MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THE CONNECTION

A PERIODIC UPDATE ON HAPPENINGS –

FROM BALTIMORE COUNTY TO ANNAPOLIS

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5/25/2025

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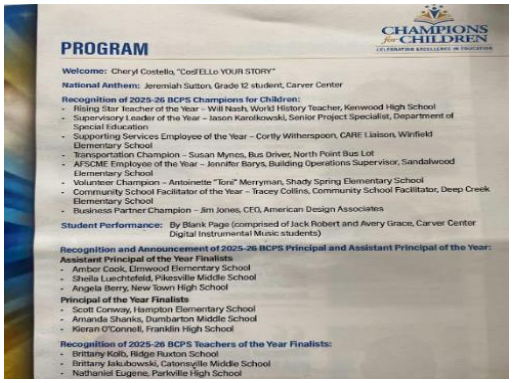
Hello all!

After session ends there is still lots to do. Much of what I do during the early days of "interim" is supporting efforts and initiatives in the community - and, of course, going to see the governor sign a few of my bills. Many of the bills I watch get signed are not my primary sponsorships, but rather, those that I molded and guided through from my position as Education Subcommittee Chair. Those efforts have all been outlined in my end of session letter. Feel free to go to the website http://www.ericebersole.org/newsletters.html to see the archive of that, and other, newsletters.

This issue will be a review of just some of the great things I have seen and been a part of in the community.

First, and probably most important to me, are our educators. Baltimore County honors its most outstanding educators every year and I go to the event to watch them get their well-deserved recognition. But one of the bigger treats is that, as Baltimore County Delegation Chair, I get to drive around the county with my staff for a day, stopping at the school of each winner and presenting them with a citation from the 20 members of the House of Delegates who represent Baltimore County.

Here is a picture of the program with a list of the winners as well as pictures from the ceremony and from our visits to their schools. Being particularly proud of southwest Baltimore County, I am pleased that the most significant award, Teacher of the Year, went to Brittany Jakubowski of Catonsville Middle.

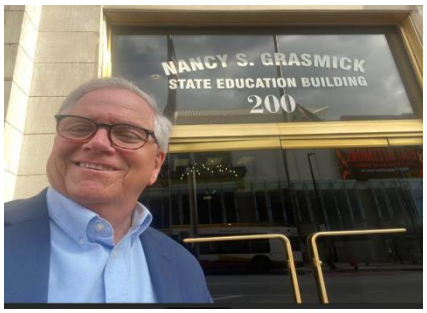


Hiking and biking accessibility in our community are tremendously important to me. A lot of the development in the past has proceeded without an eye toward that. So now we have to work very hard to find space and pathways to, from, and through our community. Over the past several years I have directed over $1,000,000 in grants to southwest Baltimore County area for development of the Catonsville Rails to Trails effort - also detailed in the end of session letter. However, recently I joined a group that started hiking at Carroll Park in Baltimore and walked along hiking access all the way to the Western School in Paradise. It's incredible to realize that such a pathway would still be possible. A lot of work needs to be done and I will continue to support that.

With City Councilman Paris Gray

With the hiking gang starting a Carroll Park

When it comes to improving education, I never rest. I recently visited the Nancy Grasmick building in downtown Baltimore - headquarters of the Maryland State Department of Education. Their government relations director, and my very good friend, Akilah Alleyne, met with me there. We discussed several bills that were good concepts but stalled because they needed some big wrinkles ironed out. One example was a bill that would have required vetting of teachers licensing history. They are already vetted with background checks for dangerous behaviors in their history. This bill would have gone a little further in checking for any irregularities in their licensing that have occurred in the past. Such a check might have flagged the teacher at Pikesville recently who used AI illegally to impersonate an administrator. He had significant deceptions in his application and licensing. I decided to get a head start on helping this and other pieces of legislation get passed next year.



There is a rather large park - Southwest Area Park of Baltimore County – just beyond the Light Rail Station in Baltimore Highlands. It borders the Patapsco River, as so much does here, and a great deal of it is marshland. It has a boat launch, a few nice hiking paths, some baseball fields, a few pickleball courts, and – most uniquely – a model plane airport and flying area. I decided to take a day to look around. I recommend it. There are so many hidden treasures in our area and this is one.

Economic development is a significant focus for me here in Baltimore County. As our infrastructure matures, we need to be sure that we are keeping our neighborhoods and communities vibrant. This means a focus on things like retail development, housing opportunity as well as developing open space. We recently passed legislation to create the West Baltimore County Redevelopment Authority. I was honored to be on the appointment committee. This group has begun a deliberate process of looking to where needs exist and finding resources to meet them. I was pleased to be at one of their inaugural meetings where they were sworn in. I'm looking forward to significant things here.

The 4th of July is just around the corner and we do a great job celebrating every year. There is an early morning group bike ride to the city and back – starting at Catonsville Bicycles and Skateboards on Frederick Rd, then the soapbox derby at Elm and Oakland Rd, followed by the Firecracker 10k at Arbutus Middle School, a flag raising celebration at the Veterans Memorial on Oregon Ave, followed by the Firecracker 10k at Arbutus Middle School. Then, two parades – in Arbutus at 12:30 and Catonsville at 3:00 - followed by the best fireworks display in the area, right after dark at Catonsville High School. Getting all this ready takes some time and – money! The Catonsville Celebrations committee raises money year-round. For example, every Thursday there are food trucks at the Christian Temple Church parking lot - where you can get some good dinner food. And the event benefits the fundraising for our celebration. I went with my grandkids and had some great food and enjoyed the new playground nearby with them as well.

I am very proud that Baltimore County has an Access to Justice Resource Center in the courthouse at Towson. I recently attended and spoke at the ribbon-cutting for this amazing concept. It's available for people who have a legal issue or challenge and are not sure where to begin or how to proceed. I see this as a great equalizer and an important step. What a great common-sense idea!

Bike-to-work week usually occurs the third week in May every year. I am pleased that we have some very good advocates for biking in this community - Dave Dittman, Bobby Krasnanski, Erin Walton, Maureen Sweeny Smith, Sam Cooper, and Charlie Murphy. There are more but these are the ones who keep me on point. And they help host this event every year. I look forward to it as it reunites me with my bike riding friends and encourages me to stay on my 2 wheels whenever I can. It's a great way to get around and helps keep me fit. The ride around Catonsville was very enjoyable this year. There is also information you can find about other rides Catonsville Rails to Trails sponsors around here – including the 4th of July Bike to Baltimore that I previously mentioned.
Try this facebook page bit.ly/4jcRARr
Or email biking@crtt.org to get on a mailing list.

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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or 410-841-3328.

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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**