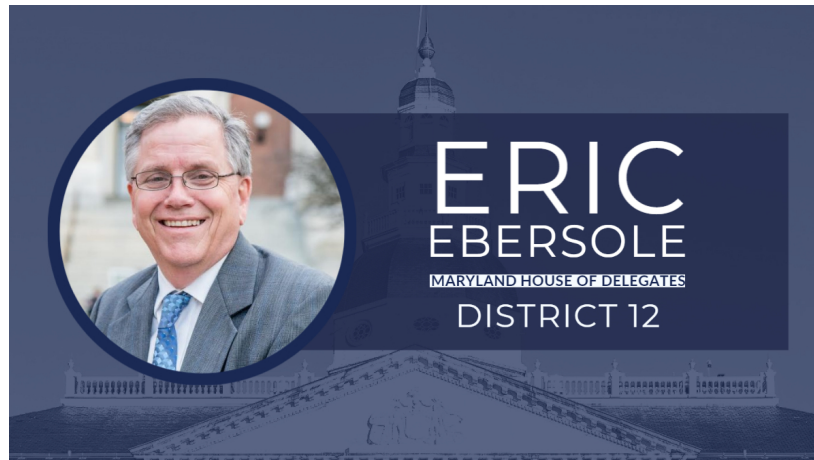


April 2022



The Connection

END OF SESSION LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

Friends,

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving you as your State Delegate and representative in Annapolis. The 2022 legislative session concluded on April 11th, 2022, and it was a very productive session in many ways. A special thank you to everyone who emailed, called, wrote letters, or came to Annapolis to speak to me about legislation that mattered to you. This session I received thousands of emails, dozens of letters or postcards, and hundreds of phone calls from my constituents. Your opinions and thoughts are of great value to me, and I am honored to have the task of representing your interests.

*Best,
Eric Ebersole*

LEGISLATION I INTRODUCED IN 2022 -

This year I introduced several bills which varied widely in subject from special education to trying to help end human trafficking in our State. For each of the bills I submitted this year, I did so with confidence that they would provide help to many and address long standing problems for our citizens. I was very happy to receive the support of many of my constituents who wrote and called in to support these pieces of legislation.

TO THE GOVERNOR'S DESK!

- These passed both houses and will become law.

This year I sponsored a couple of bills that have become law. The first bill limits the ability for public and non-public schools to use restraint or seclusion

as a means of behavioral health intervention. Under the current system, it is left to localities and school boards to decide about the ability to use restraint and seclusion in schools. This makes it difficult to properly investigate and hold abuses of the methods accountable when students end up badly injured or even dead. While opponents argue that these tactics are necessary in serious circumstances that present danger, evidence shows they are overwhelmingly used incorrectly and in a dangerous manner. On top of this, the argument that these are the only effective means to stopping individuals with disabilities acting violently is not true. A focus on comfort rather than control has been shown to help students much more successfully deal with their emotions, even in intense situations that may become dangerous. Not only does it help in the moment, but it also greatly lowers the rate of these incidents occurring in the future. This law will create a statewide ban of restraint and seclusion techniques in public schools and limits in private schools because it is in the best interest of the students, teachers, and all school staff. Special needs students do not need to be treated with violent and dangerous practices, especially at their most vulnerable moments when they are suffering from a mental health crisis and need compassion most.

I also sponsored a law that would require innkeepers – hotels owners and operators to ensure their staff are trained to recognize and properly report any and all instances of human trafficking. This builds on previous legislation I sponsored that requires commercial truck drivers to be trained to recognize and report instances of human trafficking. Human trafficking is exploitation in its simplest form, and it is the responsibility of everyone: businesses and individuals alike to recognize it's symptoms and report it to authorities.

Additionally I sponsored a bill that expands infant and early childhood mental health consultations. This bill promotes positive mental health behavior and practices for our youngest Marylanders and also provides referrals and services for children and their caregivers.

BIG INITIATIVES IN THE LEGISLATURE

My fellow legislators and I worked hard this session, and it was extremely productive, resulting in many successful initiatives that will provide, protect, and preserve for every Marylander and their families. From cybersecurity, to family budget boosters, to childcare access and preserving the great outdoors of Maryland; each and every piece of essential legislation was designed and cultivated with the best interests of Marylanders at heart.

When we first met in January, we set forth with the intention to ease pain on the wallet caused by inflation. The legislature and the Governor agreed to set a gas tax holiday for thirty days. Maryland was the first state in the Nation to enact this holiday as a response to rising gas prices. Other tax exemptions that will ease some pain are on essential items that are used daily, such as diapers and oral hygiene products. The legislature also voted to exempt certain medical devices, like blood pressure monitors and thermometers from state sales tax.

The legislature, in concert with the Governor, also passed the Retirement Tax Elimination Act. This legislation provides a tax credit to retirees aged 65 and

over who make \$100,000 individually or \$150,000 as a couple. This credit will go into effect for those who are eligible in the 2022 tax year.

The Work Opportunity Credit is a piece of legislation that provides tax credits to businesses who hire and retain employees from underrepresented communities and who experience chronic unemployment.

Further actions by the legislature taken to assist Marylanders and their well-being include support for our child care infrastructure. It is essential that we assist working families by doing everything we can to make child care accessible, and affordable. For child care providers and centers who accept the Maryland State Child Care Scholarship, I was pleased to sponsor legislation that would provide \$35 million dollars in a revolving loan program that would allow child care providers to pursue capital improvements to their child care centers. In addition, bills passed the legislature that would simplify and streamline the childcare scholarship process, would provide new hire funding support, and retention bonuses for licensed and credentialed child care staff.

Crime and safety, as always, is forefront in the mind of the legislature when we convene, and in this Session we have brought forth legislation designed to bolster community safety while affording protections and equal justice for more vulnerable members of our community.

Untraceable firearms legislation has passed the assembly and has been brought to the Governor's desk . This law will make it illegal to sell, receive, transfer or possess a firearm that has an unfinished frame or receiver. These firearms are commonly referred to as ghost guns, known to be untraceable due to their lack of serial number, and their availability outside of common government regulations.

Another notable piece of legislation that has passed involved juvenile justice and reforming the current system. This law states that a child younger than the age of 13 would not be held under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court system for delinquency proceedings, and may not be charged with a crime. The law does allow, however, for children aged 10 and older to be under the jurisdiction of the juvenile courts for more serious crimes, such as murder and other violent crimes. This legislation combats racial injustice. In many instances, children who are charged in the justice system are disproportionately black and brown children, and tend to remain within the adult justice system more than white children.

Social justice played a major role this session with many pieces of legislation designed to assist those in our community who have been hit the hardest with financial difficulties throughout the pandemic.

Tenant rights and protections have been an issue which the legislature has pursued this session. The Tenant Protection Act of 2022 ensures the right for tenants' organizations to assemble within reasonable hours and with reasonable notice given to the landlord. Additionally this bill requires landlords to disclose if they use ratio utility billing, and makes provisions of the lease unenforceable if the landlord fails to disclose the ratio billing information.

The Healthy Babies Equity Act is designed to provide comprehensive medical care and additional health services to non citizen pregnant women who would qualify for assistance with the exception of their immigrant status. This service would extend to the child of the mother until that child is 1 year of age.

The African American Heritage Preservation Program Grant Fund increases the funding for the preservation of African American heritage buildings, sites, or

communities of historical significance from 1 million dollars to 5 million dollars. African American History and Heritage has long been neglected and the extraordinary story of the African American experience must be interwoven into the American history experience at every opportunity.

Education is always a priority for the legislature and this year's session was no exception. The Maggie McIntosh School Arts Fund provides grants to Baltimore City Public Schools for the purchase of art supplies in the classroom and for the expansion of arts curriculum for students in public schools.

The Maryland Student Investment Act intends to make Guaranteed Access Grants more available for students in need who qualify. One particular portion of the legislation allows for students who may have become ineligible for the grant due to an income change to remain eligible at a reduced amount for the duration of their original grant term.

Health Issues have been discussed at length this Session, and it is important for all Marylanders to have an involved and informed role in their health care choices.

The legislature has decided that the private casual use of cannabis should be put to public referendum when voters go to the ballot box in November. If approved, this would allow Marylanders aged 21 and older the right to possess 1.5 ounces of cannabis for personal use, would allow for the personal growth of two cannabis plants, and if a person had been convicted of small marijuana possession, it would allow for that person to seek expungement for the crime.

The legislature has passed the Time to Care Act. The Time to Care Act would provide workers with partial wage replacement for up to 12 weeks away from work to care for a new child, an ill or disabled family member, or their own serious health condition - life events that can happen to any of us at any time.

The legislature took important steps to help protect the environment by passing the Great Maryland outdoor act. This bill will improve the Maryland Park service and State parks by updating their infrastructure and critical maintenance needs. To combat the dangerous effects of climate change, the legislature also passed the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions and develop clean energy goals for the future. The legislature worked to protect our oysters this session by passing legislation to establish various programs, goals, research requirements, planning requirements, and funding requirements related to oyster spat, oyster shells, and oyster substrate. This increase in funding will protect one of the most vulnerable species in Maryland for future generations.

The state's cybersecurity defenses were bolstered this session by the legislature. By passing the Local Cybersecurity Support Act of 2022, the legislature established the Cyber Preparedness Unit in the Maryland Department of Emergency Management and the Office of Security Management to better support counties. On top of this, the Modernize Maryland Act of 2022 was also passed to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of some information held by the State in the event of a cyberattack. This bill provides financial assistance for localities to improve their cybersecurity preparedness. Finally, the legislature required better reporting of cybersecurity breaches by all levels of governments in the state to create the best possible plan of thwarting future attacks.

The plight of Ukraine against Russian aggression has not escaped the notice of

the Assembly. During these dark times, the legislature came together as one and set forth a resolution that professes that Maryland stands in solidarity with the Ukrainian people, and in addition, the legislature passed measures that would divest the Maryland retirement and pension accounts from investments with Russia.

Legislative Bond Initiatives -2021 – District 12

I was very pleased with the outcome of the bond bill for capital improvements that I sponsored with Senator Lam and Delegates Hill and Feldmark. Together, we helped the Clubhouse of Catonsville secure \$100,000 in bond funding. We were able to secure \$100,000 for street scaping projects in Arbutus. Additionally, I partnered with my colleague, Delegate Sheila Ruth in securing \$100,000 for a new playground at Westowne Elementary School.



Eric D. Ebersole

Thank you again for following our efforts this session and continuing to place your trust me in to serve the 12th Legislative District and the whole State of Maryland. My team is intensely focused on providing constituent support. Please do not hesitate to contact my office via email or phone. You will get a prompt response.

eric.ebersole@house.state.md.us

or

410-841-3328.

Committee Assignments and Leadership Roles

- Ways and Means
- Deputy Majority Whip
- Chair- Early Childhood Subcommittee- Ways and Means
- Education Subcommittee - Ways and Means
- Chair - Education Subcommittee - Balt, Co. Delegation
- Joint Committee on Children, Youth & Families
- House of Delegates Representative to Education Commission of the States, Professional Standards for Teacher Education Board, and State Interagency Coordinating Council
- Advisory Board - MD Center for School Safety
- Advisory Board - Visit Howard County
- Community Leadership Board - Catonsville Y



