getting bills passed," I work hard in Annapolis to make positive changes that will help the families in our state.

I want to thank you again for contacting me this year. Your input regarding specific legislation is vital as I research bills that come before me for votes.

What follows is a summary of key pieces of legislation that were introduced and acted on during 2018, the 438th session of the Maryland General Assembly. During this session, 2,861 bills were introduced and 935 bills passed both houses. Of the bills I introduced, two bills passed and two bills resulted in positive policy changes, without needing to be enacted. Other bills I put forward were not going to pass, but needed to be introduced to start or continue the conversation toward making long-lasting positive changes that will help Marylanders, like the need for accurate, federal representation through real redistricting reform.

As you read the bills, please note that the starred bills (*) are bills that I introduced. You can learn more about those bills and other bills that I introduced on my website. Specifically, you'll be able to find PowerPoint presentations that provide greater detail.

It is an honor to serve you in the Maryland General Assembly. If you have any questions, thoughts for next year, or if I can be of service to you in the future, please contact me by email at neil.parrott@house.state.md.us or by phone at (301) 660-4263.

Sincerely,



Neil C. Parrott
Maryland House of Delegates, District 2A

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TAXES AND FEES:

HB 875 Protecting Maryland Taxpayers Act of 2018 – At the end of 2017, the Federal Government passed the largest federal Tax Cut and simplification of the tax code since the Reagan Era. However, these Federal changes affected Maryland tax-payers, due to the way deductions are calculated, creating a “windfall” tax increase in Maryland.

In order to prevent this increase in Maryland taxes, Governor Hogan proposed the Protecting Maryland Taxpayers Act of 2018, which would have created a permanent provision in Maryland that prevents changes in the Federal tax code from affecting Maryland state and local taxes. The legislation would have enabled Marylanders who choose to take the standard tax deduction at the federal level to itemize deductions at the state level if they chose. This bill would have protected Marylanders from an income tax increase of more than \$750 million. \$550 million in new state tax dollars and \$200 million in new local tax dollars.

Unfortunately, the bill never came out of Committee. While Governor Hogan wanted to allow taxpayers to keep more of their money, Mike Busch and Mike Miller want to keep the money to balance the budget and to keep in reserve for future budget increases. The legislature did manage to cut \$100 million of the increase by increasing the standard deduction on Maryland taxes and by giving young, single people the ability to collect more state dollars than they paid in taxes, when they file their tax returns by using the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Essentially, 9% of Marylanders will pay significantly more in their state taxes than they would normally have paid, costing the whole group \$650 million more in taxes according to the Comptroller’s Office. Speaker Busch, President Miller and Governor Hogan all said they would try to keep this group of taxpayers from paying more in state taxes. Unfortunately, at the end of the day it was only Governor Hogan who worked hard to fulfill his commitment to Marylanders.

HB 327 Military Retirement Income – This year, the General Assembly unanimously passed HB 327, which created \$15,000 exemption for military retirement income from State taxation for individuals 55 and older. This exemption will be phased in over four years, beginning in tax year 2019.

This legislation is important because it will help retain military residents in Maryland who otherwise may have moved in order to pay less in retirement taxes. We passed a similar bill called the hometown heroes act for fire and police last year. I would like to see these type of bills continue to expand so that eventually we can remove the retirement tax altogether like other nearby states have done.

HB 296 Retirement Income of Correctional Officers – this bill passed unanimously through both the House and the Senate. It extends Governor Hogan’s Hometown Heroes Tax credit to include correctional officers. This will save correctional officers \$1.2 million in 2019.

I was so happy to support this bill as a way of thanking our correctional officers for all the work they do to help keep Maryland residents safe. In Washington County we have three correctional facilities, which means this tax break will help Washington County residents and put money back in their pockets.

SB 184 Income Tax – Personal Exemptions – Alterations – This legislation passed early in the session and allows Marylanders to continue to claim personal exemptions, even though personal exemptions were removed from the Federal Tax Code, and Maryland typically follows the Federal Tax Code. According to an analysis from Comptroller Franchot’s Office, this legislation prevented taxes from being raised on Marylanders because of the Federal changes by up to \$1.2 billion. This was good legislation. While the resulting new taxes still are significant and increase state and local taxes for approximately only 9% of Marylanders, without SB 184, the new taxes would have been significantly higher and would have affected all Marylanders who owed Maryland taxes.

SB 134 – Small Business Relief Tax Credit – This bill provides income tax credits to small businesses who must provide paid sick leave to their employees. The paid sick leave bill passed both houses in 2017, then Governor Hogan vetoed the bill. Unfortunately, in 2018, both houses over-rode his veto. This is Governor Hogan’s new initiative to help ease the burden that the paid sick leave bill will have on small businesses. While the credit represents just a fraction of the costs required to offer the paid sick leave, at least some businesses will be able to cut their taxes through this incentive program.

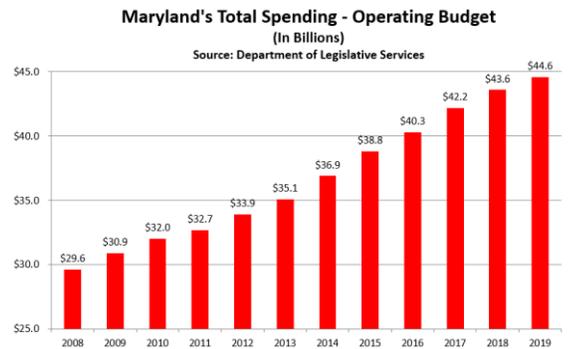
BUDGET:

Maryland’s Fiscal Year 2019 Operating Budget

Unfortunately, after the General Assembly’s actions, the overall budget growth was 2.2% over last year’s approved budget. This created a \$970 million increase in spending. The chart on the right shows the drastic increase in spending since 2008.

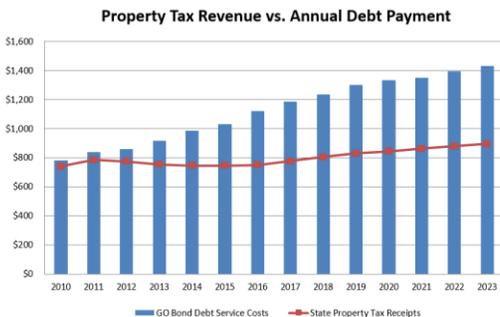
In order to reverse the significant tax increases or to provide meaningful tax reductions and to help businesses to come to Maryland, this rate of spending increase needs to be reduced.

The Tax Foundation, a non-profit, non-partisan think tank ranks Maryland as #43 when it comes to business friendliness. This is a decrease from last year when we were #42. Only 7 states rank worse than Maryland as far as being less business friendly, and none of them are our neighbors. In order to attract more jobs to Maryland and to help more Maryland families move from welfare to working, we need to improve the business environment in our state. The way to start this is painfully simple. Stop spending and borrowing so much money.



Maryland’s Fiscal Year 2018 Capital (Debt Budget) – Did you know that this year, Maryland owes almost \$54 billion, and that each Maryland citizen currently owes \$9,042 according to the Maryland Debt Clock? Last year, it was \$53 billion and \$8,799 for each of us. Thankfully, Governor Hogan submitted a Capital Budget that would have borrowed less than \$1 billion. In fact, the Governor capped borrowing at \$995 million.

Unfortunately, the General Assembly, did not use the same restraint and increased the borrowing so that we are going to borrow \$1.091 billion in fiscal year 2019. To put this in perspective, in Governor O’Malley’s last year, Fiscal Year 2015, Maryland borrowed \$1.18 billion in new debt. Governor Hogan and the General Assembly reduced the borrowing so that in Fiscal Year 2016 Maryland borrowed \$1.045 billion, for Fiscal Year 2017 \$1.005 billion, and for Fiscal Year 2018 the Capital Budget borrowed \$1.065 billion. By action of the



legislature, borrowing is the highest it’s been since Governor O’Malley’s budget. The Governor can line item veto from the capital budget, so hopefully we will see a few lines vetoed so that the actual Capital Budget returns to under \$1 billion, or less, of new debt.

While Maryland’s capital budget borrows less than in Governor O’Malley’s tenure, **Maryland must stop borrowing so much money.** Maryland’s property tax is supposed to be the primary agent used to pay for the principle and interest payment on the

state debt, but the funds collected from the property taxes don’t come close to the yearly principle interest payments. In order for the property taxes to actually cover the cost of debt payments, Legislative Services indicated that Maryland would have **to forego all new debt for the next 7-8 years**, and then we would be able to pay the minimum payments from our property taxes.

Since the property tax cannot pay the debt service (interest expense) each year, money from the General Fund makes up the difference. In Fiscal Year 2019, Maryland is projected to receive \$829 million from property taxes, but is required to pay over \$1.3 billion in debt service, a difference of almost \$1/2 billion that must come out of the General Fund monies. It is only a matter of time until the state will have to significantly increase our property taxes to pay the debt service.

In many ways, what we do in the Capital Budget, is **like using our children's credit cards**. We run up debt in their names, reap the benefit of all projects, and then we leave the responsibility of paying to future generations. **This is not responsible government**, and I voted against this irresponsible borrowing bill.

GUN REFORM:

HB 888 – Bump Stocks – A new bill this year dealt with Rapid Trigger Activators, commonly referred to as “Bump Stocks.” Bump Stocks are an accessory that one can add to their firearm to cause it to fire more rounds faster. This legislation would have banned Bump Stocks in the State of Maryland and made it illegal to own or possess a Bump Stock, punishable by up to 3 years in prison and a \$5,000 fine for a first offense.

I voted against this bill. While I do not think that Bump Stocks are a necessary item for adhering to Second Amendment rights, I do think that the punishment is much too harsh for a first offense of owning a mere accessory without any grandfather clause for people who already own them. This bill bans the possession and sale of bump stocks as of October 1, 2018. However, the Republicans in the Judiciary Committee where I serve, successfully amended the bill to allow citizens to continue to own bump stocks when they are added to the prohibited list by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, should a federal exemption be allowed.

HB 1302 - Red Flag Bill – The Red Flag Bill establishes an “extreme risk prevention order.” If a person poses a threat to himself or others, a judge can order a seizure of their firearms. On its face, this may sound like a good idea, and indeed, it has already passed in 5 other states. However, Maryland’s bill is too broad in its definitions, and gives acquaintances too much leeway to take make complaints that result in taking their neighbors guns without due process. The standard in this bill gives judges just a 50/50 test to determine if the firearms should be confiscated.

I voted against this bill, but the bill passed. I think that the standard should be higher than a 50/50 chance when Second Amendment rights are involved.

SCHOOL SAFETY LEGISLATION

HB 1816 – Safe Schools Act of 2018 - This year, we had a great amount of discussion on school safety legislation. Several bills from both sides of the aisle introduced legislation to help keep our children safe in schools. Governor Hogan introduced the “Safe Schools Act of 2018” which created a \$150 million plan to add more school resource officers to Maryland public schools, create single points of access, add door alarms, and add security cameras. The bill would have created the first-ever statewide standards for school safety. The bill would require every school system in our state to conduct a mandatory, annual, school-by-school safety assessment to include a specific plan of action in the event of an emergency. Unfortunately, this legislation was held in committee and **not given a vote, so it could not pass**. Parts of this bill were included in SB1265 which did pass and is written more about in the version of this letter that is printed online.



HB 760 – School Employees – Handgun Permits - Delegate Rick Impallaria introduced HB 760, which would have allowed public school teachers to be trained to have access to firearms during school times in order to protect their students. It would be up to the local school boards to determine if they wanted to adopt this type of

policy and to set standards to allow teachers to help protect their schools. Only the teachers who requested to participate and received proper training would be involved.

In my committee, Jim Irvine from FASTER Saves Lives shared how Ohio has implemented these types of policies with great success. Ohio implemented these policies after the Columbine, Ohio, school shooting. It was encouraging to see positive results, in Ohio and I hope Maryland will one day allow these options. I would have voted for the bill, but unfortunately, the bill was not given a vote in the committee this year.

SB 1265 – Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018 – This bipartisan school safety legislation borrowed aspects of Governor Hogan’s Safe Schools Act of 2018. It establishes a School Safety Subcabinet to collaborate with local school systems, law enforcement agencies, state and local government agencies, parents, and other stakeholders to provide a comprehensive, coordinated approach to school safety. Starting in 2020, this bill provides \$10 million per year to the Safe Schools Fund. Dollars from this fund will be distributed to local school systems and law enforcement agencies to fund school resource officers or local law enforcement coverage for schools that do not have school resource officers.

The bill also included the establishment of a training curriculum for school resource officers. The legislation requires each school system to designate a School Safety Coordinator to work with the school system and law enforcement. Local school systems must also designate a Mental Health Services Coordinator to coordinate existing mental health services and referral procedures for services within the school system and work with local health departments and other local entities to ensure that referred students obtain the necessary mental health services. The bill provides for the establishment of school safety drills and requires local school systems to establish regular safety evaluations at every public school in their jurisdiction. Governor Hogan signed this bill that bill passed unanimously in the House and passed in the Senate with only one dissenting vote.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION:

HB 1401 – SAFE Act – Maryland once again attempted to become a Sanctuary State with the SAFE Act. Maryland could have harbored illegal immigrants in Maryland, without fear of being deported, no matter what crimes they have committed in other states. Thankfully, this harmful bill did not pass this year, in large part because of many legal immigrants from Montgomery County, who came to Annapolis and testified until 1:30 AM in opposition to the bill. They spoke about how hard they worked to come to the US legally, and that immigration laws must be followed.



A counter bill, HB 1308 "Keeping Our Communities Safe Act", was offered by Delegate Kathy Szeliga and would have demanded that the State of Maryland cooperate with ICE Officials to deport illegal aliens. Unfortunately, this bill was voted down in the Judiciary Committee on a party-line vote. This legislation is important not only because it would force Maryland to comply with federal law, but it would also help keep Maryland communities safe from growing illegal alien gang involvement, such as MS-13 in Baltimore.

Thankfully, three counties in Maryland, Anne Arundel, Frederick and Harford, have implemented 287G programs. These programs allow specially trained local officers to serve as ICE Officers and to help enforce immigration laws. On the other hand, several Maryland Counties and the City of Baltimore have gone the other direction and have declared themselves sanctuary areas where cooperation with ICE is non-existent.

SB 317 – Higher Education Degree and Job Certification without Debt Act of 2018 – This bill would have forced taxpayer-funded, state scholarships to be awarded to illegal aliens. The bill passed both in the House and in the Senate. It looked like it was going to pass, but thankfully, the reconciliation committees report did not get voted on in time before midnight on the last day of session, and the bill failed.

Unfortunately, however, in Maryland, illegal aliens already receive subsidized college tuition because they have been granted in-state tuition benefits. When the graduate, they still cannot work legally in our country.

Meanwhile, legal aliens who are here with a green card have to pay the full amount of college tuition rather than have 2/3 of the cost paid for by Maryland taxpayers, like illegal aliens receive.

Rewarding illegal activity is not good policy for Maryland. However, good news happened in Arizona this week. Their State Supreme Court ruled that in-state tuition **could not** be given to illegal aliens. While a detailed opinion is not yet available, it is evident that Arizona's Supreme Court recognizes that the bill violates the rule of law, and that our laws should respect the taxpayers' money.

SOCIAL:

HB 902/SB 1028 – Prohibition of Conversion Therapy for Minors – Late this session, I was alarmed to see that SB 1028 had passed through the Senate and was sent to the House of Delegates. Previously introduced, it didn't seem like this bill would pass this year.

The bill specifies that licensed counselors or psychologists should counsel minors struggling with their sexual identity to embrace a gay lifestyle, and that they may not talk about ways to "eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same gender." *This is censorship in its most basic form.*

The bill forbids Maryland counselors from providing Judeo-Christian type counseling to minors struggling with their sexual identity. **There is no religious exemption.**

This bill also restricts healthcare. It prohibits the state from providing healthcare coverage for conversion talk-therapy. Even if the patient goes out-of-state to receive this therapy, because a provider in Maryland is banned from doing so, the patient still will not have health insurance to help pay for the price of this therapy. This is an unconstitutional infringement on First Amendment Rights. Not only that, but it is also an **extreme government overreach into the patient/counselor relationship**.

As this bill got to the House, I introduced three amendments to the bill that would help make the bill less harmful. One amendment would have limited the prohibition to simply apply to physical conversion therapy, also known as aversion therapy. This amendment was stopped right away because aversion therapy simply is not happening by licensed professionals and is not what the authors of the bill intended. They want to stop any therapy that might criticize the homosexual lifestyle. The legislation forbids a counselor from even suggesting that one might want to pursue a heterosexual lifestyle. If they do, then they face losing their license and paying a fine.

One amendment added a religious exemption to the bill. This was not accepted, even though Nevada added an acknowledgement of a religious exemption in their similar bill. This amendment would have protected churches, or parochial schools who refer a student to receive conversion, talk-therapy to a Pastor, Priest, or anyone else, not necessarily just professional.

A third amendment would have eliminated the provision that indicates that no state funds could be used to provide grants for or contracts with an entity that "conducts or refers an individual to receive conversion therapy." Many parochial schools in Maryland receive public funds through the BOOST Program, or the Aging Schools Program. This legislation would force a school to either go against their religion, or to forgo important grants.

In the end, the bill passed 95-27, with 19 Delegates not voting. I have never seen that many people not vote before. I am still hopeful that the Governor will veto this legislation so that Maryland children can get counseling that could help them, and so that professional counselors are not gagged from presenting all options.

HJ 5 - Resolution Against Pornography* – Late last year, I had a constituent reach out to me to promote legislation that would declare pornography a public health crisis. This is a bill that has been passed in 6 other states, with Florida passing it just this year.

This legislation is desperately needed as pornography seriously hurts those who are exposed to it. Statistics show that people who watch porn are more likely to “show an increased behavioral intent to rape and are more likely to believe rape myths.” In a time when the #MeToo movement is exposing the prevalence of sexual assault in our society, we should be attacking one of the major contributing factors to sexual crimes, pornography.

I was glad to promote this legislation on behalf of my constituent and was glad that he and his son were able to come testify in support of the bill. Unfortunately, this legislation was voted down in the Rules Committee, but I am hopeful we can pass this important legislation in future years.

HB 1335 – Parental Consent for Minors Seeking Abortions* - Did you know that a minor needs parental permission to take Tylenol at school, but is allowed to have an abortion—a major medical procedure—without parental consent or notification? Current Maryland law allows for children to have abortions without parents even being notified that their child is considering a life altering procedure.

If their child is pregnant, parents should know so that they can help the child make the best decision possible for their situation. Not only that, but parents could help identify if foul play was involved and work to stop it from continuing. Abortions can have many physical and emotional consequences long into the future, and minors should not be at risk for being coerced into having an abortion without parents being notified.

Paid Sick Leave – Veto Override – Last year Democrats passed a paid sick leave bill which was quickly vetoed by Governor Hogan. The Governor tried to work with the Democrats to have a more common-sense bill last year. Before session this year, he even modified his original position to try to just get rid of the most harmful parts of the paid sick leave bill.

I am opposed to this kind of Legislation, especially because in Western Maryland it means that businesses may simply move either to West Virginia or to Pennsylvania to avoid this new mandate. Even so, at least Governor Hogan’s proposed bill would have included moderate protection for businesses. The Governor’s initiative would have applied only to employers with 50 or more employees, providing up to 40 hours of accrued “paid time off”, that could be used for any reason. Employers with less than 50 employees would receive a tax credit to incentivize providing the benefit.

Rather than move forward with Governor Hogan’s more common-sense proposal the General Assembly used blunt political force and overrode his veto of **HB 1- Paid Sick Leave**, indicating that they would change the most troubling parts of the bill later. This legislation mandates up to 40 hours of “sick and safe” leave for employees who work for businesses with 15 or more employees, carrying heavy fines for non-compliance.

This bill also requires paid sick leave for part-time employees who work as little as 8 hours per week, and it does not exclude temporary seasonal employees. So a teenager working after school, as well as summer workers in Ocean City, will qualify for paid sick leave under this bill. This bill will likely have a harmful effect not only for businesses, but also for jobs, and therefore, families. Bills like these encourage businesses to automate by forcing them to become creative to reduce their labor costs so that they can stay in business. In one example, we are already seeing fast food restaurants moving toward self-ordering kiosks where the cost of labor is too high. This type of legislation tends to hurt the very people the Legislature claims to be trying to help.



Unfortunately, even after the bill was passed, over Governor Hogan’s veto, within the first week of session, no effort was made to fix any parts of the bill that are so obviously flawed. I have heard from many Washington County business owners, who confirm the complaints that I heard before the bill was passed. This bill is bad for businesses, hurts competitiveness with other states, and drives up the cost for producing goods.

HB 1477 – Medicaid Work and Volunteer Requirements* - President Trump’s recent tax cut bill had a provision that now allows states to begin requiring work and volunteer requirements for Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) in order to receive Medicaid. These individuals are fully capable of working or volunteering and don’t have anyone they are taking care of, older or younger. As a result of the federal change, I proposed HB 1477, which would allow Washington County to begin implementing this work/volunteer requirement as a pilot program.



ABAWDs would have the same work requirements as they do for Food Stamps— 20 hours/week participating in a work program, or 6 hours/week volunteering. When Washington County began requiring work requirements for Food Stamps, the changes were astounding. In April 2016 only 42 percent of ABAWDs in Washington County were employed. By July 2016, after the requirements were re-installed, 62 percent of ABAWDs were employed. It would be great to see this happen for Medicaid recipients as well. The Washington County Commissioners supported this change, but unfortunately, this local bill was voted down by the Appropriations Committee by a vote of 24-0.

HEALTHCARE:

SB 1267/HB 1795 – Maryland Health Benefit Exchange – Establishment of a Reinsurance Program –

Because of the Federal Government’s failure to produce a comprehensive health care solution, health insurance rates on Maryland’s individual market were set to increase by 50 percent or more in the coming year. After nearly a decade of increasing rates under the “Un”Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, the overall stability and foundation of Maryland’s healthcare market was in clear jeopardy.

Governor Hogan and his team worked for more than a year to find potential solutions to this problem. This session, he brought together a bipartisan team to address the crises head-on to protect Marylanders from this 50 percent increase in their health insurance rates. HB 1795 creates the structure for a reinsurance program to be administered by the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE), which is predicted to help stabilize rates for the next several years. This bill passed the House and the Senate, and the Governor has already signed the measure into law.

The bill relies on a fund created by taxing insurance providers \$380 million and on federal grant money to pay insurance costs that are higher than a certain range. This fund then allows the insurance companies to lower premiums, since the very high bills will be paid for through the reinsurance program.

This is a temporary program that helps get Maryland through the next couple of years, but the real solution needs to happen at the federal level to remove Obamacare and return to affordable and practical private market solutions.

Of the reinsurance program proposed at the federal level, the Heritage Foundation indicated that, "This bailout approach is wrong and should be abandoned." A report published by the group indicated that, "It is fiscally imprudent and unnecessary." It is the ACA’s "radical regulatory overreach," that has caused chaos in the health insurance market, the report says.

Heritage Foundation Source (<https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2018/0410/States-adopt-reinsurance-pools-to-keep-premiums-low>)

HB 1782 – Maryland Health Care Access Act of 2018 – With the cost of healthcare skyrocketing, the Maryland Health Care Access Act of 2018 creates a bail-out of Obamacare in the individual market in Maryland as need to fund the reinsurance passed in HB1795. The individual market already costs a fortune for anyone not signed up with Medicare and the rates are starting to skyrocket. This bill levies a 2.75% tax on all healthcare insurance providers in order to reduce the costs for this one market.

Obamacare is becoming more and more harmful to consumers. While Maryland can try to prop it up, at the federal level a complete overhaul of the program is needed. For now, the Democrats in the US Senate will not allow a vote on Obamacare since they have the votes to filibuster changes where 60 votes are needed to take votes rather than a simple majority needed to pass better legislation.

Unfortunately, bailing out Obamacare only raises fees and will not help bring premiums down for families experiencing higher health insurance rates each year. By increasing fees, this legislation does not make healthcare more accessible or affordable. I voted “no” on this legislation.

ELECTIONS

HB 1563 - Voter ID* - Elections have serious consequences. We need to make sure that each Maryland citizen gets one, and only one, vote, because every fraudulent vote counteracts one honest vote and restricts your voice in your government.



Several state legislatures have adopted laws requiring voters to show identification at the polls. The map on the right shows the laws at the beginning of 2018. West Virginia just passed a voter ID law which is a strict, non-photo ID required. (Dark blue)

HB 1563 is a bill I introduced this year that would require every voter to show a photo ID when voting. For those who do not have a photo ID, the law provides that the MVA will provide an ID, free-of-charge when needed for voting.

Without Voter ID, someone could vote several times without ever being caught. This chance of fraud becomes very important during close elections such as *Bush v. Gore* in 2000, and much more recently a State Delegate Race in Virginia. Last November, Virginia had to settle a disputed State Delegate seat by casting lots. One ballot would determine if there was a tie and what party would have control over the House of Delegates. In cases like this it is imperative that officials be able to verify that votes were not fraudulent.

It is ridiculous that a privilege as important as voting is not protected by something as simple as ensuring that the person showing up to vote is who they say they are. You must show ID to rent library books, to register your children for Little League, and to visit people in the hospital...but not to vote? Sadly, Democrats voted against voter ID this year, but we cannot stop fighting for fraud-free elections.

HB 1326 - Proof of Citizenship* – In Maryland, one can register to vote online, and has only the honor system of checking a box affirming “I am a US Citizen” to hold him accountable. As a deterrent to voter fraud, I would like to see those who register to vote be required to submit proof of their citizenship before they vote.

Our neighboring state, Pennsylvania, allegedly had more than 100,000 non-citizens registered to vote due to a “glitch” with the Department of Motor Vehicles. This “glitch” could have affected the outcomes of numerous elections, and should never have happened. Maryland has a chance to avoid Pennsylvania’s mistake and fight fraud before it becomes news.

HB 1326 would simply require that the Board of Elections actually verify that people who register to vote are US Citizens, and that only US Citizens are allowed to vote. If we want to create elections that everyone can have faith in, we should enforce existing law where only American citizens should be allowed to vote.

HB 532 - Same Day Voting Registration – While the election integrity bills that I presented would help keep Maryland’s elections fair and just, the Democrats passed legislation that will make it even easier to cheat. HB 532 would allow for same-day voter registration, meaning that one could register to vote and then vote on the

same day. This would allow non-Maryland residents to register to vote, claiming that they plan to move to Maryland, but then never actually move to Maryland.

We saw this occur in the 2016 Elections in New Hampshire. Controversy has surrounded New Hampshire, as 6,000 votes came from same-day-registered voters with out-of-state driver's licenses, most of which were never updated to New Hampshire licenses after the election. Both a US Senate race and the Presidential contest in New Hampshire were decided by less than the 6,000 disputed votes. Why would we want to open Maryland up to the same opportunity for voter fraud? I voted against this bill, but unfortunately, it passed.

TRANSPORTATION

HB 889 – Parallel Parking* – In 2015, the Motor Vehicle Administration removed parallel parking from the State Driver's License Test. They argue that the two-point reverse turn tests the same skills as parallel parking, making parallel parking redundant. I disagree.



Many people believe that parallel parking should still be tested, because it is a valuable and often necessary skill. If one is visiting a city, or even a smaller town, oftentimes parallel parking is one of the only practical options. If one cannot properly parallel park, they become a safety hazard and interrupt the flow of traffic. Parallel parking spaces are also a necessary design tool for narrow roads. Angled or straight-in parking requires more road space, and unused parallel parking spaces are wasted space when parking is at a premium.

Currently, the majority of states require parallel parking as part of the driver's test. We had support from driving schools, municipalities, and parents for this bill. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass this year. The committee did vote to send a letter to the MVA requesting that they add parallel parking back to the driver's test in Maryland. I'm glad for that action and hope the MVA changes their current policy.

HB 959 – Pedestrian Hybrid Signals* - It came to my attention this past autumn that the options for pedestrian signals in Maryland are too limited. Towns like Sharpsburg and Boonsboro have busy streets during peak tourist times where pedestrians have trouble crossing the street. However, the streets do not meet the requirements for installation of a regular traffic signal according to Maryland Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Md-MUTCD).



The Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB) provides more flexibility and options for the State Highway Administration at problematic pedestrian crossings. When a pedestrian wishes to cross the street, they can activate the signal and cars are required to stop.

This year, HB 959 did not advance. Even so, because of this bill, the State Highway Administration (SHA) has assured me that they will update the Md-MUTCD to allow PHB devices and will begin utilizing them beyond their few pilot location installations. I don't know if the intersections I mentioned in Sharpsburg and Boonsboro will qualify for PHB devices, but at least it is an option that the SHA can consider where they could not before.

LOCAL/MISCELLANEOUS BILLS

SB 324/HB 1202 – Serving Underage Individuals – Penalties – In Washington County, anyone who serves alcohol to an underage individual faces a penalty of up to 2 years in jail, and up to a \$1,000 fine. The penalty was set so high that most of the time no penalties were assessed at all to servers serving underage drinkers, just the establishments paying their fine. This year, the Washington County Delegation and the Washington County Liquor Board worked together to reduce the consequences for first-time offenders so that a penalty would be enforced and so that servers would know that they could be fined for serving underage customers.

This bill allows first time offenders to pay a fine of \$100, second time offenders to pay a larger fine of \$250, and on the third offense, face up to 2 years in jail and a \$1,000 fine. This bill is important for Washington County servers because it allows one to learn from their mistakes first before throwing them in jail. This bill also shows that some servers may have contempt for the law and ignore the necessity to ensure that no one under 21 is being served alcohol. If they continue to ignore the law, they show contempt for the law, and a harsher sentence is necessary.

HB 903 – Prolonged Parking of Inoperable or Disabled Vehicles* - Occasionally motorists leave their abandoned vehicles on the side of the road for long periods of time. Some are obviously inoperable, such as those with missing tires or smashed windshields. This makes the neighborhood look unkempt, which can result in an increase in crime and reduction of property values.

Last year, I had a constituent and a Home Owner’s Association (HOA) contact me because inoperable vehicles were legally parked on a public road within the HOA. The HOA had no authority to enforce their HOA rules regarding inoperable vehicles since it was parked on a public road and not on the private property overseen by the HOA. In addition, the police could not do anything because the cars were safely parked on the shoulder of the road and one vehicle was abandoned, which would have allowed for towing.

In response, my bill passed, prohibiting the parking of an inoperable vehicle on a highway in Washington County, if left on the roadway for more than 7 days. The bill allows the vehicle to be towed after notice has been provided showing intent to tow for at least 72 hours in advance of the towing. In addition, violators of the law are guilty of a misdemeanor and could be subject to a fine of up to \$500.

HB 1232 - Cellphone Disclosures* - In 2015, Congress passed, and President Obama signed, the “Unlocking Consumer Choice and Wireless Competition Act.” The Act indicates that cell phone providers must unlock their phones upon request after customers fully pay for the devices. This was a fantastic law for consumer choice, however, this act did not address which phones will work on which carriers with full functionality. It seems that carriers have found a way around the federal law that still prevents customers from easily switching carriers.

Carriers use different air interface technologies to provide wireless network access. AT&T and T-Mobile Operate on a Global System for Mobile (GSM) Communications network using a SIM card; while Sprint, Verizon, and US Cellular operate on a Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) network. Carriers “lock” cell phones to prevent them from operating on another carrier’s network, but now must unlock them according to the federal law. Even if “unlocked”, however, the phone may not work on other networks. They also may not be fully functional on those networks, and may only provide slow and interspersed connectivity.

Which iPhones work on which carriers?

Phone and Model#	AT&T	Sprint	T-Mobile	Verizon
2017 iPhone X A1901/iPhone 8 A1905 / iPhone 8 Plus A1897	X		X	
iPhone X A1865/ iPhone 8 A1863/ iPhone 8 Plus A1864		X		X
2016 iPhone 7 A1660/ iPhone 7 Plus A1601		X		X
iPhone 7 A1779/ iPhone 7 Plus A1784	X		X	
2016 iPhone SE A1662	X		X	X
iPhone SE A1723		X		
2015 iPhone 6s A1633/ iPhone 6s Plus A1634	X			
iPhone 6s A1688/ iPhone 6s Plus A1687		X	X	X
2014 iPhone 6 A1549	X		X	X
iPhone 6 A 1586		X		

HB 1323 would provide consumer protections. Carriers would either need to sell phones that work on all networks, or provide a disclosure to the consumer indicating which major networks the phone will be able to operate on as the phone being sold. The disclosure would indicate which major networks the phone will work on when it’s unlocked. The consumer would then sign the disclosure acknowledging they are aware of the information stated. That way, the customer could be aware of what their options could be in the future.

As the chart above shows, it should be noted that even the exact type of advertised phone, say an iPhone X, actually has different versions that work on different networks. The phones’ serial numbers tell you what type of phone it is and which networks it could then work on. It is possible though, for the carriers to sell phones that work on all of the major networks. As an example, the Galaxy S9 has an unlocked version that works on all of the networks. The Galaxy S9 is also sold in versions specific to carriers that could then only be transferred to a limited number of other carriers depending on the serial number of the phone.

HB 807 – Transportation – Highway User Revenues – Distribution – Restoration of the Highway User Revenue (HUR) has been an issue for counties and municipalities for nearly 10 years, when the O’Malley Administration started robbing those dollars to balance the State’s budget. HUR dollars come from gas taxes, titling fees, and other monies generated from motorists. Historically, about 30 percent of those dollars were sent back to counties and municipalities for local road construction and repair. Last year, I introduced legislation to return HUR money back to the counties and local governments, but, it did not pass. As a result, I reintroduced legislation this year, which I withdrew because HB 807 passed unanimously in both houses. HB 807 creates a formula by which local governments will receive additional HUR dollars. The restoration is only temporary, but it’s a step in the right direction toward getting these dollars back in the hands of local governments.

SB 877 – Promoting extraordinary Innovation in Maryland’s Economy (PRIME) Act – In September, 2017, Amazon announced that they were looking to create a second headquarters (HQ2). Over 200 cities applied and in January, Amazon announced that Montgomery County, MD had made the list of 20 finalists.

Wherever Amazon locates, they will bring strong economic activity with them. Amazon has indicated that they plan to invest approximately \$5 billion in construction costs and that they will hire up to 50,000 employees with an average salary of \$100,000. Analysts estimate that if HQ2 were to move to Montgomery County, with the direct investment by Amazon as well as industries needed to help and support HQ2 would generate \$17 billion in increased economic activity each year, create more than 100,000 jobs, with nearly \$7.7 billion in compensation.

In an effort to lure Amazon to Maryland, the PRIME Act was introduced by Governor Hogan. According to the Baltimore Sun’s report, this legislation provides \$6.5 billion in tax incentives for Amazon and \$2 billion in infrastructure and transportation infrastructure improvements. However, these benefits are only available, if Amazon pays an average salary of \$100,000 per year at HQ2. Amazon must also spend a minimum of \$4.5 billion in capital expenditures over 17 years, and employ at least 40,000 people within the 17-year period. If the goals are not met, the tax incentive is reduced accordingly.



While opponents of this legislation called the deal unfair, there is actually a term for this deal. A Pareto Improvement, “is a policy or action that makes at least one person better off without hurting anyone else.” This deal will help Maryland by bringing a proposed \$17 billion in increased economic activity, and will help Amazon by providing them with benefits for settling in Maryland. No other businesses in Maryland will be hurt by this deal since HQ2 will be built somewhere.

If Amazon located HQ2 in another city, the bill becomes moot. Even so, this bill gives the State of Maryland the tools to compete to get the headquarters to move here, and I for one hope that Amazon chooses to settle in Maryland. If they do, even after their tax reduction, the new taxes they will generation as a company and as individual filers will provide extra money to Maryland’s budget which I hope will be used to help provide a tax cut for all of us.