



DELEGATE ERIC EBERSOLE

DISTRICT 12

**THE CONNECTION:
LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER
END OF SESSION 2020 – PART I**



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



**EARLY
ADJOURNMENT**

**COVID-19
LEGISLATION**

CENSUS 2020



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We adjourned early out of an abundance of caution. We did not want to be a risk to our colleagues and our families. We had a few things we had to take care of before we left.

Here is a rundown of the last days:

1. House and Senate leadership are united in their support of the Governor in his effort to respond to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Speaker Adrienne Jones and Senate President Bill Ferguson decided to take unprecedented, but necessary, measures to slow the spread of the virus in Maryland. As such, the 2020 Legislative Session adjourned Sine Die on Wednesday, March 18, 2020. The General Assembly will try to reconvene in May for a special session to finalize any outstanding legislative work.



2. This decision to adjourn the legislative session did not come lightly. House and Senate leadership coordinated to make a decision that was informed, research-based, and promptly responded to the current public health crisis.

3. As legislators, we have a constitutional duty to pass the budget before we adjourn - and we have an obligation to work for the people of Maryland. We passed a balanced budget with a great deal of collaboration and hard work. It even shows a predicted surplus, although time will tell as we move through the economic pain the COVID-19 pandemic will cause. We also worked long hours in the House and Senate committees to prioritize and pass important legislation that still needed attention (even in light of the pandemic) in each committee.

4. The Maryland General Assembly supports the Governor in taking proactive actions to protect our most vulnerable and limit the spread of the virus. We have witnessed in other states and countries how rapidly the virus can spread when the governments fail to take immediate, preventative measures to mitigate the spread of the virus. Public health research shows that the more steps we can take right now to prevent transmission of the virus, the better off we'll be.

5. The Speaker and Senate President have established a special workgroup, the Joint Committee on the COVID-19 Response, to monitor the effects of the virus and advise the General Assembly on the steps to take to prevent the further spread of the virus.

6. Our job as elected officials is to lead by example. By adjourning the legislative session early, we're demonstrating our commitment to protecting the health of our residents, our families, and ourselves and we hope to serve as a model for our local governments and neighboring states.

Practicing social distancing now can save lives later!



We Passed a Few Important Measures to Help Responses to COVID-19

House and Senate leadership, the Governor and all state agencies are unified in the effort to keep residents safe in the wake of this rapidly evolving public health threat. At the behest of Governor Hogan, Speaker

Adrienne Jones took immediate legislative action and introduced two COVID-19 bills to provide the Governor with the necessary tools to respond to this public health emergency:

HB 1661: State Budget - Revenue Stabilization Account Transfers -

Coronavirus:

This bill provides the Governor with up to \$50 million from the State's Rainy Day Fund to help respond to the public health threat.

HB 1663: State Government – State of Emergency and Catastrophic Health Emergency – Authority of Governor and Unemployment Insurance Benefits COVID–19 Public Health Emergency Protection Act of 2020:

This bill allows the Governor to take specific actions to expand healthcare benefits and protect workers in response to the public health threat:

- Changes the definition of a work week to allow state hospital nurses to care for COVID identified patients and still be eligible for full-time benefits;
- Eliminates co-pays and other out-of-pocket costs for COVID–19 testing;
- Requires the Maryland Department of Health to cover the cost of COVID–19 testing and any associated costs not paid for by insurance or another third party;
- Covers the cost of COVID–19 immunization should it become available;
- Waives certain telehealth protocols for COVID–19 to allow more patients to be diagnosed and treated over the phone and online;
- Requires the Maryland Department of Health to reimburse patients for telehealth services related to COVID–19;
- Allows the state, in partnership with federal government, to provide unemployment insurance benefits to workers who are temporarily out of work or quarantined due to COVID–19;
- Prevents retailers from price gouging necessary goods and services such as food, water, fuel and medicine;
- Prohibits employers from firing employees who are isolated or quarantined for COVID-19.

One Last Thing - Please Complete Your Census!

It helps you get properly represented and makes our community eligible for proportional funding. Follow the instructions in your mailer or just go to



<https://my2020census.gov/>

It only takes about 10 minutes but it is a critical investment in our community.

Look for Another Newsletter Soon with More Detail About Other Legislation We Addressed

Thanks again for all your support and participation. As always, I hope that you will share your concerns and ideas with me. Please, stay in touch and try your best to keep yourself and those around you healthy.

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Committee Assignments and Leadership Roles

- **Ways and Means**
- **Chair - Early Childhood Subcommittee**
- **Education Subcommittee**
- **Deputy Majority Whip**
- **Joint Committee on Children, Youth & Families**
- **Advisory Board - MD Center for School Safety**
- **House of Delegates Representative to Education Commission of the States**

