

Passed Priority Legislation

April 2021

OVERRIDEN VETOES

HB 1 – Funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Passed Enrolled)

While the State has increased operating and capital funding to the HBCUs over the past decade, additional investment is needed to increase the availability of new and distinct programming to attract more students to HBCUs resolving a decade-long federal court case. HB1 provides \$577M to resolve the program duplication issues in Maryland’s four HBCUs and level the playing field for all students – regardless of background, or race, or college they attend.

HB 37 - Procurement - Prevailing Wage – Applicability

House Bill 37 ensures that contracted workers are paid a fair wage in state government projects. The bill expands Maryland’s prevailing wage laws to apply to State contracts with a value of \$250,000+ instead of \$500,000+ and for projects for which the State provides at least 25 percent of the construction costs instead of 50 percent.

Police Reform and Accountability Act of 2021

HB 670 – The Police Reform and Accountability Act of 2021

House Bill 670 overhauls the police disciplinary process and makes Maryland the first state in the nation to fully repeal the Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights. It replaces it with a civilian–driven, public–facing approach to police discipline. The bill also requires increased training and assessments for officers:

- Fully repealing of the Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights
 - Enhancing civilian–driven transparency in police misconduct
 - Supporting civilian complaints
 - Imposing swift and uniform penalties for police misconduct
 - Police agencies can no longer destroy or expunge police misconduct and disciplinary records.
- **Full Repeal of the Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights**
 - Maryland’s Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights, which was enacted nearly 50 years ago, is fully repealed.

- **Civilian–Driven Transparency in Police Misconduct**

- Police Disciplining Police: A single individual – the chief or head of a police agency – will no longer control the investigation, charging, and ultimate discipline of officers in a manner that is not transparent and excludes public participation.
- Civilian Charging Committee: A committee of all civilians will review the complaint and resulting investigation of misconduct against an officer, providing sunlight on the investigation and charging of an officer. The charging committee makes recommendations that serve as a baseline for the discipline that an officer receives.
- Trial Boards: If an officer rejects the punishment decided by the civilian charging committee and offered by the chief, they can appeal for a hearing in front of a trial board made up of a majority of civilians (2 out of 3). All trial boards will be transparent and open to the public and the victim and the officer both have the right to attend with counsel.
- Command–level Deficiencies: The police disciplinary process will no longer look at just the officer accused of misconduct but also the officer’s supervisors to see if their management contributed to the officer’s actions.
- Zero Destruction of Records: Police agencies can no longer destroy or expunge police misconduct and disciplinary records.

- **Supporting Civilian Complaints**

- Complaint Intake: Civilians may file complaints with their local police accountability board as well as the police department.
- Victim’s Rights Advocate: Each agency must designate a victim’s rights advocate to provide a victim with information regarding the complaint, investigatory, and adjudicatory process.
- Complaint Tracking: Each agency must create a database to enable a complainant to follow the status of their case throughout every step of the process.
- Complainant Notice: A complainant must receive an explanation of the investigation, trial board proceeding, and the ultimate disciplinary decision. The complainant also has the opportunity to review an officer’s account prior to completion of the investigation.
- Timing: The investigatory and charging stages of the complaint process must be resolved in a timely fashion.

- **Swift and Uniform Penalties for Police Misconduct**

- Uniformity: Police agencies must use a Statewide, uniform matrix to discipline officers, developed by the Police Training & Standards Commission through an open, public process.
 - Dismissal: A police officer must be fired or decertified upon conviction for felonies and certain misdemeanors.
 - Emergency Suspensions: A police officer may be suspended for certain misconduct and criminal charges.
 - Decertification: The Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission must decertify police officers who are convicted of a felony, convicted of certain misdemeanors, or were previously fired or resigned while being investigated for serious misconduct or use of excessive force.
- **Police Accountability Boards**: Local jurisdictions must create a body of civilians authorized to review police misconduct. The PAB must reflect the diversity of the county and be confirmed by the local council/commissioners. The PAB must hold quarterly meetings with law enforcement agencies on policy, appoint civilians to serve on charging committees and trial boards, review aggregate disciplinary data quarterly as a check on the civilian charging committee and support victims in filing and understanding the disciplinary process.
- **Police Officer Hiring and Certification**
 - Release of Disciplinary Record: An individual who applies for a position as an officer with a Maryland police agency must, as a condition of hiring, disclose their full disciplinary record before being hired.
 - Implicit Bias: Police officers must continually undergo implicit bias testing and training.
 - Marijuana Use: Prior marijuana use is no longer a disqualifier for certification as an officer
 - Mental and Physical Health: Officers must submit to regular mental health and physical agility assessments.
- **Other**
 - Education: Provide \$10.0 million in funding in tuition support to encourage diversity in the ranks of law enforcement.
 - Data-Driven Approach: In order to root out patterns of police misconduct, aggregate data on police misconduct will be publicly available.
 - No Compliance, No Funding: A police agency can lose State public safety grants if its officers fail to comply with the Maryland Use of Force Statute.

- Liability Caps: A victim may now receive a greater monetary award from a civil lawsuit stemming from an illegal act committed by a police officer.
- Right to Record: A police officer may not prohibit or prevent a civilian from recording an officer's actions.
- Stops: At the commencement of a traffic or other stop, an officer must describe the reason for the stop and provide identifying information.
- SWAT Reporting: Law enforcement agencies must report on their use of specialized entry teams.

SB 71: Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 - Body-Worn Cameras, Employee Programs, and Use of Force

Senate Bill 71 requires for the first time ever that all local and state law enforcement officers to wear body cameras by 2025. The legislation also significantly limits the use of force by law enforcement and allows it when it is necessary and proportional and requires officers to intervene when excessive force is used.

- **Body Cameras**

- Universal Usage: All police officers in the State must be equipped with and use body-worn cameras no later than July 1, 2025. The Department of State Police, Anne Arundel County Police Department, Howard County Police Department, and Harford County Sheriff's office must implement by July 1, 2023.
- Policies on Recording and Use: Police agencies are explicitly prevented from impeding the use of body-worn cameras through collective bargaining. For agencies that have the technological capability, body cams must retain recordings 60 seconds prior to initiation.
- Task Force on Body Cameras: A task force to study the implementation of body cameras is extended to study the feasibility of jurisdictional implementation

- **Employee Assistance and Early Intervention Programs**

- Early Warning System: Law enforcement agencies must establish data-based, early intervention systems to identify officers who are at-risk for engaging in the use of excessive force and to provide all officers who are identified with retraining and behavioral interventions, reassignments, or other appropriate responses to reduce the risk of the use of excessive force.
- Employee Assistance Program: Law enforcement agencies must establish a program that provides access to voluntary and confidential services to

address the mental health issues of an officer stemming from personal and work-related concerns.

- **Use of Force**

- Sanctity of Life: Police officers must sign a sanctity of life pledge.
- Strengthening Limitations on Use of Force: Police may only use force that is necessary and proportional to prevent an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury under the totality of the circumstances. Additionally, an officer must cease using force when that force is no longer necessary. This standard is higher than the prevailing constitutional standard.
- Criminal Penalties: A police officer is subject to 10 years imprisonment for a violation of the standard. This sentence may be consecutive to any other sentence.

SB 178: Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 - Search Warrants and Inspection of Records Relating to Police Misconduct (Anton's Law)

Senate Bill 178 provides the public with access to police disciplinary records. Additionally, the bill puts greater restrictions on how and when no-knock warrants can be served.

- **Transparency of Records**

- Public Access: Police misconduct and disciplinary records are no longer held in secret. These records can be publicly accessed under the Public Information Act, regardless of the outcome or when the record was made.
- No Compliance, No Funding: A police agency can lose State public safety grants if it fails to provide data on police misconduct.

- **Warrants**

- Raising the Bar for No Knock Warrants: No knock warrants may only be used as a last resort when the life or safety of an individual is in danger.
- Application for No Knock Warrants: An application for a no knock warrant must include that someone's life or safety is in danger, be approved by a supervisor and State's Attorney before the judge reviews the application, and include detailed information as to why a no knock warrant is the last resort, including whether children or other people are at the location.
- Timing of No Knock Warrants: A no knock warrant may only be executed between 8:00 am and 7:00 pm, absent exigent circumstances, and officers

- executing a warrant must clearly identify themselves and use body cameras.
- Expiration: To prevent staleness, all warrant must be executed within 10 days of issuance.
 - General Warrant Execution: Police must provide occupants with 20 seconds notice before entering a residence and may not use military style stun devices when executing a warrant, absent exigent circumstances.

PASSED THE HOUSE & SENATE

Police Reform & Accountability Act of 2021

SB 600: Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 - Surplus Military Equipment and Investigation of Deaths Caused by Police Officers

Senate Bill 600 requires an independent investigative unit in the Office of the Attorney General to investigate alleged or potential police-involved deaths of civilians. The bill also prohibits a law enforcement agency from receiving certain equipment from a program operated by the federal government for the transfer of surplus military equipment.

- **Independent Investigations**

- Independent Criminal Investigations: Police agencies will no longer investigate their own in police-involved civilian deaths. A new, independent investigative agency in the Office of the Attorney General will now be responsible for investigating criminal police misconduct involving death.
- Staffing: The independent investigative agency may detail state police officers and other civilian personnel as needed.

- **Military Surplus**

- Acquisition Banned: Weaponized aircraft, drones, and vehicles, as well as other military style weapons, may not be purchased from federal military surplus programs.

SB 786: Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 - Baltimore City - Control of the Police Department of Baltimore City

Senate Bill 786 returns the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) to local control – contingent on the ratification of an amendment by the voters of Baltimore City. If ratified, Baltimore City will finally regain oversight of its police department rather than the State of Maryland. The bill also establishes an Advisory Board on the Transfer of Control of the Police Department of Baltimore City to study potential issues related to the transfer.

Criminal Justice Reform

HB 16 - Dignity Not Detention Act

House Bill 16 bans private immigration prisons in Maryland stopping new detention center contracts and grandfathers its three existing detention centers. Maryland should not profit off the unnecessary incarceration of immigrants or be complicit in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) inhumane treatment of immigrants held in its detention centers.

SB 202 – Correctional Services - Parole - Life Imprisonment

Decisions about parole should never be political. Senate Bill 202 takes the Governor out of parole decisions for those who are sentenced to life in prison after 20 years. Maryland will now join the majority of states who follow this model. This bill ensures the parole process is independent and fair.

SB 494: Juvenile Restoration Act

Senate Bill 494 ends juvenile life sentences without parole; individuals who were convicted as adults for an offense committed as a minor can be considered for parole after being imprisoned for at least 20 years for the offense.

HB 742 - The Walter Lomax Act

House Bill 742 provides appropriate compensation through the BPW for individuals who are erroneously convicted, sentenced and jailed. There needs to be a consistent process in place to provide restitution and adequate resources so those who have been exonerated can have a better quality of life when they re-enter society.

Government

HB 2 – Maryland Environmental Service Reform Act of 2021

The abuse of power and misuse of state money at the Maryland Environmental Services agency cannot continue in this Administration or in future Administrations. The Maryland Environmental Service Reform Act of 2021 will reform MES to prevent outrageous severance packages from happening again because of political favors.

SB 8 - State Song Repeal

The language of the song sympathized with Confederate motivations and is not representative of who we are as a State any longer. House Bill 667 repeals the state song so we can better reflect our current values of unity, diversity and inclusion.

HB 30 - Office of People's Counsel Environmental Reform Act

House Bill 30 ensures that climate change is part of the conversation when energy and utility regulations are considered at the Public Service Commission. House Bill 30 creates a climate counsel position to advocate at the PSC on climate change issues the way the people's counsel advocates on ratepayer issues. This legislation takes affirmative steps to meet our greenhouse and gas reduction goals.

SB 433 - Institutions of Higher Education - State Funding - Revision

Senate Bill 433 clarifies the State's formula to ensure that funding to community colleges in the state are calculated equitably and are fully funded in the same way as four-year institutions. The bill also provides \$7 million to the School of Medicine for doctors in specialty areas to support better healthcare delivery at University of Maryland Capital Region Hospital and University of Maryland rural hospitals.

HB 588 and HB 589 – FY22 State Budget

After facing a billion dollar deficit due to the COVID-19 pandemic last year, the House Appropriations Committee passed the FY22 budget that eliminates the structural deficit for the next two years, restores the Rainy Day Fund, and leaves a cash balance to account for unforeseen impacts from COVID. The budget fully funds healthcare and education funding while putting \$1.5 billion in to construction projects to get people back to work.

HB 590 – Capital Budget

The Capital Budget leverages nearly \$2B in state capital spending – prioritizing education, recreation and support for localities. In addition to the \$2.2B dedicated to school construction, the budget provides an extra \$320M to build schools, modernize classrooms and provide the necessary equipment so schools can safely re-open. State and local parks will receive \$130M to maintain the parks and playgrounds around

the state after record use. The budget also approves a record 275 bond initiative requests totaling over \$75M to stimulate local investments.

HB 940 – Sports Betting

Maryland has been at a competitive disadvantage with other East Coast states who offer sports betting options. Last year at the ballot box, voters overwhelmingly supported a constitutional amendment to allow sports betting in Maryland. House Bill 940 makes Maryland the 21st state in the nation to legalize sports betting, increases funding for education and maximizes the opportunity for minority businesses to participate in Maryland’s newly established gaming industry.

Energy and Environment

HB569 - Electricity - Net Energy Metering - Limit

House Bill 569 doubles the state capacity for residential rooftop solar and community solar projects

SB 65 - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Qualifying Biomass (Black Liquor)

House Bill 875 removes black liquor from Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard. Black liquor is a by-product of paper mills and a caustic pollutant that makes its way into our air and waters. Climate change is an existential threat; if we want to address it, we cannot continue to subsidize black liquor.

HB 507 – Clean Water Commerce Act

As amended, the bill would stop the sunset of the fund and increase the allocation from the Bay Restoration Fund Wastewater Account from roughly 10M up to 20M through 2030.

Of that 20M, 35% (highest share) would be allocated toward agricultural projects, which it is not currently eligible, and prioritize tackling nitrogen levels. Which is the largest share of pollutants and more expensive to take on. An additional 20% of the share would go toward projects in disadvantaged communities for storm water projects and green infrastructure.

To meet environmental goals, it is crucial that the state continues to address pollution levels caused by other sources. Maryland has done exceptionally well to reduce pollution from wastewater facilities and while there is more work to do, it becomes increasingly important to address pollution coming from agriculture and other sectors.

The Black Agenda

HB 1178 – First–Time Homebuyer Savings Accounts

House Bill 1178 creates tax-free savings accounts for all first-time homebuyers so an equal path to homeownership can be afforded for more Marylanders.

HB 1210 – Corporate Diversity - Board, Executive Leadership, and Mission

Companies should look like the communities they serve, because corporate board decisions impact employees, investment policies and our state's economy. House Bill 1210 requires Maryland companies to report on the racial diversity of their boards; requires companies to demonstrate racial diversity in board membership, executive leadership OR mission in order to qualify for State capital funding, tax credits or contracts over one million dollars by fiscal year 2023 and requires Commerce and the Governor's Office of Minority and Small Business Affairs to create a score card to report composition of corporate governance, employees, minority business contracts as well as diversity policies for the 430,000 business entities in the State.

HB 1211 – Pre–Seed Capital for Minority Entrepreneurs

State governments must play a decisive role in accelerating racial and economic equity. HB1211 adds \$10M to TEDCO's Builder's Fund to provide more meaningful venture opportunities for minority entrepreneurs who may not have the same access to capital.

HB 1213 – Determination of Creditworthiness - Evaluation Rules and Alternative Methods

Redlining, mortgage rates, and banking investment strategies since the New Deal have left Black families in Maryland without the valuable wealth creation tool of homeownership. House Bill 1213 prevents housing loan/credit applicants from being denied if applicants can provide alternate forms of creditworthiness including: a history of rent payments, utility payments, etc. By increasing credit access, an equal path to homeownership will be afforded for more Marylanders of every color.

Election Reform

HB 745: Election Law - Early Voting Centers

This bill modernizes the state's formula for Early Voting centers and will result in over a dozen new centers across the state for the 2022 election. The House has

embraced early voting as a practical and helpful option for voters to improve accessibility to the ballot box. This legislation also requires local boards of elections to take into account equity and maximizing participation when placing Early Voting centers. Other factors local boards must consider include: historically disenfranchised communities, access to public transportation, and proximity to dense populations.

HB 1048 - Permanent Absentee Ballot List

The House passed HB1048 to make voting easier and more convenient by creating a permanent mail-in ballot option. Marylanders who want to vote by mail in future elections will not need to request a ballot for every election. Elections during the pandemic have shown us that our existing mail-in voting process works and that voters should be able to choose the option that works best for them. This is an important step towards a more accessible and equitable democracy.

HB 1350 - Produce Bank Statements

Requires campaigns to produce bank statements if they are assessed a civil fine by the State Board of Elections.

Pandemic Relief and Recovery

SB 218 – Income Tax - Child Tax Credit and Expansion of the Earned Income Credit

The House passed SB218 to expand Maryland’s \$1.5B relief package to eligible Marylanders with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). Without SB218, nearly 86,000 immigrant tax payers would be excluded from the RELIEF Act – including the highest earned income tax credit (EITC) in the nation. The pandemic has hit low-income families the hardest and all Marylanders – regardless of their status – should have access to these critical relief benefits.

SB 496 – Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families (RELIEF) Act

The House of Delegates passed the bipartisan RELIEF Act providing over \$1.5 billion in pandemic relief. The RELIEF Act infuses the State’s economy with \$509.0 million in spending and provides over \$1.0 billion in tax relief and credits:

- Maryland becomes the highest state in the nation for its earned income tax credit, which puts cash in the pockets of low income Maryland taxpayers.

- Maryland also raises its earned income tax credit for individuals with no children from nearly \$100 to \$530.
- Unemployment insurance payments will be exempt from the State income tax, keeping over \$225.0 million in the pockets of unemployed Marylanders.
- Marylanders who qualified for the earned income tax credit in 2019 will be provided with stimulus payments of up to \$500, putting over \$175.0 million immediately in the hands low-income individuals and families.
- Allows small businesses to keep sales tax collections of up to \$9,000 over three months
- Helps up to 100,000 small businesses & nonprofits to defer paying unemployment insurance taxes until the first three months of 2022 to help cash flow (they employ ¼ of MD workforce)
- Forgives MD taxes on COVID loans and grants
- Minority and Small Business Loans (MSBDFA): Converts up to \$50,000 in Equity Participation Program loans to grants

HB1372 – Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Revisions addressing

After a year of distance learning due to COVID-19 school closures, a growing number of students are falling further behind. This legislation revises the Blueprint in response to the current state of education and gives students a path forward. The Blueprint 2.0 bill includes needed fixes to education funding that were exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and:

- Provides more support to address learning loss;
- Expands behavioral and mental health resources;
- Closes the digital divide with more access to broadband and devices; and
- Requires better reporting and data tracking for more accountability.

Unemployment Insurance Reform Package

The pandemic has shown us that Maryland's unemployment system was unprepared for a statewide emergency and needs to be reformed. The Unemployment Insurance Reform Package will get relief to Marylanders who need it most, when they need it the most.

Over 4k Marylanders reported that they were unable to get assistance because the State has been using an outdated, broken system that needs short and long-term fixes. Immediate and structural fixes that will help streamline the process and make the UI system more efficient include:

- Modernizing the UI system to ensure that Marylanders can get the money they deserve
- Improving customer service
- Creating more accountability
- Planning for the next emergency

Bill List:

HB 907/SB 817 - Unemployment Insurance - Study on System Reforms

House Bill 907 requires the Department of Labor and the Department of Legislative Services to study unemployment insurance reforms and report its findings to the General Assembly.

HB 908/SB 816 - Unemployment Insurance - Employer Contributions and Reimbursement Payments

House Bill 908 requires the Department of Labor to implement flexible payment plans for employers to pay their unemployment taxes. Allowing employers to pay their unemployment taxes incrementally over time instead of paying one lump sum will help more businesses as they recover from the pandemic.

HB 1002 - Unemployment - Insurance Revisions and Special Enrollment Period for Health Benefits

House Bill 1002 makes improvements to the unemployment insurance process by expanding language and disability access, establishing greater customer service standards, providing more accountability within the appeals process and requiring more information about any over-payments that occur. The bill helps unemployed Marylanders make sure that they continue to have health insurance.

HB 1138 - Unemployment Insurance – Maryland Department of Labor – Accountability and Oversight

House Bill 1138 requires the Department of Labor to have a disaster plan in place whenever a drastic increase in unemployment claims occurs.

HB 1139/ SB 819 – Unemployment Insurance – Weekly Benefit Amount – Income Disregard

Senate Bill 819 raises the amount of weekly income an unemployment insurance claimant can earn from \$50 to \$200 throughout the duration of an emergency. This will allow more people receiving UI benefits to seek part-time work and supplement their UI benefits.

HB 1143/ SB 771 – Unemployment Insurance - Work Sharing (Work Share Expansion Act of 2021)

Senate Bill 771 adjusts the amount of time an employer can temporarily reduce an employee's work hours under the existing work share program - making State law consistent with federal law. This bill will allow more Maryland employers retain employees and help more employees get back to work following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health Equity

HB 28 - Implicit Bias Training and the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities

Requires health equity and bias training as part of the accreditation and licensing process for all health care providers including registered doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners.

HB 78 - The Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Act of 2021

Establishes the Maryland Commission on Health Equity to create a health equity framework that works to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequities in the State.

HB 463 - Maryland Health Equity Resource Act

Creates a process to designate Health Equity Resource Communities which will provide targeted support in order to reduce health disparities, improve health outcomes, improve access to primary care, promote primary and secondary prevention services and reduce health care costs and hospital admissions and readmissions.

HB 849 – Public Health – Medical Records Fees

The cost to gain access to certain medical records disproportionately impacts those who are low income and experiencing homelessness. House Bill 849 lowers the maximum fee that can be charged for a copy of a medical record and prevents health care providers from charging a separate preparation fee. The bill also repeals the exemption for x-rays from medical records fees and repeals other medical record fees for individuals seeking social security benefits or social security disability payments. Medical records are essential for those needing social security and other benefits. Removing these financial barriers will allow our most vulnerable residents gain better access the benefits they need.

Housing Relief

HB 18 – Right to Counsel in Specific Eviction Cases

The House took an historic step by passing legislation for Maryland to become the first state in the country to grant tenants a right to counsel in specific eviction cases. Under this legislation, individuals who make 50% or less of the state median income will be eligible for a lawyer to argue defenses in eviction cases, including but not limited to, retaliatory actions by a landlord, rent escrow disputes, and lead hazards. Ninety-six percent of landlords come to court with a lawyer as opposed to only 1% of tenants. This bill aims to bring more balance to legal proceedings while granting representation to those who need it most.

HB 31 – Eviction Filing Fee Increase

This legislation will increase the fee to file for an eviction from \$15 to \$75 (\$85 in Baltimore City). Currently, Maryland has one of the lowest eviction filing fees in the nation. This increase is needed to reduce frivolous claims and incentivize landlords and tenants to resolve disputes outside of court. Additionally, the fees collected will be reinvested into rental assistance and legal aid programs.

PASSED THE HOUSE

HB 50 – Tenant Protection Act

This bill increases protections for victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking in lease terminations. It also improves transparency in utility costs when they are passed on to tenants and security deposit disbursement at the end of a lease.

HB 314 – Plastic Bag Ban

In 2019, fifty percent of the bags we used ended up in landfills. Nothing we use for a few minutes should threaten our health and pollute our planet for hundreds of years. HB314 prohibits retail businesses from offering “single-use plastic carryout bags” in Maryland after July 2022.

HB 448 – Juneteenth National Freedom Day

Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865 – the day that the last enslaved Americans learned they were free – two years after the Emancipation Proclamation. House Bill

448 designates Juneteenth as a state holiday to reflect our values of inclusivity and celebrates the freedom of all Americans.

HB 655 - County Commissioner and County Boards of Education - District Voting

The House passed HB655 to give Maryland voters a right to choose who represents them at the county level. This legislation defeats a tool historically used to disenfranchise voters by requiring commissioners to live in a specific district but electing them at-large. The ability to choose your representative is the most fundamental part of our democracy and HB655 ends a system that left some communities without a voice.

HB 832 – Electric School Bus Pilot Program

House Bill 832 establishes the Electric School Bus Pilot Program to help the state transition our diesel powered school buses to an electric fleet. The utilities will make the electric school buses the same cost as diesel buses, and over time, electric buses will be far less costly than diesel buses to maintain and fuel. This an important step in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and meeting our overall clean energy goals.

HB 1212 Workgroup to Study Enhanced Opportunities for Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individuals in the State

Establishes a workgroup to study if the State government can apply a percentage preference of 10% for bidders and offerors on a procurement contract who agree to the inclusion in the contract of a certain clause requiring that at least 50% of workers on the contract be socially and economically disadvantaged individuals under certain circumstances and the inclusion of a similar clause in certain subcontracts under certain circumstances.

HB 1214 – Transparency in the Procurement Process for Government Contracts

Minority businesses are underrepresented in government contract projects. This legislation provides more transparency in the procurement process, restructures the Governor’s Office of Small, Minority, and Women Business Affairs to be a more effective advocate with the ability to provide more technical resources to minority businesses and requires a liaison to assist State agencies with MBE procurement.

HB 1312 – Affirmative Defense Catastrophic Health Emergency/Rent Increase & Fine Freeze

This emergency legislation will strengthen Governor's executive order which created an affirmative defense for failure to pay rent by allowing tenants to use the defense up to six months after the COVID-19 state of emergency has ended. Tenants will be required to show the court that they suffered a substantial loss of income due to the pandemic. This includes job loss, reduction in work hours, or need to miss work to care for a home-bound student. The effects of the pandemic will last for months after this crisis. While the state of emergency may end, the economic effects on Marylanders will continue. This bill also codifies this affirmative defense in the event there is another catastrophic health emergency. It also stops landlords from increasing rent or tacking on fees during the duration of the crisis.

HB 1352 - Verify Campaign Contributions from Businesses

Allows state regulators to create an internal system to audit and investigate campaign contributions made by businesses against State Department of Assessment and Taxation records.

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS NOW 2021 HOUSE BILL

As passed by the House, the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021 is dedicated to realistic and robust measures to combat climate change in Maryland. This legislation ensures that State institutions themselves take the lead to mitigate the effects of climate change, not just passing along the responsibility to others.

Unfortunately, the Senate ultimately rejected the House bill as amended. The version backed by the House included viable budget goals, backed by scientists, engineers, and had support from most environmentalist organizations and the Legislative Black Caucus. We will continue to work toward these goals and are proud of the aggressive legislation the House put forward to curb the effects of climate change for future generations.

TREE PLANTING

- The tree program will benefit urban, suburban and agricultural communities across the state and put Marylanders to work. This coordinated tree planting program will improve air quality in communities across the state for generations to come and improve the natural filter system to defend the Chesapeake Bay.
- It establishes State policy to support and encourage public and private tree plantings and reforestation efforts, with a goal of planting 5 million trees of diverse species in the State by the end of calendar year 2031 – with 500,000 of the trees in underserved areas.
- The Bay Restoration Fund will allocate \$15M in fiscal year 2023 and general funds after that for the tree planting program. The Chesapeake Bay Trust will receive \$10M/year for

the urban tree program, the Department of Natural Resources: \$2.5M, and the Department of Agriculture: \$2.5M.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- The house version extends high performance building requirements to capital projects funded with 25% State funding and requires the state to always use the most recent version of International Green Construction Code.
- The House version requires each new State building, including buildings constructed with more than 50% State funds, must have a high efficiency HVAC system (geothermal, water cooled, or equivalent), if a life-cycle analysis based on a 15-year period concludes that net present value for the system is less than an ICC-compliant HVAC system.
- The House version requires new commercial buildings which meet solar-ready requirements to have a roof that is at least 40% solar-ready, reflective, or green (vegetative terrace or other vegetated green roofing system).
- Require utilities to achieve energy savings of 2.25%/year for 2024 and 2025; 2.5% in 2026; and 2.75%/year in 2027 and thereafter with the EmPower Maryland program
- The House version requires the state to create a procurement preference for a less carbon intensive version of concrete. The 2nd most used product in the world, concrete represents 8% of the world's carbon output. The state could reduce our concrete carbon footprint by 10%.

CLEAN ENERGY

- Invests in community solar by offering tax exemptions for community solar energy generating systems that provide more than 51% of kWh output to low and moderate income customers.
- The House version requires MDE to complete its study on least cost options for carbon reductions in the building sector and an MEA and PPRP study to identify and assess policies and cost considerations relating to solar installations on commercial and industrial property
- The House version includes a Blue Ribbon Solar Land Use Commission to study and make recommendations regarding the land use needs to meet the State's solar energy goals under the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard

ZERO – EMISSION PASSENGER AND LIGHT-DUTY VEHICLES

- Whether it's electric buses, cars and light duty vehicles, high performance buildings or green concrete- this bill makes it clear that the state is willing to lead the way on change in order to address climate change. We won't just tell others what they need to do. We'll do it ourselves.
- Under the House version of the bill, thousands more passenger and light-duty vehicles in the state's fleet will transition to electric than in the original bill. Additionally, vehicles targeted under the House amendments are on average "dirtier" (SUVs and trucks) than the passenger cars under the original legislation.
- Beginning in fiscal year 2027, 100% of passenger vehicles –2032 for light-duty vehicles– in the state's fleet must be zero-emission. In the years leading up, the state is required to

phase in the electric vehicles into the fleet. (Passenger – FY 22-24: 25%, FY 25-26: 50%. Light-Duty – FY 27-29: 25%, FY 30-31: 50%)

EMISSION REDUCTION GOALS, PLANNING, & MONITORING

- Creates a new targeted goal of 50% total state greenhouse gas reduction by 2030 (compared to 2006 levels) and 100% net zero by 2045. 50% reduction by 2030 represents another leap forward in our commitment to climate change solutions while respecting the science of what is possible in the near term. 50% is as far as modeling says we can realistically go by 2030 but as new technology comes online, this number can always be revisited. The House version of the bill REMOVES the sunsets in the Senate version on these goals.
- Requires the Department of the Environment to work with the Environmental Justice Commission to identify communities disproportionately affected by climate change and develop recommendations to address environmental justice concerns, reduce emissions of GHGs and co-pollutants, and build resilience in disproportionately affected communities.
- The bill requires best efforts to monitor and reduce methane emissions from the state's landfills. Methane represents a unique threat in the fight against climate change.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- Creates a Just Transition Employment and Retraining workgroup under the Maryland Commission on Climate Change to study and advise on various issues and opportunities related to a just transition to a clean energy economy.
- Much of the House's reforms to the Environmental Justice Commission are now found in Del. Bridges' House bill 1207