



**DELEGATE ERIC  
EBERSOLE  
DISTRICT 12**

**THE CONNECTION:  
LEGISLATIVE  
NEWSLETTER -  
SESSION BEGINS 2019**

**PERIODIC NEWSLETTER TO KEEP YOU INFORMED AND UP  
TO DATE WITH POLITICAL HAPPENINGS IN  
ANNAPOLIS AND IN HOWARD AND BALTIMORE COUNTIES**



**A SECOND TERM &  
ANOTHER NEW  
SESSION**

**LEGISLATION I AM  
FOLLOWING AND  
SUPPORTING**

- Prescription Drugs for State Retirees
- Gun Safety
- Child Care Costs
- Chesapeake Bay Protection
- Protecting Health Insurance
- Combating Opioid Epidemic
- Responses to Federal Tax Changes

**LEGISLATION I AM  
SPONSORING**

- Local Control of School Calendar
- State School Board Expansion
- Combatting Human Trafficking
- School Safety



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## A SECOND TERM!

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving you as your State Delegate and representative in Annapolis. I am heartened to have been elected by the residents of our district to serve another four years. I am also energized and excited. I have found that I love this job. So a big thanks to you all.

I have focused on a number of things including health care, the environment, public transportation, jobs training and creation, local business concerns, and, with great personal investment, education. I have felt supported by you who elected me in these pursuits and I will continue to be an advocate in all these.

I am also pleased to have been named as a chair of the Finance Resources Subcommittee of Ways and Means. The name is a bit oblique, but it boils down to a committee that will consider all legislation dealing with gaming. I am always alert and questioning when it comes to using gambling as a source of income, so I feel I am a good gatekeeper here. In any case, being a little more on the leadership wheel is better for my ability to influence policy in many areas.

### **2019 Legislation I Am Following and Supporting**

#### **Prescription Drug Coverage for State Retirees**

I have been very troubled by the loss of prescription plan benefits for State retirees. That is why I have co-sponsored Delegate Bromwell's bill, HB98, that would restore these benefits. As a retired teacher who will depend on a retirement prescription drug program, I can clearly imagine the stress this has put on state retirees. I was upset with the cavalier nature of the notification by our state agency and the initial lack of information. I am deeply sorry for the distress it caused. This has been on my mind and will continue to be as the legislative session progresses. I will do all I can to make sure this legislation is successful.

You can view the bill with this link:

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmgafirmMain.aspx?pid=billpage&stab=01&id=hb0098&tab=subject3&ys=2019RS>



#### **Gun Safety - Banning 3D & Ghost Guns –**

For Maryland to continue being a leader in reducing gun violence, our laws need to evolve with new technology. That is why Democrats in the General Assembly will move to ban the possession of 3D printed gun blueprint and untraceable “ghost” guns. Both types of unregulated firearms pose extreme threats to public safety as they don't have serial numbers, and, if made out of plastic, are able to pass through metal detector unnoticed. By banning these weapons, we are closing a loophole where a prohibited individual can access a gun and potentially use it to commit a crime. I look forward to supporting and voting for this legislation



#### **Reducing child care costs for parents**

Maryland is far behind neighboring states in its support for parents of young children. The cost of child care in Maryland continues to skyrocket – nearly [\\$14,000 per year on average](#) and is the 5th highest in the country. Maryland's existing child care tax credit has remained unchanged for almost 20 years – a family making more than \$50,000 no longer qualifies for it. Our proposal increases funding by more than \$20 million per year, modernizes the credit, and benefits approximately 110,000 Marylanders who are currently struggling to pay for adequate child care. I am heartened to see this legislation which is largely a result of the work my colleagues and I did on the Joint Committee for Children Youth and Families.



#### **Cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay and our waterways**

We will introduce legislation banning Styrofoam and other pollutants. Maryland will become the first 'foam free' state by banning polystyrene, a synthetic polymer often used in Styrofoam packaging. Making Maryland 'foam free' will continue our commitment to a cleaner environment and reduce the amount of non-biodegradable waste in our landfills, city streets, and the Chesapeake Bay. Businesses would be required to use alternative materials such as compostable or recyclable containers which will reduce waste and result in cleaner communities across the state. In addition, I am in support of a bill introduced locally in Howard County to allow for a fee on plastic bags. Fees like this have been shown to reduce use of these insidious plastics that are terrible for our environment and a danger to wildlife



## Protecting Health Insurance



We will work to keep key ACA reforms such as protecting the ban on pre-existing conditions - The Attorney General has advised that, if the Affordable Care Act is overturned by the Supreme Court in Texas v. United States, hundreds of thousands of Marylanders would be at-risk to lose insurance or have their rates significantly increased because of a pre-existing condition (including pregnancy and cancer). I will support coming legislation that will create a statutory right for individuals to health insurance without being discriminated against because of health status.

## Opioid Control and Addiction Treatment

The General Assembly also passed two bills in 2018 aimed at curbing the opioid epidemic. The first establishes a competitive grant program that awards funding to local behavioral health organizations to expand capabilities of crisis response programs and services. The second bill requires pharmacies to report suspicious orders to the Attorney General's office; an order might be considered suspicious if it is abnormally large or shipping at an unusual frequency. Hopefully these two programs will help end this public health crisis that is impacting people all across our state. We will be collecting data and reports in hopes of decrease in the number of overdoses and death due to opioids. As further action is suggested, I will be helping to make sure we do all we can.

## Taxes and the New Federal Laws

When we convened in January of 2018, the recently passed federal tax bill was of significant concern. We wanted to ensure that the new policies would not adversely affect Marylanders, and to that end we made two large changes to Maryland tax policy. First, we ensured that Marylanders could continue to take personal exemptions on their state tax returns, even though they were eliminated at the federal level. Second, we increased the standard deduction for all Marylanders, and to account for inflation, these bills will increase the standard deduction every single year moving forward indexed to inflation – so we will not have to wait for the need to increase to become acute and then revisit deserved increases. Finally, this session, we will continue to monitor the effect that the federal changes to the tax code have on Marylanders and work so that they do not cause your tax burden to rise.



## 2019 Legislation I Am Sponsoring:

### School Calendar –



A few years ago, the Governor issued an executive order to require all public schools in the state to start their school year after labor day and end on or before June 15. Many will remember their school calendars as such, but such reminiscing is not realistic in today's educational climate. Today, we offer more days off to be respectful of our diverse cultural and religious makeup. We also require many more work days of teachers beyond the 180 school days so they may engage in professional development – a very necessary activity. These weekends on the calendar have put us in a bind where sometimes they cannot be adhered to as well as meet the State School Board requirement of 180 days. Some school officials have been tempted to send our kids to school on bad weather days. I am pleased that they have resisted this, declaring that they will not let this conundrum endanger students trip to and from school. But this should all be unnecessary. I am not sure why the governor feels that local school boards - many of them elected by those in their jurisdiction and others appointed by the governor himself – cannot make a good decision about what is best for their students. His justifications were also all economic, pointing to tourism and vacation dollars while ignoring the educational and family impacts of this calendar. Locals should be allowed to balance these the needs of their communities in mind. The bill I have submitted would restore this ability to local school boards. Common sense and local control will again be in evidence if this measure passes.

**State School Board Composition**– I have reintroduced legislation to add representation of teachers and parents to the State Board of Education. These three additional members will provide an important and informed voice to the board. As a career teacher in the legislature, I come to know the importance of a voice for those who understand how policy will manifest at the point of delivery of instruction – the classroom. The experience and insights of these people from the building level perspective will round out the decision making ability with important point of delivery insights. We need them there. This bill passed the legislature in 2018 but was vetoed by the governor. I hope we will be able to make this small but very necessary addition to the body that sets educational policy for the state.



### **Human Trafficking**

I have reintroduced a bill to require that professional drivers who are training to receive a commercial driver's license (CDL) will receive, as part of that training, human trafficking awareness. This is a heinous and insidious crime that is often taking place right under our noses and truckers are in a position to offer a huge assist in identification to local law enforcement. Several states have passed similar legislation that trains truck drivers on how to identify the signs of human trafficking and how to report it. We are working with the nationwide group Truckers Against Trafficking to create a no-cost training program with the support of Maryland's truckers. This bill sailed through the house last year but was ignored in senate committee. I have a strong ally in Senator Kathy Klausmeier this year who is submitting the cross file in the senate. We both filed early so I would be ahead of the rabble that sometimes causes common sense bills like this to get stalled. After this legislation is understood and passed, I am hopeful that we can move on to training hotel employees next.



### **School Safety -**

This is not currently legislation but deserves mention. We unanimously passed a comprehensive school safety initiative last session. This wide-reaching legislation provided \$12.5 million school safety grants for schools to evaluate and improve their safety measures. It also restructured the oversight of school safety measures and adds mental health coordinators to school systems. This new structure called for legislators to be appointed to the Maryland Commission on School Safety. I am pleased to have been selected to represent the House of Delegates on the Subcabinet.



Thanks again for your support and participation. I am already eagerly looking forward the outcomes this term. As always, I hope that you will share your concerns and ideas with me. Please, stay in touch.



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