



# MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## THE CONNECTION

A PERIODIC UPDATE ON HAPPENINGS –  
FROM BALTIMORE COUNTY TO ANNAPOLIS



**ERIC  
EBERSOLE**  
MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
DISTRICT 44A

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I was very pleased to make an excursion to Kansas City to visit the Kansas Correctional Program to educate and teach skills to incarcerated individuals. We spent the entire day at the Lansing Correctional Facility. The programs, that cooperate with local colleges, train people to be ready to reenter our community with skills and knowledge that will allow to find employment and housing. Many of them have been incarcerated for so long that they start off needing basic instruction on the technologies that are imbedded in our day to day lives. They have been denied good access to them in prison. Then, the program teaches things like welding, IT, and even daily life skills. The level of recidivism among those in this program is virtually zero - something we all want for people who have served their sentence and paid their debt to society. There are similar programs here in Maryland, but, in my opinion, they are not nearly as robust or even available. I intend to advocate for expansion in the future.



On March 4, we celebrated **Read Across America Day**. This is a day that is promoted by the National Education Association and our own Maryland State Education Association. This group that represents educators is one of the few collective bargaining groups that not only represent their members, but also the people they serve – our students. And Read Across America is a shining example of that – focused on the “need to read” among our most important citizens – our students. We are encouraged to donate a book and send it to a school in our district and I did that. Here you see my interns, Claire and Esther, presenting that book – “B is for Blue Crab” – along with Clifford the Big Red Dog.



I have been elected by my peers to be the chair of the **Baltimore County House Delegation**. There are laws that are state laws but are particular to a county (or city) jurisdiction. The 20 fine legislators, that have been elected by the citizens of Baltimore County to represent them in Annapolis, take a serious and thoughtful approach to laws that are local in impact, from election of our board of education to liquor laws in Baltimore County – just to name a few. Further we are a civic minded bunch. As chair, I arranged to have us do a **day of service** at the Maryland Food Bank. Several of us participated in sorting and stacking food. Here you see Delegates Phillips, Allen, Forbes, and Bhandari joining me to help this organization feed hungry Marylanders. I am proud to be part of and lead this bunch.

I have had two bills passed in recent weeks about which I am very proud. I have described them here previously, but I will take the liberty of revisiting them here.

First – HB1 – This bill requires the Maryland Department of Transportation to train its employees to recognize the signs that a person is being human trafficked and teaches them how to report it. This bipartisan legislation passed unanimously. The Senate cross-file has also passed. I am looking forward to this legislation being signed into law very soon. Next session, I will work on similar legislation for taxis and rideshares.



And – HB 986 – Last session I passed legislation that would create new and equally rigorous pathways to teacher certification. That effort was to allow choices that would be alternatives to the Praxis test that tends to weed out people of color. This legislation goes further – creating policy that will keep teachers once we encourage them into the profession. All first, second, and third year teachers will be assigned a mentor in their building and the school must create a cohort of these teachers – overseen by a veteran educator – that will meet to share solutions to the

challenges encountered in the first years of teaching. I have a personal stake here. I had a tough first year all those years ago and a few veteran teachers organically decided to step up and help me navigate that year. Had they not been willing to give their free time, I may not have survived that year and gone on to teach for 35 years. This bill adds structure, as well as compensation for participating mentors and cohort guides. Teachers were generous with me then and generally teachers now would gladly volunteer, but we ask them to do so much and they need to be valued and given professional development time or money for their good advice and help.



I am a proud supporter and advocate for the many groups that find themselves struggling to find equitable treatment and opportunity. We have caucuses of legislators representing the needs of Black, Hispanic, Jewish, Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI), LGBTQIA+, Veteran, and Women Marylanders. We have a rich and thoughtful set of legislators from each of these groups. I am a proud to be an affiliate member of these caucuses. I have learned so much about the unique life challenges people in these



protected classes face. I am proud to be supportive and to be learning more all the time. Recently these caucuses joined together in a press conference to highlight all the legislation that we can pass to improve equity for them here in Maryland. I was proud to attend this show of cooperation and unity.

I recently stopped by Westchester Elementary School to deliver a Maryland flag. I had noticed the one they were flying was looking a bit worn. I offered to replace it. Principal Phil Byers was bit surprised that we could do that for them. I joined him and two first graders, Natalie and Abby, in presenting it. Even though this was a small gift, my ability to be generous in this kind of way is one of my favorite parts of my service to the community. It is nice to offer gifts but, just as important, to let students see their elected officials as wanting to support the community. If your organization has need for a flag, be sure to contact my office and we will accommodate you.





*I had the pleasure of meeting with student leaders from the Baltimore County Student Council on Lawyers Mall during their visit to Annapolis. These bright, engaged, young advocates came ready to discuss the issues*

*that matter most to them, from overall education funding (particularly on the Blueprint) to mental health resources in schools. After interacting with young adults for over 30 years as a high school teacher, I am consistently impressed, but never surprised, by their maturity and commitment. The passion for civic engagement and advocacy they model is truly inspiring, and it's clear that our future is in good hands. I'm grateful for the opportunity to hear their perspectives and look forward to supporting their efforts as they continue to lead and make a difference in our communities.*

**LET ME HEAR FROM YOU!**

*My team and I are focused on providing constituent support. If there is anything we can do to help, please do not hesitate to contact my office via email or phone. You will get a prompt response.*

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**COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS AND LEADERSHIP ROLES**



- **Ways and Means Committee**
- **Chair- Education Subcommittee - Ways and Means**
- **Member - Early Childhood Subcommittee - Ways and Means**
- **Chair – Baltimore County House Delegation**
- **Member - Joint Committee on Children, Youth & Families**
- **House of Delegates Representative - Education Commission of the States, State Interagency Coordinating Council, and Southern Regional Education Board**
- **Advisory Board Member - MD Center for School Safety**
- **Board Member – Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports**
- **Member – Apprenticeship 2030 Commission**

