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Montgomery County

Environment and  
Transportation Committee

*Subcommittees*  
Housing and Real Property

Land Use and Ethics

Local Government and  
Bi-County Agencies



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## *The Maryland House of Delegates* ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

April 10<sup>th</sup> marked the end of the 437<sup>th</sup> legislative session of the Maryland General Assembly. This has been a year like none we have experienced before in the legislature. Your District 18 Team - Senator Richard Madaleno and Delegates Al Carr, Ana Sol Gutiérrez and Jeff Waldstreicher - worked hard again this year to advocate for the needs of our community, while simultaneously addressing developments at the federal level.

The following briefly summarizes a few of the major issues that were considered during this session. It is an honor and privilege for all four of us to represent you in the State House during these consequential times.

### **Fighting for Economic Justice and Opportunity**

The fight for job growth and economic justice was again center stage in Annapolis. Del. Waldstreicher, a member of the House Economic Matters Committee and Chairman of the Consumer Protection Subcommittee, is a leader on these issues. He and Sen. Madaleno authored legislation, **The Fight for \$15 Act (HB 1416/SB 962)**, to increase the state's hourly minimum wage to \$15 over five years. Dels. Carr and Sol Gutiérrez were co-sponsors. We believe that poverty should have no home in our great state. The "Fight for \$15" is gaining momentum throughout our nation, and we hope to pass this critical bill next year.

Your District 18 Team were also vocal proponents of the **Maryland Healthy Working Families Act (HB 1/SB 230)** to ensure that all workers have access to earned sick leave. We will always stand arm-in-arm with working Marylanders, who should not be required to choose between a paycheck and their loved ones. While this bill passed both chambers overwhelmingly, the Governor has vowed to veto it. If that occurs, a vote to override the veto will be the first act of business during our next session.

### **Investing in our Priorities for Today and Tomorrow**

We believe the budget is a moral document. That's why we all voted for a budget that fully funds our critical commitments for education, healthcare, public safety, and social services. The state's



\$43.6 billion budget passed with near-unanimous bipartisan support. Two of us serve in leadership roles on the legislature's budget committees. Sen. Madaleno is the Vice Chair of the Senate Budget & Taxation Committee and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, while Del. Sol Gutiérrez is the Vice Chair of the Public Safety and Administration Subcommittee and serves on the Capital Budget Subcommittee on the House Appropriations Committee.

The budget contains \$13.3 billion in operating funds for education, with \$738.7 million dedicated to Montgomery County Public Schools and Montgomery College. The budget also ensures that tuition at Maryland's public four-year universities will not increase by more than 2%. To address overcrowded K-12 schools, the General Assembly invested \$60 million in extra capital funds for school districts with growing enrollment, including ours. We also provided \$88.7 million in capital funds for the Universities at Shady Grove and an additional \$14.7 million for Montgomery College. As a result, the capacity of our Montgomery County higher education institutions, which serve the largest number of students in the state, will increase. The state capital budget also contained funding for a range of projects including \$3 million for enhancement of the Strathmore Music Hall, \$125,000 to support the expansion of A Wider Circle's Silver Spring facility, \$175,000 to open a community center in Rockville's Halpine Hamlet community, and \$150,000 to renovate the Audubon Society's Woodend Center in Chevy Chase.

We also passed legislation to guarantee access to critical health services provided by Planned Parenthood (**HB 1083/SB 1081**). As Congress continues to target Planned Parenthood, your representatives believe that we should never compromise on comprehensive women's healthcare or the right to choose. This timely bill will allow our state to continue to reimburse Planned Parenthood for the healthcare services they provide to our residents, no matter what happens in Congress.

### **Protecting our Environment**

The District 18 Team is committed to protecting our environment. Del. Carr is a leader on these issues and serves on the House Environment and Transportation Committee. We worked together to pass landmark legislation which bans fracking (hydraulic fracturing) in Maryland (**HB 1325**). There is simply no such thing as safe fracking. The Governor has already signed this bill, and it is now law.

At the beginning of this year's legislative session, your District 18 team voted to further Maryland's commitment to fighting climate change by overriding the Governor's veto of the **Clean Energy Jobs Act**. This new law ensures that at least 25% of Maryland's electricity comes from renewable sources by 2020; helps to create high-paying, quality jobs in the renewable energy sector; and removes barriers for women and minority owned-businesses to break into the industry.

### **Investing in Transportation**

Responding to the federal government's call for increased safety oversight of WMATA's Metrorail system, the District 18 team voted for legislation creating a new Metrorail Safety Compact. Now that Maryland, the District of Columbia and Virginia have all passed this agreement, we have ensured continued federal transportation funding for the system.

The General Assembly also passed legislation to enhance transparency in the State's transportation planning process, while preserving the Maryland Department of Transportation's flexibility to

include projects in the State's Consolidated Transportation Program.

### Securing Our Rights

The General Assembly also considered a series of bills designed to protect our rights and restore faith in government. That is why we passed the **Maryland Defense Act of 2017 (HJ 3/SJ 5)**. This law provides our state Attorney General with the power to sue the federal government to uphold our basic constitutional rights and challenge federal overreach. Thus, Maryland was able to join other states in opposition to the Trump Administration's unconstitutional travel ban. Most state Attorneys General already have this independent authority.

Responding to the tremendous fear and stress in our immigrant communities, we proudly co-sponsored **The Community Trust Act (HB 1362/SB 835)**. No Marylander, regardless of immigration status, should ever fear their own local law enforcement. The House passed this common-sense bill by a strong majority, but the Trust Act unfortunately did not pass in the Senate.

Finally, we believe that healthcare is a right, not a privilege reserved for the few. With the landmark federal Affordable Healthcare Act under existential threat, we passed several bills to oppose repeal and establish a process to protect the gains we have made in reducing the number of uninsured to all-time lows. Even if the ACA is repealed, Maryland will stand firm in its policy of accessible, affordable healthcare for all its residents.

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In an unprecedented environment and difficult legislative session, we were girded by the thousands of emails, letters, phone calls, and office visits we received from you throughout the last 90 days. We were energized by the rallies you attended in Washington, Annapolis, and across Montgomery County. We were strengthened by your advice and counsel. Thank you.

If you have questions or comments about the 2017 legislative session or any other matters, feel free to email us at our individual email addresses below.



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