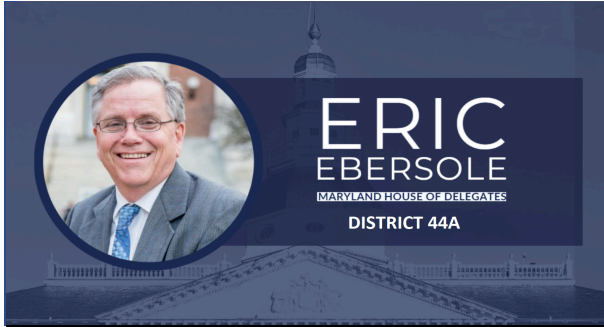


March 2024



MARYLAND
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Connection



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Crossover!

On March 18, the 69th day of Maryland's 446th Legislative Session, legislators in Annapolis engaged in "Bill Crossover Day." In order for legislation to make it to the Governor's desk to be signed into law, it of course must pass through both chambers of Maryland's legislature. Each year at around this time, the bills passed by the Maryland House of Delegates are sent to the State Senate. Simultaneously, the bills passed by the State Senate are transferred to us.



Below, I have shared with you some of the notable bills passed in the House that are now being sent across the hallway to the Senate. Additionally, I have highlighted a few of my own bills that are now being reviewed by my colleagues in the other chamber. Lastly, you will find information pertaining to our District Scholarship at the end of the newsletter. If you or someone you know is attending a Maryland college or educational institution, I encourage you to apply and take advantage of this opportunity.

My office continues to work hard to represent you and your voice in the Maryland House of Delegates. As always, I have provided contact information if you would like to get in contact with me or my office. Please, do not hesitate to reach out with questions, comments, or concerns; you will receive a prompt response.

Best,

Eric Ebersole

Teacher Development and Retention Program ([HB0075](#))



In a previous newsletter, I discussed the importance of Governor Moore's Teacher Development and Retention Program. This system was designed to incentivise the next generation of student teachers through in-classroom, experiential learning for interested college students. Teachers are the lifeblood of our communities, and we must continue to provide college students with the skills and resources necessary to teach in Maryland's public schools. Currently, however, the program does not extend to all community-college students that may be interested in a

teaching career. Earlier this session, I proposed House Bill 75 to address this problem. By allowing community-college students to engage in the program, Maryland expands the umbrella of teacher recruitment – specifically reaching out to low income teacher candidates and helping to encourage badly needed diversity in our teacher workforce.

Fortunately, this bill passed through the House of Delegates and will cross-over to the Senate for their review and subsequent vote. If passed, the promise of the Teacher Development and Retention program will be realized; Maryland will leave no stone unturned in the quest to improve the education of our children. I will continue to support all efforts to hire and retain skilled educators, and this bill provides critical resources to the pool of students interested in a teaching profession. I look forward to its passing in the Senate.

Teacher Certification Requirements ([HB0945](#))

As educational standards continue to modernize and evolve, so too must our teacher training and preparation. As the sponsor of HB 945, I wanted to provide alternative pathways for aspiring teachers to become adequately trained to certification. By emphasizing modern skills needed for today's learning environment – like components of modern instruction like research skills, cultural competency, restorative practices, and virtual teaching techniques – this bill creates pathways to reach the certification required to become a teacher.

Alongside these alternative pathways, HB 945 will allow local school systems to establish their own induction program and also permits the State Department of Education to develop subject-specific examinations for aspiring educators. In all, I am proud of this bill and the substantial progress it makes towards recruiting the next generation of modern teachers.



Freedom to Read Act ([HB0785](#))



Earlier this session, Democrats fought hard against a bill looking to replicate the “book banning” we have seen in many states across the country. Never have those looking to ban literature ended up on the right side of history, and it is unfortunate that we, in Maryland, have this threat. There must always be a diverse, inclusive collection of books and reading material in our libraries; not a broad censorship standard that does the opposite.

I am a proud co-sponsor of House Bill 785 – The Freedom to Read Act. As a part of the Speaker’s “Decency Agenda,” this bill ensures that library materials and services will be available for all individuals without exclusion based on origin, views, or partisan disapproval. After passing through the Ways and Means Committee, this landmark legislation was passed by the House and is now on the way to the Senate.

As libraries across the country continue to be threatened by censorship and harsh penalties inflicted upon librarians for refusing to adhere to said censorship, Maryland stands as a beacon of protection. The Freedom to Read Act puts Maryland in the driver’s seat in the fight against book-banning and undue censorship. I am honored to continue supporting this bill as a co-sponsor, and look forward to its passage in the Senate.

Ticket Scalping ([HB0701](#))

Ticket scalping continues to be exacerbated and consumers are left vulnerable to the abuse from ticket scalpers and companies. Take tickets for Merriweather Post Pavilion as an example: tickets that were \$125 originally are now selling for \$5,000 on reseller websites. With restricted ticket availability, consumers are forced to pay for unreasonable prices and endless fees, making it incredibly difficult to access the events important to you. With sellers selling tickets two to three times their worth and charging sky-high fees, it is common-sense to investigate and regulate third-party ticket sellers and services.

House Bill 0701 would ban “speculative” tickets – tickets that the reseller does not currently possess and require an all-inclusive ticket price that both includes price breakdowns for fees and cap these fees at 10% of the ticket price. Furthermore, this bill would require resellers to provide contact information for the

tickets, so that resellers may be able to communicate cancellations and rescheduling, allowing buyers to have options after buying tickets.



Protecting consumers and halting unfair and deceptive practices from ticket scalpers is one of my top priorities. This bill will allow consumers to buy fair-priced tickets with a peace of mind.

Community Colleges and Contraception ([HBo367](#))

Free and accessible contraception is vital to reducing negative health outcomes, especially for students in our state. House Bill 0367 would require community colleges to create a plan that would allow access to over-the-counter contraceptives to all students, at no additional cost to the students. This plan would not be devised by faculty alone, but includes the voices of student organizations to help create a modern and effective procedure to contraception.



The impact of this bill is quite significant – 61% of community college students who have children after starting do not graduate, and it is shocking that there is little to no access to reproductive care in our community colleges. With over 100,000 students across 16 community colleges, this legislation will create access and assist an important student body in our state.

Scholarship Application

My office is excited to announce our District Scholarship Program. If you are looking to attend or are currently attending a Maryland college or university, I encourage you to apply for this great opportunity. The deadline to apply is **April 1st, 2024**; additional information related to requirements and the application process can be found [here](#). Please contact my office with any questions related to the scholarship program.



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Thank You!

Do reach out to my office for any comments, questions, or concerns. You will receive a prompt response.

Best,
Eric Ebersole

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