



DELEGATE ERIC EBERSOLE
END OF SESSION RECAP

**THE
CONNECTION:
LEGISLATIVE
NEWSLETTER**

DISTRICT 12

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

**END OF SESSION-
SINE DIE**

**MY LEGISLATION
AND WHAT
PASSED**

**BIG LEGISLATIVE
INITIATIVES**

**CAPITAL MONEY
FOR DISTRICT 12**

**DELEGATE
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Friends,

Thank you again for the honor and privilege of serving you as your State Delegate and representative in Annapolis. Here is my **End of Session Recap** for you.

The 2021 legislative session concluded on April 12th, and it was a very unorthodox session in many ways. Due to COVID safety measures, many meetings (such as committee hearings) were conducted virtually for the first time in the history of the General Assembly and we actually split the House of Delegates into two locations that were connected simultaneously on screens. I am pleased to report that despite the major changes to protocol, we were able to conduct an extremely productive session this year while keeping everyone healthy.

A special thank you to everyone who emailed, called, wrote letters, and attended our virtual town hall to tell me about legislation that mattered to you. I received thousands of emails, dozens of letters or postcards, and dozens of phone calls from my constituents. Your opinions and thoughts are of great value to me in forming my opinions, and I am honored to have the task of representing your interests.

Best,

Eric Ebersole



LEGISLATION I INTRODUCED IN 2021 -

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 are waiting to be signed into law.

HB 321 – Adult Changing Facilities – Public Buildings

Families with significantly disabled adults in their care can find it difficult to meet hygiene needs when travelling around the state. This bill requires a changing facility suitable for providing personal care for an adult to be installed in at least one public restroom within a public building being constructed or substantially renovated. Specified state and local governmental entities must report the location of all changing facilities to 2-1-1 Maryland, Inc., which must maintain a list on its website of all the reported locations. This way, caregivers can plan trips with civilized stops that do not require changing adult diapers on a parking lot or bathroom floor. This bill passed both houses unanimously

HB 776 - Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project

A few years ago, we passed legislation that prohibited suspension of students in pre-k through grade 2. All the research says that suspending a student from school is only damaging, now and in the future. However, without the ability to remove students, schools needed assistance with managing students with mental health challenges. This prompted the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Consultation Project. Composed of teams of experts, they offer assistance to elementary schools, pre-k, and child cares in understanding and managing challenging children. As we expand pre-k in our state and

realize additional needs for child care, this program may need to expand as well. This is especially important now as business and non-profit day cares are still able to expel students, although generally they do not want to. This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to conduct a study of the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Consultation Project. As part of the study, MSDE must, among other things, review the goals of the project, assess the need for new services, report on progress the project has made, and consider ways to integrate the project with other specified services. If the report indicates a need for expansion, I will offer that as legislation next year.

HB 752 - Farm to Food Donation Program –

This bill creates an incentive to get food that farmers would discard to food banks and to people's tables instead. It creates a tax credit against the State income tax for eligible food donations made by a qualified farms. Generally, the farmers are encouraged to donate food that is not "pretty" enough for market, but is still high quality. This bill is good for farmers, good for foodbanks and, of course, good for the food insecure. The MDA will promote the program through marketing of the tax credit and facilitate the donation of eligible food donations by qualified farms through the reimbursement of transportation costs or direct assistance with the transportation of eligible food donations. This bill passed unanimously!

JUST WAIT 'TIL NEXT YEAR. ☹ - These made various levels of progress. I will work on a strategy to get each a favorable outcome next session.

HB 237 - Early Literacy and Dyslexia Practices.

I continue to work toward making sure all students in Maryland, especially those with special learning needs, get the education they need and deserve. This bill would require the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop a reading and dyslexia handbook to guide local school systems in the implementation of best practices for early literacy and dyslexia. We passed it unanimously in the House of Delegates. It was held up in Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee in the Senate. I will work with Senator Hester, who cross filed it with me, to get ideas on how to get some traction in her branch next year for this important initiative.

HB 338 - Innkeepers and Hospitality - Human Trafficking Awareness Training

Human trafficking is pervasive in each of our communities and it is a horrible crime. It flies below the radar, so much so that we are hardly aware of it. It has been a disturbing revelation in my years as a delegate that I was previously mostly unaware of its insidiousness before advocates and colleagues helped me see it. We need to check it and

stop it in every way we can. This bill requires the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (GOCPYVS) and the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) to approve an education training program for the accurate and prompt identification and reporting of suspected human trafficking. I have received interest from Senator Jackson on this initiative. I plan to meet with him during interim to create a strategy for success and a cross file. I want to take a bite out human trafficking and this is one place we can do that.

HB 271 - Law Enforcement Diversion Programs.

One of the tragedies of non-violent crimes like drug use is that arresting violators often does not help them to change their behavior. Frequently, being incarcerated adds to their problems both directly and in their life circumstances. Many times, being referred to social programs is a more effective alternative. This bill authorizes a law enforcement agency to establish a law enforcement diversion program in partnership with the local behavioral health authority within the jurisdiction. This bill stalled in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee after being passed unanimously in the House of Delegates. I will speak to members of that committee to get an idea of their concerns so I can introduce it successfully next year.

HB 1166 - Physical Restraint and Seclusion in Schools.

Physical restraint or seclusion should not be used in school except in situations where the child's behavior poses imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others. As many reports have documented, the use of restraint and seclusion can, in some cases, have very serious consequences, including, most tragically, death. There is no evidence that using restraint or seclusion is effective in reducing the occurrence of the problem behaviors that frequently precipitate the use of such techniques. This bill would then provide information that will, no doubt, lead to further legislation that will address the need to significantly limit restraint and seclusion of students in school. I look forward to being part of that initiative. I plan to introduce it again next year.

BIG INITIATIVES IN THE LEGISLATURE –

LAW ENFORCEMENT REFORM :

HB 670 – The Police Reform and Accountability Act of 2021

SB 71-Maryland Police Accountability Acts of 2021-Body-Worn Cameras and Use of Force

SB 178 - Maryland Police Accountability Acts of 2021 - Search Warrants Inspection of Records Relating to Police Misconduct (Anton Law)

Based on the strong, transformational recommendations of the House Police Reform and Accountability Workgroup, the House passed legislation to bring greater transparency

and accountability to policing across Maryland. House Bill 670 along with the Senate bills, will ensure equal treatment for every Marylander, safer communities and public confidence in our police departments by:

- Fully repealing the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights
- Enhancing civilian-driven transparency in police misconduct
- Supporting civilian complaints
- Imposing swift and uniform penalties for police misconduct
- Allowing for more transparent police records
- Providing stronger limitations for use of force statutes and no-knock warrants
- Establishing independent investigations for police misconduct
- Requiring body worn cameras by all officers by 2025

HB 1372 – Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Revisions

After a year of distance learning due to COVID-19 school closures, a growing number of students are falling further behind. This legislation revises the Blueprint in response to the current state of education and gives students a path forward. The Blueprint 2.0 bill includes needed fixes to education funding that were exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and:

- Provides more support to address learning loss;
- Expands behavioral and mental health resources;
- Closes the digital divide with more access to broadband and devices; and
- Requires better reporting and data tracking for more accountability.

Unemployment Insurance Reform Package

Over 4k Marylanders reported that they were unable to get assistance because the State has been using an outdated, broken system that needs short and long-term fixes. Kudos to my staff for helping over a thousand constituents get the help they needed. But this is the job of Department of Labor and they need help meeting needs in a difficult time like we had this past year. Immediate and structural fixes that will help streamline the process and make the UI system more efficient include:

- Modernizing the UI system to ensure that Marylanders can get the money they deserve
- Improving customer service
- Creating more accountability
- Planning for the next emergency

SB 496 – Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families (RELIEF) Act

The House of Delegates passed the bipartisan RELIEF Act providing over \$1.5 billion in pandemic relief. The RELIEF Act infuses the State's economy with \$509.0 million in spending and provides over \$1.0 billion in tax relief and credits:

- Maryland becomes the highest state in the nation for its earned income tax credit, which puts cash in the pockets of low income Maryland taxpayers.
- Maryland raises its earned income tax credit for individuals with no children from nearly \$100 to \$530.
- Unemployment insurance payments will be exempt from the State income tax, keeping over \$225.0 million in the pockets of unemployed Marylanders.
- Marylanders who qualified for the earned income tax credit in 2019 are provided with stimulus payments of up to \$500, putting over \$175.0 million immediately in the hands low-income individuals and families.
- Allows small businesses to keep sales tax collections of up to \$9,000 over three months
- Helps up to 100,000 small businesses and nonprofits to defer paying unemployment insurance taxes until the first three months of 2022 to help cash flow (they employ ¼ of MD workforce)
- Forgives MD taxes on COVID loans and grants
- Minority and Small Business Loans (MSBDFEA): Converts up to \$50,000 in Equity Participation Program loans to grants

Election Law: HB 745 -Early Voting Centers & HB 1048 - Permanent Absentee Ballot List

HB 745 modernizes the state's formula for Early Voting centers and will result in over a dozen new centers across the state for the 2022 election. The House has embraced early voting as a practical and helpful option for voters to improve accessibility to the ballot box. This legislation also requires local boards of elections to take into account equity and maximizing participation when placing early voting centers. Other factors local boards must consider include: historically disenfranchised communities, access to public transportation, and proximity to dense populations. And...

HB1048 will make voting easier and more convenient by creating a permanent mail-in ballot option. Marylanders who want to vote by mail in future elections will not need to request a ballot for every election. Elections during the pandemic have shown us that our existing mail-in voting process works and that voters should be able to choose the option that works best for them. This is an important step towards a more accessible and equitable democracy.

HB 1 – Funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities

While the State has increased operating and capital funding to the HBCUs over the past decade, additional investment is needed to increase the availability of new and distinct programming to attract more students to HBCUs resolving a decade-long federal court case. HB1 provides \$577M over 10 years to resolve the program duplication issues in Maryland’s four HBCUs and level the playing field for all students – regardless of background, or race, or college they attend.

HB 30 - Office of People & Counsel Environmental Reform Act

This legislation ensures that climate change is part of the conversation when energy and utility regulations are considered at the Public Service Commission (PSC). House Bill 30 creates a climate counsel position to advocate at the PSC on climate change issues the way the people’s counsel advocates on ratepayer issues. This legislation takes affirmative steps to meet our greenhouse and gas reduction goals.

HB 940 – Sports Betting

Maryland has been at a competitive disadvantage with other East Coast states who offer sports betting options. Last year at the ballot box, voters overwhelmingly supported a constitutional amendment to allow sports betting in our state. The bill makes Maryland the 21st state in the nation to legalize sports betting with the revenues going for education. It also maximizes the opportunity for minority businesses to participate in Maryland’s newly established gaming industry.

HB 507 – Clean Water Commerce Act

As amended, the bill will stop the sunset of the fund and increase the allocation from the Bay Restoration Fund Wastewater Account from roughly 10M up to 20M through 2030. Of that 20M, 35% (highest share) would be allocated toward agricultural projects, which are not currently eligible, and prioritize tackling nitrogen levels. To meet environmental goals, it is crucial that the state continues to address pollution levels caused by other sources. Maryland has done exceptionally well to reduce pollution from wastewater facilities and while there is more work to do, it becomes increasingly important to address pollution coming from agriculture and other sectors.

Legislative Bond Initiatives -2021 – District 12 -

Harriett Tubman School and Programs

I am proud that District 12 is the home of the Harriet Tubman School. This building springs from yet another difficult chapter in our racial history – the segregated “separate but equal school” for Black students in Howard County. Finally taken out of use in 1965,

11 years after the Brown v Board ruling, it stood empty and then acted as an office building for school maintenance. Finally and recently recast as a center for historic reflection and cultural education, we continue to enrich the programs that celebrate the students who went to school there and to remember the past that it represents. This year we were able to provide \$750,000 for the creation and construction of a cultural center there as well as \$200,000 for a playground.

Patapsco Valley State Park

This year, I was excited to sponsor legislation along with Delegate Pat Young to help improve Patapsco Valley State Park, a jewel of open space in our suburban district. Patapsco Valley State Park is nationally known for its trail opportunities with over 220 miles of natural surface trail. Our legislative bond initiatives will bring home a money for the construction of the Patapsco Trail Center which will serve as a headquarters for the planning, development, and stewardship of PVSP's stellar trail system. Our combined legislation, worth almost \$3/4 million, will also soon help provide legal parking at River Rd and Ilchester Rd., providing safe access for the community and helping distribute park users throughout the valley. Additionally, the site improvement will begin incorporation of a trail corridor that will help relieve the pedestrian and cycling use on River Road adjacent to the site. Patapsco Valley State Park is a Maryland treasure that is near to my heart and an important asset to our community. I was grateful for the opportunity to help contribute to its improvement. I will continue to be committed to supporting and improving it.

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LET ME HEAR FROM YOU:

Thank you in 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. 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.

**eric.ebersole@house.state.md.us
or 410-841-3328.**



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric D. Ebersole". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eric Ebersole
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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 Member - Visit Howard County**
- **Community Leadership Board - Catonsville Y**