

The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY Since 1932



From left: East Coast Sens. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., Bob Menendez, D-N.J., Cory Booker, D-N.J. and Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., join forces to reintroduce the Clean Ocean and Safe Tourism Anti-Drilling Act at a press conference on Wednesday, April 22, 2015.

Cardin, East Coast Senators Say No to Offshore Drilling

By LILY HUA
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON – Maryland Sens. Ben Cardin and Barbara Mikulski joined other East Coast senators Wednesday to reintroduce the Clean Ocean and Safe Tourism (COAST) Anti-Drilling Act on Earth Day in an effort to block offshore drilling in the Atlantic.

This week also marked the fifth year anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, which serves as a reminder of the possible consequences of offshore drilling. The spill is recognized as the worst in U.S. history, according to the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

Sen. Bob Menendez of New Jersey said, "We're in-

roducing the COAST Act to help protect our local economies, marine life, the health of our shore residents and to tell Big Oil that America's coastline is not for sale."

Rhode Island Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse said, "Not only no, but hell no to offshore drilling."

The legislation is being sponsored by the group of East Coast Democratic sena-

tors in opposition of the Obama administration's plans for offshore oil and gas drilling in the Atlantic Ocean, announced in January.

The administration's proposal would allow oil companies to lease areas off the coasts of Virginia, North Carolina,

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Rushern L. Baker, III Delivers 5th "State of the Economy" Address

By PRESS OFFICER
PG County Government

Upper Marlboro, MD - Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III delivered his 5th "State of the Economy" address entitled "Investing in Education: The Time is Now!" to business leaders during a breakfast hosted by the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation and the Greater Prince George's Business Roundtable held at the Colony South Hotel & Convention Center in Clinton, MD. To watch the speech, please click here. Residents are also encouraged to

visit the Investing in Education Homepage on the Prince George's County website to learn more about this investment.

"Investing in the Prince George's County Public Schools is what we must do to change our trajectory," said County Executive Baker. "If we don't take ownership for investing in our children's success, who will? If we want to improve property values and bring more businesses here, this is what we must do. If we want to grow and expand our commercial tax base,

See RUSHERN Page A5

Department of Parks and Recreation Receives \$30K Grant for Out-of-School Time Programs

By PRESS OFFICER
MNCPPC

GREENBELT, MD – The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC), Department of Parks and Recreation in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), has received a \$30,000 grant to support its "Healthy Out-of-School Time" (HOST) food access and nutritional literacy programs. The gift is part of a \$2.3 million grant NRPA received from the Walmart Foundation to support out-of-school time programs at

75 park and recreation agencies. The purpose of the grant is to:

- Increase the number of healthy meals children in low-income communities receive through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) during out-of-school times;
- Provide evidence-based, age-appropriate nutrition literacy to children that create behavior change by teaching the importance of healthy eating;

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Melwood and Zipcar Join Forces to Support People With Disabilities

Zipcar to provide first-year membership and \$365 free driving credit to anyone donating a vehicle to Melwood

By PRESS OFFICER
Bendure Communications, Inc.

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. —Cari DeSantis, president and CEO of Melwood announced today that Melwood and Zipcar have formed a partnership where Zipcar will provide a year of free membership and \$365 in driving credit to anyone donating a vehicle to Melwood.

"We are delighted to have this partnership," stated DeSantis. "This not only provides a potential tax credit to a vehicle donor but also ensures they'll have access to a Zipcar for a year."

Zipcar is the short-term rental car company that was launched in 2000 to wide acclaim. Participants pay a membership fee and can then rent a car by the hour or day. A variety of vehicles are generally available within easy walking distance of many urban neighborhoods. Members can reserve vehicles online or by phone any time, im-

mediately or up to a year in advance.

Melwood, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization relies heavily on cash and vehicle donations to support its work. Melwood is one of the largest employers of those with differing abilities throughout the Washington, D.C. region, including veterans. The organization has more than 40 government and corporate contracts and oversees total facilities management, custodial services, landscaping, recycling and a variety of other services. "We receive regular accolades from the government agencies and corporations we work with," DeSantis explained. "Our employees are not only reliable and conscientious but they have a lot to contribute to the work environment and their co-workers."

In addition, Melwood has a horticulture division that provides plant material for landscape con-

See ZIPCAR Page A3

Mikulski Receives Congressional Champion Award From Save the Children for Her Continued Support of Early Childhood Education

By MELANIE BALAKIT
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), a senior member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee and former Baltimore social worker, today was awarded the a Congressional Champion Award by Save the Children for her unending support for child care and early education programs.

"I'm honored to receive this tremendous award that recognizes the importance of child care and early childhood education in preparing our children for a successful future," Senator Mikulski said. "As a social worker, I've seen firsthand how quality, reliable care and early childhood education makes a difference in a child's life. I will keep fighting so that America's children, regardless of the zip code they live in, have access to quality child care and education they can count

on from pre-school through higher education."

Senator Mikulski has been a lifelong advocate for children and families. Last year, she fought to pass the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act, which refreshes and reforms the critical CCDBG program to help families access safe, affordable, quality child care that gets kids ready for school. CCDBG serves more than 1.5 million children each month, including 19,000 in Maryland, while their parents work or attend school. As Vice Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Mikulski has fought year in and year out to put funds in the federal checkbook for early childhood care and education including for the CCDBG program and well as Head Start and Preschool Development Grants.

"As a fellow Marylander, I am honored to present this award to Senator Mikulski, who is such a terrific champion for children," said Mark



On Wednesday, April 22, 2015, U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.) was presented a Congressional Champion Award by Save the Children Action Network president Mark K. Shriver for her continued fight to support early childhood education.

K. Shriver, president of Save the Children Action Network. "She knows that early childhood education is essential to a strong start in life."

Save the Children is a leading non-profit advocacy group that focuses on limiting and ending early childhood mortality and expanding access to

early-education for children in the United States. They have helped 143 million children in 120 countries throughout the world through advocacy and disaster and conflict relief.

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INSIDE

HUD Awards \$1.2 Million in Housing Counseling Grant to Maryland

Recent research from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia and the Urban Institute continues to find substantial benefits to housing counseling for families who purchase their first homes and those struggling to prevent foreclosure.
Community, Page A3

The State of On-Screen Diversity

Evidence from the Hollywood diversity report also points to another emerging truth about diversity: it sells. The data shows that our nation's increasingly diverse audiences are buying movie tickets for, and tuning into television shows that have "relatively diverse casts." Diverse audiences want to see their multifaceted lives reflected in the media they enjoy.
Commentary, Page A4

MDA to Introduce Farmers Market Finder – A Mobile Site for FMNP Participants

We will still circulate printed materials, but we see this as a low-cost, effective way to provide them with additional information and to encourage them to use their checks at farmers markets to buy to fresh produce.
Business, Page A5

Movie Review: Ex Machina

Caleb, a coder at Bluebook, wins an employee lottery to spend a week with CEO Nathan Bateman, an eccentric billionaire genius who lives in a remote, high-tech house on a mountain estate, the better to conduct his mind-blowing experiments without scrutiny. Nathan is disheveled, frequently drunk, gregarious, but secretive.
Out on the Town, Page A6

Earth Talk

Dear EarthTalk:

The proposed KeystoneXL oil pipeline from Canada into the U.S. seems to get all the headlines, but shouldn't we also be worried about the Energy East pipeline?

— Art Shea, Troy, NY

Features, Page A7

Towns and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

Ealey honored for 18 good years on the Morningside Town Council

Jim Ealey, Morningside Council Member and longtime vice-mayor, is stepping down, choosing not to run again. Following the Council meeting on April 21, the Town honored him. Mayor Kenneth Wade, former Mayor Karen Rooker and others paid tribute to him, a plaque was presented, and we all recalled what a blessing he has been for the town.

James O. Ealey and his wife Selaine moved to Pine Grove Drive in October 1976 and went right to work getting involved. He served as town dogcatcher for four years and later as code-enforcement officer. Then he was called to Africa where he served more than two years as a medic in Kenya.

He returned to Morningside in 1996 and a year later ran for the Town Council and won. He has continued on the Council ever since, most of the time as vice-mayor. Among his duties has been responsibility for the town's streets and signs, including the Municipal Center's Gateway sign, which he designed.

During his 18 years on the Council he served under four mayors. The first was Jerry Glaubitz whom he greatly admired. In 2004 Jim spearheaded the dedication of Glaubitz Circle near the home of the mayor, designed and constructed the Memorial Monument and opened the ceremony with "The Star Spangled Banner" on his harmonica.

He has often entertained with his harmonica, the first of which cost \$4.50. Over the years he served on the Peace Corps, worked with prisoners, has been heavily involved with his church, and played that harmonica at funerals. He has been dedicated to his town.

And now Jim is retiring. As he told us, "I had a good run." We will miss him.

More Morningside news

Morningsiders go to the polls Monday, May 4, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., to vote for two Council seats. Candidates are incumbent

Todd Mullins, Sheila Scott, Dakota Tyree and Bradley Wade. For information, call 301-736-2300.

The Morningside Recreation Council has become a committee of the Town. Officers were sworn in at the March 17 Town meeting. They are: Susan Mullins, president; Regina Foster, vice-president; Katie Frostbutter, secretary; and Susan Frostbutter, treasurer. Meetings are the first Thursday of the month, 7 p.m., at the Town Hall.

The Rec Council seeks participants for the Morningside 4th of July Parade. If you know a marching group, scouts, a clown, an old car, or other who might be interested, call Susan at 301-412-0135.

Taxes

Well, I paid my income taxes, thanks to Winnie Lanehart of Skyline and also of H&R Block. Winnie told me she has been with H&R Block for 19 years. If you'd ever like to discuss taxes with her, call 301-420-8398.

Applause

Rashad Whack, a 2009 graduate of Bishop McNamara High School, has been named Rookie of the Year 2014-15 by the National Basketball League of Canada.

Coming up

There's still time to help feed the hungry by participating in the 19th Annual Oxon Hill Food Pantry Walkathon on May 2, from 9 a.m. to noon, starting with sign-up at Oxon Hill Lutheran Church, 3415 Brinkley Road, then walking or running the Henson Creek Trail. Donation: \$10 or 10 pounds of non-perishables. Information: 301-899-8358.

The VFW Ladies Auxiliary of Post 9619, 6527 Suitland Road, is sponsoring an Outdoor Yard Sale on Saturday, May 9, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The first table or space is \$15; each additional is \$10. Call Karen Rooker at 301-967-8377 to reserve your table.

Bring kids (2 & up) to the Live Animal Show on May 2, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m., at Clearwater

Nature Center in Cosca Park. Meet close-up some of the nature center's live animals. Touch a snake, turtle, toad, and more. Fee: \$3. Info: 301-297-4575.

Changing landscape

Fast Eddie's will be moving into the space that was originally Andrew's Manor Theater. According to the sign on the front, they offer food, billiards and a bar.

There has been an application to build seven single-family homes on Suitland Road between the VFW and Randolph Road.

County Executive Baker delivered remarks at the Ribbon Cutting & Grand Opening of Marriott's AC Hotel at National Harbor on April 23.

I hear rumors that Thomas Creek Windows is moving to Forestville, to the site where Murry's Steaks was located for years.

Truck-driver Joby Lagana dies at 92

Joseph "Joby" Lagana, 92, of Capitol Heights died March 7. He was born in Washington to Antonio and Angela (Forami) Lagana. He was a truck driver all his life, spending most of his career driving for Bevard Brothers & Silver Hill Sand and Gravel. In later years he drove his pick-up to deliver fruit, vegetables and Italian bread to family and friends.

He was the husband of the late Dorothy Evelyn Lagana; father of Charlotte Studds, Rosemarie Pearson, Terri Comfort, Lisa Fusco, and the late Barry Lagana. He is also survived by 15 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, his sister Ruth Kans and brother Frank "Icky" Lagana.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Kathryn Deaver, Ann Lacey, Ernestine Taylor Wood, Dante Ross Jr. and Janet Booth Kaye, May 2; my daughter Sheila (McHale) Mudd and Lori Williams, May 3; India Goodall and Ruby Haines, May 4; Donald Young, Jim Henderson and Marlyn Meoli, May 5; Elsie Dent and Gretchen Ennis, May 6.

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301 888 2153

150th FOUNDERS DAY CELEBRATION

Bowie State University celebrated their 150th Founders Day Celebration on April 15, 2015 10:00 AM. The celebration was held at Samuel L. Myers Auditorium Martin Luther King, Jr. Communications Arts Center Bowie State University. The keynote speaker Dr. Walter M. Kimbrough, president of Dillard University inspires "BSU Community to Build the Bowie Empire."

Bowie State University have provided high-quality, educational opportunities for 150 years. Bowie State University is the oldest Historically Black University in Maryland and one of the ten oldest in the country. The University empowers more than 5,600 diverse students with a rigorous curriculum under President Mickey L. Burnim, Ph.D. Bowie State University has made great strides on the path to becoming one of the nation's best comprehensive universities.

AWARDS GALA

Bowie State University Foundation celebrated their Sesquicentennial Founders Day Awards Gala Saturday, April 18, 2015 at Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center National

Harbor, Maryland. The University celebrated 150 years honoring: Leadership, Heritage and Service. Special guests were Vivica A. Fox Film and Television Actress/Producer and Brian McKnight Grammy Award Nominated Artist Singer and songwriter Guest Performer. The Gala honored outstanding achievements and contributions of faculty, alumni and business leaders who have made a significant impact on the University.

ANNUAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION

New Hope Fellowship Parish North Campus: Nottingham Myers Church, South Campus: Christ Church, Reverend Constance C. Smith, Pastor invites you to our Annual Women's Day Celebration "Women Walking in the Beauty of Holiness". Our big celebration is Sunday, May 17, 2015 10:00 AM at Nottingham Myers Church Family Life Center 15601 Brooks Church Road Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772.

Guest speaker is Rev. Loretta Johnson, Jones Memorial United Methodist Church Washington, DC. If you need additional information please contact North Campus: Nottingham Myers Church (301) 888-2171, South

Campus: Christ Church (301) 888-1316 or website: thenhf.org. We are looking forward with great expectations as we gather to celebrate womanhood in the life of our parish.

STAGE PLAY

Alexandria Chapel United Methodist Church (Rev. Kermit C.C. Moore, Pastor) in association with JM Entertainment presents a Stage Play "Conversations in Faith" Saturday, June 13, 2015 at Asbury United Methodist Church. The church address is 4004 Accokeek Road Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Rev. Gladman Kapfuvuti is the Pastor. Tickets cost \$15 (General Admission). Doors open at 1:00 PM. Play starts at 2:00 PM. For more information: www.JMEntertainment.info.

CHILDREN'S GLOBAL READINESS ACADEMY

Children's Global Readiness Academy is one Language Academy with two great programs and locations. Summer Camp will be offered in two sessions. Session I June 22-July 24 (Language & the City, Session) II, July 27-August 21 (Language & Stem). Call 301-842-4056 or visit www.cgrkids.org for more information.

Neighborhood Events

Edwards Statement Opposing the Federal Employee Tax Accountability Act

Washington, D.C. — Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards (MD-4) issued the following statement in opposition to the Federal Employee Tax Accountability Act, H.R. 1563. The bill failed to receive the two-thirds majority vote required for passage.

"The Federal Employee Tax Accountability Act is more frivolous legislation by House Republicans as they continue to vilify federal employees. The truth of the matter is this legislation would be counterproductive as federal agencies already have the ability to garner wages to pay delinquent taxes, which wouldn't be possible if the employee is removed from their position. It is also unnecessary since federal agencies already have the authority to initiate disciplinary action against employees for delinquent tax debts, which may include removal.

"This legislation also highlights the hypocrisy of House Republicans. As they target the 4 percent of federal employees who owe back taxes, Republicans have cut over \$1 billion in funding for the Internal Revenue Service, leaving the agency severely understaffed and with limited resources. I once again urge House Republicans to stop playing these political games and join Democrats in addressing real challenges facing the nation."

B&O Railroad Museum Awarded Top Choice Medal By Asian Tourism Market

Baltimore, MD — This week the B&O Railroad Museum received written recognition from Lianorg announcing the honor of being voted to receive a "Top Choice 2015" medal by Asian visitors and judges. Courtney Wilson, Executive Director of the B&O Railroad Museum, states "With our recent formal affiliation with The Railway Museum in Saitama City, JAPAN, this award is a tremendous honor and an indication that tourists from all over the Far East are enjoying Baltimore and the Museum's unrivalled American railroad collection."

Based in China, Lianorg is the leading tourist website in Asia that provides authentic and professional travel, tourist and destination information and aims to be the most reliable search engine for Asian tourists. This distinguished award significantly raises the B&O Railroad Museum's international profile and will be highlighted and promoted by Lianorg through its website, APPs, Video productions and platforms, travel guides and magazines. Information on the "Top Choice" award and medal program is available on their website www.lianorg.com. Lianorg presents Top Choice medals annually to distinguished restaurants, hotels, shopping venues and attractions across 83 countries. In winning this award the B&O Railroad Museum joins other spectacular attractions in the United States like the Kennedy



Congresswoman
Donna F. Edwards

Space Center, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The B&O Railroad Museum, a non-profit 501 (C) 3, welcomes over 250,000 visitors annually. About one third of these visitors reside in foreign countries. The B&O Railroad Museum, a full affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, also received the 2014 Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence.

About the Museum

The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of American railroading and its impact on American society, culture, and economy. The Museum is home to the oldest, most important and comprehensive collection of American railroad artifacts in the world including an unparalleled roster of 19th and 20th century railroad equipment. The 40-acre historic site is regarded as the birthplace of American railroading and includes the 1851 Mt. Clare Station, the 1884 Baldwin Roundhouse, and first mile of commercial railroad track in America. For further information on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum, please call 410-752-2490 or visit www.borail.org

William J. Frank Named Deputy Secretary Maryland Department of Disabilities

BALTIMORE, MD - Governor Larry Hogan and Carol A. Beatty, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) today announced that William J. Frank, former member of the Maryland House of Delegates and co-sponsor of the 2004 legislation that created the Department of Disabilities as a cabinet-level department, has been named Deputy Secretary of the Maryland Department of Disabilities. An adjunct professor at Towson University, Frank most recently served as Director of Development at the Center for Pregnancy Concerns in Baltimore.

"I have known Bill Frank for many years as a tireless advocate for the people of Maryland," said Governor Hogan. "Throughout his professional career, his tenure as a Delegate in the Maryland General Assembly and his volunteer and community work, Bill has worked to ensure that Maryland families are stronger and that our communities are better places to live and work. I know he will bring this dedication and commitment to his role as Deputy Secretary to the ben-

efit of Marylanders with disabilities and their families."

"We are truly fortunate to have someone with Bill's experience working on behalf of people with disabilities," said Secretary Beatty. "I envision a strong working partnership, one in which we position Maryland as a national leader providing greater opportunities for employment, education, housing and independence for all of our citizens."

"I am deeply honored to have been appointed by Secretary Beatty to this important role and I look forward to aggressively championing the rights of Marylanders with disabilities. My own diagnosis of Parkinson's disease in 2007 has provided me with a deeper understanding and empathy for individuals with disabilities," said Frank. "My hope is to supplement Secretary Beatty's knowledge and expertise of disability issues with my background and knowledge of state government and budgetary issues."

Frank served as a member of the House of Delegates representing the 42nd District of Baltimore County from 2003 to 2015, at which time he decided not to run for a fourth term. During his tenure in the House of Delegates, Frank initially served on the House Appropriations Committee and later on the House Health and Human Resources Subcommittee, where he oversaw the budget for MDOD and other disabilities programs. He was Chief Deputy Minority Whip of the House Republican Caucus from 2007 to 2013. In 2015, Frank was awarded the prestigious Thomas Kennedy Medallion, an award presented to former members of the House of Delegates in recognition of personal courage and dedication to the principles of liberty and freedom.

As Director of Development at the Center for Pregnancy Concerns, Frank was responsible for a comprehensive fundraising program in support of the organization's goals and mission. Prior to his work at the Center, Frank was Project Coordinator for the St. Joseph Medical Center Powered by ME! initiative, a community based campaign to educate parents, coaches and student athletes about anabolic steroids and performance enhancing drugs. His background also includes marketing and business development experience with AllFirst Bank and the Maryland Credit Union League.

Frank received a Bachelor of Art degree in Political Science from Mount St. Mary's University and a Master of Arts degree in Management from The Johns Hopkins University. In 2007, Frank was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. He lives in Lutherville with his wife Mary Jeanne, a nurse manager at Stella Maris. The Franks have three children, Kathleen an attorney in St. Petersburg, Florida; Meredith a graduate of the University of Maryland and a doctoral candidate in audiology at Towson University; and Michael a sophomore at the University of Maryland.

COMMUNITY

Practical Money Skills

By Jason Alderman

Resetting Your Retirement After Divorce

Retirement planning can face derailment after a divorce. Married, two-income couples have the advantage of splitting living expenses and pooling all their investment assets, including retirement accounts. Once the marriage is over, costs for separate households may limit the ability of ex-spouses to keep their retirement on track.



After a divorce, individuals generally walk away with a share of joint retirement assets based on how they negotiate that split. However, returning to singlehood means the end of shared expenses with housing, food, transportation and related expenses now being paid out of one wallet, not two. This can mean considerably less money to direct toward retirement and other savings and investments.

To assure a comfortable retirement, many experts advise individuals to save and invest over time so they can live annually on at least 70 percent of their pre-retirement income. Divorcing couples should retain separate qualified financial experts to assure an equitable split of assets and a continuing plan to build a solid retirement in single life.

Here are a few steps to reset one's retirement goals after divorce.

Gather a personal finance team. It's a good idea to hire a financial professional to offer advice on all relevant financial, investment, tax, estate and retirement details of a divorce negotiation. Afterward, individuals may continue with these advisors or interview new ones. Personal referrals are best, but the following resources may help:

- The Certified Planner Board of Standards
- The Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education
- The Financial Planning Association
- Your state CPA society

Budget. Spending priorities can change after a divorce. Newly divorced spouses should track all new spending diligently so they can reset their budget for retirement. (<http://www.practicalmoneyskills.com/retirementcalc>) Qualified financial advisors can help review a divorcing individual's budgeting strategy to make sure as much money goes to savings as possible.

Evaluate all retirement assets. When divorce is finalized, it is a wise idea to take inventory of all retirement assets to determine whether they still fit investment goals. If one's 401(k) or employer plan administrator does not have a calculator to help estimate how accounts will grow under certain investment scenarios, refer to Bankrate.com's various retirement calculators for help.

Review Social Security benefits. Most experts urge individuals to wait as close to age 70 as possible to start drawing their Social Security benefits. Check the Social Security Administration's Delayed Retirement Benefits page (<http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/delayret.htm>) for a discussion of how and when to start taking payments. Also keep in mind that retirees married 10 years or longer who have stayed single may be entitled to Social Security benefits on their ex-spouse's record if they meet certain requirements.

Be honest about new financial limitations. If a serious retirement shortfall emerges after divorce, it's important to reset financial priorities. That may mean speaking with family members about necessary cutbacks in certain expenses. It is important to have retirement in the best shape possible to avoid stress on family finances later.

Bottom line: The personal and financial disruption caused by divorce can make it easy for newly single individuals to neglect their retirement planning. It is important to seek advice and take all necessary steps to keep one's retirement on track.

Mikulski from A1

The Save the Children Advocacy Summit, taking place April 21-22 in Washington, D.C., brings together community leaders, supporters and partners of Save the Children, and lawmakers to engage in

discussions and workshops on continued efforts to improve the lives of children throughout the world. This year's summit focuses on advocating support for early childhood education programs in the U.S. and investing in key maternal, newborn and child health programs.

Zipcar from A1

tracts as well as additional employment opportunities and recently launched an electronics recycling program. Melwood also has an active therapeutic retreat program supporting war fighters with post traumatic stress disorders and other deployment related traumas at its camp in southern Maryland as well as a variety of veteran employment and job training programs.

"Because Melwood runs many ads for vehicle donations, many area residents think of us for car donations but don't realize all of the other important programs we operate," DeSantis added.

The Zipcar program began February 2, 2015. For more information on Melwood and the Zipcar partnership and to find out how to donate a vehicle, go to www.melwood.com or www.zipcar.com/melwood.

HUD Awards \$1.2 Million in Housing Counseling Grant to Maryland

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Lt. Governor

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded today \$1.2 million in grants to support nine housing counseling organizations in Maryland in their efforts to help families and individuals with their housing needs. These grants will help households find housing and make more informed housing choices. See the national list of all counseling agencies awarded funding today.

HUD is also establishing a new Housing Counseling Federal Advisory Committee to help the Department provide consumers with the knowledge they need to find and sustain decent housing. The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010 requires HUD's Secretary to appoint no more than 12 individuals from various backgrounds to offer advice to the Department regarding the functions of the Office of Housing Counseling. Read HUD's Notice, which includes information on applying for a po-

sition on the Housing Counseling Federal Advisory Committee.

"Access to knowledge and information is vital to every family's success," said HUD Secretary Julián Castro. "These grants will expand housing opportunities for families across our nation. The evidence is clear: housing counseling works. We look forward to working with our housing counseling partners to empower American families with the tools to prosper."

"Across the Mid-Atlantic region, housing counseling agencies will receive \$5.3 million in funding to address the needs in their communities from foreclosure prevention and reverse mortgage assistance to help in finding affordable rental housing," said Jane C.W. Vincent, Regional Administrator of HUD's Mid-Atlantic region.

National and regional agencies distribute much of HUD's housing counseling grant funding to community-based organizations that assist low- and moderate-income families improve their housing conditions. In addition, these larger organ-

izations help improve the quality of housing counseling services and enhance coordination among counseling providers. Read a summary of each grant, organized by state.

Recent research from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia and the Urban Institute continues to find substantial benefits to housing counseling for families who purchase their first homes and those struggling to prevent foreclosure.

Grant recipients utilize funding to address the full range of families' housing counseling needs. This includes helping homebuyers realistically evaluate their readiness for a home purchase, understand their financing and downpayment options, and navigate what can be an extremely confusing and difficult process. Grantees also help households find affordable rental housing and offer financial literacy training to individuals and families struggling to repair credit problems that restrict their housing options.

In addition to providing counseling to homeowners and renters, these organiza-

tions assist homeless persons in finding the transitional housing they need to move toward a permanent place to live. They also provide reverse mortgage counseling to senior citizens who are seeking to convert equity in their homes to income that can pay for home improvements, medical costs and other living expenses.

Housing counseling agencies support fair housing by assisting borrowers in reviewing their loan documentation to avoid potential mortgage scams, unreasonably high interest rates, inflated appraisals, unaffordable repayment terms and other conditions that can result in a loss of equity, increased debt, default and even foreclosure.

There are several ways to find a HUD-approved housing counseling agency—search by state at www.hud.gov/findacounselor, call 1-800-569-4287 or download the free housing counseling mobile application on Apple devices. A video is also available on how housing counseling can help families find and keep housing.

Drilling from A1

South Carolina and Georgia for oil and gas drilling. These states have been designated as part of the nation's Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2017-2022.

Proponents of the COAST Anti-Drilling Act argue that offshore drilling would introduce threats that could irreversibly damage the state of the Atlantic Ocean and cause a ripple effect that would destroy the environment and local economies.

"Oil spills do not respect state boundaries, making the risks of drilling off the Atlantic Coast far greater than the rewards," Cardin said. "The Chesapeake Bay, which generates more than \$1 trillion in economic activity for the mid-Atlantic region, does not need yet another threat to its future health and vitality."

"I am absolutely opposed to offshore drilling and always will be," Mikulski said. "Offshore drilling can devastate the environment, harming our unique

and fragile coastline and wreaking havoc on the coastal communities whose economies rely heavily on tourism."

Environmentally sensitive areas such as Chesapeake Bay, the Jersey Shore, and Long Island Sound would suffer from an oil spill, according to proponents of the legislation.

In response to a question at a Capitol Hill press conference Wednesday, Menendez said there has been no recent interaction with the Obama Administration on this subject.

The House of Representatives led by Rep. Frank Pallone, D-N.J., planned to introduce companion legislation to the COAST Anti-Drilling Act Wednesday.

Cardin and Mikulski were joined by several others, including, Menendez, Whitehouse and Sens. Cory Booker, D-N.J., Edward Markey, D-Mass., Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., Jack Reed, D-R.I., Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn. and Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., in sponsoring the Senate version.

Weight Loss Surgery May Reduce or Eliminate the Need for Some Prescription Medications

By PRESS OFFICER
Doctors Community Hospital

Lanham, MD — Obesity is often linked to diabetes, sleep apnea, heart disease and many other conditions. Bariatric surgery has helped many people improve their overall health while reducing or eliminating their need to take some prescription medications to manage such chronic health conditions. Doctors Community Hospital's Bariatric and Weight Loss Center shares information about bariatric surgery to help community members make informed healthcare decisions.

Looking Great Never Felt So Good

Many of us know it can be a struggle to lose weight and keep it off. You may feel like you've tried everything, and you still haven't gotten the results you want. Though maintaining a healthy weight helps you look good and feel great, it is sometimes hard to achieve.

For those who are struggling with obesity, additional assistance may be needed. Bariatric surgery is an option that may contribute to more successful weight loss. When combined with a healthy diet and regular exercise, this type of surgery can result in long-term weight loss — helping to significantly improve your health and quality of life. What might surprise you: it

may even help eliminate your need for prescription medications to treat obesity-related conditions such as diabetes, sleep apnea, heart disease, high blood pressure and other chronic conditions.

Hitesh Amin, MD, is a board-certified surgeon and the medical director at Doctors Community Hospital's Bariatric and Weight Loss Center. He answers commonly asked questions about bariatric surgery.

Q: What is bariatric surgery?

Bariatric surgery makes changes to your stomach or small intestine that can affect the quantity of food you need to feel full. Two types of minimally invasive procedures used are Lap-Band and sleeve gastrectomy surgeries.

Research shows that lifestyle changes are necessary to keep weight off long term, even after bariatric surgery. That's why we also offer comprehensive support (e.g. weight management education, nutrition counseling, behavior modification and support groups) at Doctors Community Hospital's Bariatric and Weight Loss Center to help you accomplish your overall health goals.

Q: What is Lap-Band surgery?

It is an FDA-approved procedure that involves placing an adjustable band around a portion of your stomach to re-

strict the quantity of food it can hold at one time. After eating, this procedure helps you feel full faster and longer — resulting in gradual weight loss. Also, Lap-Band surgeries are reversible with many patients returning to work within a week or so.

Q: What is sleeve gastrectomy surgery?

It is an FDA-approved procedure in which part of the stomach is removed. The remaining portion is formed into a tube-like structure that cannot hold as much food. The recovery period for this type of weight loss surgery is about six to eight weeks.

Q: Could weight loss surgery help me?

If you've tried to lose weight through diet and exercise without lasting success, weight loss surgery might be an excellent option for you.

Talk to your primary care physician first. If you have tried other weight loss methods and your body mass index (BMI) is 40 or higher, or your BMI is 35 or higher with your having obesity-related conditions such as diabetes or high blood pressure, bariatric surgery might be a good option. As mentioned, weight loss surgery is just one step. It is equally important to get additional support for lifestyle changes that will keep you

healthy. Counseling, eating a healthy diet and getting regular exercise are essential for long-term success.

All surgeries have risks. The good news is that minimally invasive surgery with state-of-the-art equipment may reduce some of those risks and get you back on your feet, faster. Our robot-assisted daVinci® surgical system is an advanced and minimally invasive technology. Its precision often results in reduced pain, shorter hospitalization and faster recoveries. In fact, Doctors Community Hospital's Bariatric and Weight Loss Center was the first hospital in Prince George's County to offer minimally invasive bariatric surgery using this technology.

Q: Are there any upcoming lectures where I can ask a doctor to answer questions about bariatric surgery?

We offer free lectures on March 6, April 10 and May 8 at 9 a.m. It is held at 8116 Good Luck Road, Professional Office Building, Suite 210, Lanham, Maryland. At this lecture, a physician and other healthcare professionals share a wide range of information about weight management and bariatric surgical procedures. These lectures are free and registration is required by calling 301-DCH-4YOU (301-324-4968).

COMMENTARY

Barbara A. Mikulski United States Senator for Maryland



Mikulski Continues Fight to Refresh and Reform “No Child Left Behind” and Prepare all Kids for Successful Future

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.) a senior member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today participated in a committee markup of legislation reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), bipartisan legislation to replace the failed tenets of No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

“This bill is a down payment on our children’s future and on our nation’s future,” Senator Mikulski said. “As our nation continues to look at how best to create, sustain and support high paying jobs, we must look at how best to educate the children who will make up the workforce of tomorrow. If we educate and prepare them well, they can be anything. If we do not, they will fail and we will have failed them.”

ESEA is the primary source of federal aid to K-12 education. It was first enacted in 1965 and was last reauthorized in 2001 through NCLB. Despite its bipartisan best intentions, NCLB presented a host of problems for schools, students, and educators, including: setting inflexible benchmarks without taking into consideration the different needs of schools and without recognizing student progress; mandating the same federal sanctions for all schools that created a pressure to “teach to the test;” requiring states and schools to adhere to prescriptive, Washington-generated accountability models; and forcing school districts to spend money on activities that did not make sense for all students or schools.

Senator Mikulski is working with other members of the HELP Committee to reauthorize ESEA and replace the failed tenets of NCLB so that students have a fair shot at a quality education while ensuring schools have the tools they need to suc-

ceed. Senator Mikulski is fighting to make sure that any ESEA reauthorization bill is fair to students and teachers, and provides states and districts with the certainty, support, and flexibility they need to prepare all children for success in the 21st century.

Senator Mikulski’s remarks, as prepared, follow:

“Thank you, Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray, for your work on putting together a bipartisan reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. I know it wasn’t easy, especially in this political climate, but politics were put aside and children, educators and schools were put first.

“This bill is not perfect. It won’t solve all our problems. There are still areas where I’d like to see improvement. But this is the first step in the right direction towards overhauling and improving ESEA. Senators Alexander and Murray should be commended for this accomplishment, which continues HELP’s strong history of bipartisan accomplishments - 26 of the committee’s bills were signed into law last Congress!

“As our nation continues to look at how best to create, sustain and support high paying jobs, we must look at how best to educate the children who will make up the workforce of tomorrow. If we educate and prepare them well, they can be anything. If we do not, they will fail and we will have failed them.

“It’s no secret that No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the result of the last ESEA reauthorization, while passed with the best intentions is fail-

See **Reform**, Page A7

Marc Morial, President and CEO National Urban League



The State of On-Screen Diversity

“She was never able, after her education in the movies, to look at a face and not assign it some category in the scale of absolute beauty, and the scale was one she absorbed in full from the silver screen.”

— Toni Morrison, “The Bluest Eye,” 1970

From our television sets in our living rooms to our local movie theaters, diversity appears to be the new black.

Fresh off the success of small screen hits like Fox’s musical drama “Empire,” CW’s telenovela inspired “Jane the Virgin,” and ABC’s family-centric “black-ish,” television has emerged as a powerful frontrunner in the race to broader inclusion on our nation’s shared media landscape—even outpacing Hollywood.

According to the “2015 Hollywood Diversity Report: Flipping the Script” published by the Ralph Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA, people of color are gaining ground and more movie leads in Hollywood films, overall cast diversity is increasing and directors of color are a more frequent phenomena on movie sets than in the past. But these hard-fought strides are oftentimes undermined by harsh realities, like the total lack of nominations for black actors, directors, cinematographers or female screenwriters at this year’s Oscars. And these accomplishments are also tempered by the numbers.

While people of color make up about 40 percent of the U.S. population, those numbers are neither reflected in front of the cameras nor behind the scenes of our film and broadcast industry complex—shining a glaring spotlight on another reality: while the push to diversify casts and crews on television and in film is clearly having a moment right now, the work to remedy the underrepresentation of people of color and women is far from over and requires a dedication far more sustained than a brief, moment-in-time uptick in casting.

Diversity is more than a discussion about a studio’s payroll, it is a much-needed conversation about perspective and pride. Debra Martin Chase, the

founder of Martin Chase Productions, credits a desire to create positive images of African Americans in film and television as the catalyst that drove her into the entertainment business. Ms. Chase shared her views about the importance of diversity on our small and big screens in an essay entitled “Creating the Change the World Needs to See,” in the 2015 State of Black America® report - “Save our Cities: Education, Jobs + Justice.”

“I grew up watching television and going to the movies. While I was conscious of the fact that I seldom saw myself in the images that were projected on screen, it wasn’t until I was older that I understood what that really meant. Those images did not just dictate how I viewed myself, I eventually learned that they very clearly influenced how the outside world viewed me and others like me.”

Diversity benefits us all. When we see our communities fairly represented in our movies and television shows, we are given the opportunity to see ourselves, each other, and hopefully learn about one another—what makes us unique, as well as what we share in common. This is not merely a call for greater numbers, because reducing communities to racial or ethnic stereotypes does our nation of viewers as much of a disservice as ignoring the existence of groups outside the borders of the typical Hollywood model.

Evidence from the Hollywood diversity report also points to another emerging truth about diversity: it sells. The data shows that our nation’s increasingly diverse audiences are buying movie tickets for, and tuning into television shows that have “relatively diverse casts.” Diverse audiences want to see their multifaceted lives reflected in the media they enjoy.

If ignoring the lives and experiences of so many Americans once came without a price, today’s audiences are making their voices and preferences heard with their dollars and Nielsen ratings influence, and they are sending a loud and clear message to television and film’s decision makers: they are no longer willing to have their American experience ignored.



Surratt House

Open to the Public

PHOTO COURTESY WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Surratt House

Surratt House, located at 9118 Brandywine Road Clinton, MD, is open to the public mid-January thru mid-December. Walk-in tours are available with costumed guide on Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays from 11 am-3 pm and on Saturdays and Sundays from 12 noon-4 pm. Weekday group tours for 10 or more are available by appointment by calling 301-868-1121. Surratt House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Admission is \$3 per adult, \$2 for Seniors, \$1 for children ages 5-18, and free to children 4 and under

Child Watch

by Marion Wright Edelman



Big Winners and Losers in Budget

A budget is a moral document; it talks about where your values are. — Representative Rob Woodall (R-GA) discussing the House Budget Committee’s FY2016 Proposal

There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.

— President Nelson Mandela

In the House and Senate budget proposals for fiscal year 2016, passed with only Republican votes at the end of March, there are big winners and big losers. The big winners are defense spending and contractors and very wealthy people and powerful special interests. The big losers are children, our poorest group in America, and struggling low- and middle-income families trying to stay afloat in our economy.

Very big winners: Defense spending and contractors. The House and Senate Republican budgets add \$38 billion more in defense spending above the Pentagon’s request in fiscal year 2016. Instead of being up front and including it in the regular defense department budget, it was added to a catch-all war fund not subject to budget caps. This is a budget gimmick some conservatives have decried as deceptive and fiscally irresponsible. The \$38 billion additional defense spending could provide 2.5 million subsidized jobs to poor families with children lifting 1.2 million children from poverty; and double the Head Start program, which serves only 40 percent of children who need it, for one year. The House Republican budget goes much further adding \$387 billion in defense spending between 2017-2025. This amount could lift 60 percent of our children out of poverty for five years.

Very big winners: Very wealthy people. People making more than \$1 million a year would get a \$50,000 average tax cut from the repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) in the House budget. The overall taxpayer loss would be more than \$1 trillion in revenue

over 10 years. The Senate budget includes a last-minute amendment to repeal the estate tax, which benefits only the wealthiest 0.2 percent of Americans with estates worth over \$5.4 million for an individual or \$10.9 million for a couple. An estimated 5,400 wealthy estates would save \$2.5 million each with a taxpayer loss of \$269 billion dollars between 2016-2025. This morally indefensible government giveaway for super rich people could provide housing subsidies for 10 years for 2.6 million poor and near-poor families with children struggling to find a place to live and reduce child poverty by 21 percent; or pay for the President’s \$80 billion proposed investment for child care subsidies for all low-income children under 4 and \$75 billion for quality preschool for low-income 4 year olds and extend through 2025 Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit improvements that keep 1 million children out of poverty.

Very big losers: Vulnerable children and low- and middle- income families. Under the guise of balancing the budget and cutting the deficit,

recklessly unjust massive cuts of more than \$3 trillion over 10 years will undermine lifelines of stability and hope. The House and Senate Republican budgets will cut programs for those who need help most and increase government welfare for those who need help least.

Very big losers: The millions benefiting from health coverage under the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Both Republican budgets seek to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which prohibits discrimination against 129 million children and adults with pre-existing health conditions, helps over 5 million uninsured 18-26 year olds now covered under parental insurance plans, and extends coverage for some foster care youths to age 26. More than 10 million near poor adults in twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia will lose Medicaid coverage received under ACA. The House budget also proposes to block grant Medicaid, merge CHIP

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BUSINESS

The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

Team Up For Success In Creating A Healthier Life

Yes, it can be hard to try to lose weight, exercise more or make other lifestyle changes for better health. But a recent study out of England has shown that the odds for success increase dramatically when you make changes for a healthier you with a partner.

Researchers followed couples for four years and found that when one person lost weight, his or her partner was three times more likely to do the same, as compared to those couples where only one person was trying to drop excess pounds.

The study wasn't limited to just weight loss. In looking at other lifestyle changes, such as exercising more or stopping smoking, the success rate increased significantly when both partners were shooting for that shared goal.

They found that when two people are working together towards a goal they both want, they tend to inspire and encourage each other. Another factor in the higher levels of success was that each of the people tends to hold the other accountable. It's not as easy to eat that extra dessert, or sneak a cigarette, when you know your partner will be disappointed should he or she discover you're cheating on the goal that you both desire.

Teaming up to work toward a healthier life doesn't have to be with just a husband or wife, though usually, if you're married, that would often be the partner you turn to. But if you're single, or your spouse isn't interested, researchers found that teaming up with friends, family or co-workers produced the same positive effect.

It isn't a difficult process to make happen. If your goal is to shape up, sit down with your partner and discuss what each of you desires and how you could work together to achieve it. You might start with a commitment to eat more healthfully and to exercise together. When it's a common goal, it's much easier to plan for a healthy meal or schedule a brisk walk after work or after dinner.

A partner can also be great support when you hit those bumps that can slow down reaching that healthier goal. With a partner to work with and with each encouraging the other, you're more likely to get past those hurdles rather than give up the effort.

Counseling Corner is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to ACAcorner@counseling.org or visit the ACA website at www.counseling.org

Grant from A1

- Implement nutrition and physical activity standards that increase access to healthier foods and increase opportunities for physical activity; and

- Promote meal and program efficiencies that will reduce costs, maximize existing resources, decrease food waste, and lead to more sustainable meal programs.

The grant will help the Department to increase access to healthy foods and improve opportunities for physical activity. Parks and Recreation will also receive additional support for meals provided through USDA afterschool and summer feeding programs as well as nutritional literacy materials to help ensure life-long healthy habits for Prince George's County's youth.

With the grant, the Department plans to institute a nutritional education curriculum, which will support the Commission's endeavor to promote healthy lifestyles for youth. The money will be used to buy refrigerators for various sites, water bottles to support our recycling initiatives and gardening supplies, including composters which could provide soil for our community gardens.

The Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation already partners with the Family League of Baltimore, the Capital Area Food Bank, the Prince George's County Department of Social Services and the Prince George's County Public Schools to support the Summer Food Service Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. With these partnerships, the Department supplied an estimated 150,000 meals and snacks during out-of-school programs during 2014, ensuring that roughly 6,000 chil-

dren had meals at more than 70 locations.

This grant supports NRPA's campaign - Commit to Health - which encourages the implementation and evaluation of Healthy Eating, Physical Activity (HEPA) standards in park and recreation sites across the country. NRPA's goal is to have at least 2,000 participating sites in five years. Within the first year of the program, 486 sites have pledged to Commit to Health and 51,382 children now have improved access to healthy foods and increased opportunities for physical activity.

According to Share our Strength's No Kid Hungry Campaign, one in five children in America struggles with hunger. Over 21 million low-income children receive free or reduced meals during the school year to help them meet their daily nutrition needs, but only 3 million of these children are getting these meals during the summer. During summer months, these children may not have access to quality and healthy food to help them grow—making M-NCPPC's work during out-of-school times that much more critical.

About National Recreation and Park Association

The National Recreation and Park Association is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing park, recreation and conservation efforts that enhance quality of life for all people. Through its network of more than 47,000 recreation and park professionals and citizens, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public space. For more information, visit www.NRPA.org. For digital access to NRPA's flagship publication, Parks & Recreation, visit www.parksandrecreation.org.

MDA to Introduce Farmers Market Finder – A Mobile Site for FMNP Participants

By PRESS OFFICER
MDA

ANNAPOLIS, MD – Beginning June 1, participants in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), Seniors in the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) and participants in the WIC Fruit & Vegetable Check (FVC) Program will be able to find farmers markets near them on the Farmers Market Finder, a soon-to-be-launched mobile site. The purpose of the mobile site is to encourage low income residents to use their checks at farmers markets and increase overall check redemption. Maryland is the first state to pilot this program.

"Studies show that growing numbers of low-income Americans who may not be able to afford computers and in-home internet access are relying on smartphones as their primary means of reaching the internet," said MDA Marketing Chief Mark Powell. "While the FMNP and WIC programs provide the opportunity for low

income participants to spend their federal assistance dollars buying produce at farmers markets, participants need to know how to find the farmers markets where they can spend their checks. We will still circulate printed materials, but we see this as a low-cost, effective way to provide them with additional information and to encourage them to use their checks at farmers markets to buy to fresh produce. These checks also provide local farmers with additional income at the farmers markets, so we encourage their use in any way we can."

The Farmers Market Finder will list all farmers markets in the state that have farm vendors who accept FMNP/SFMNP & FVC checks. The site will also remind users how to use their checks at farmers market, remind them what foods are eligible for purchase, and provide links to videos and photos of farmers who participate in the FMNP program. The app will also provide recipes for fresh produce dishes. Participants can also opt to receive mobile



PHOTO BY EDWIN REMSBERG
Just a sampling of what you can find at the many Maryland farmers market around the state.

text messages every month to remind them to use their FMNP Checks.

The FMNP/SFMNP is a USDA Supplemental Nutrition Grant Program that provides grants to state agencies to provide checks to low-income participants. Checks can be used to buy fresh fruits, vegetables, cut herbs and honey (Seniors only) at farmers' markets. The top three reasons participants give for not using their checks is: Not knowing where to find the

farmers markets, not knowing how to prepare or cook the produce purchased and not remembering to use checks before they expire. The mobile site is designed to address those reasons.

Last year in Maryland, 58,825 FMNP checks were used by WIC participants and 42,284 SFMNP checks were used by Senior participants at farmers markets. A total of \$505,561 was paid to Maryland farmers who are authorized to accept these checks.

Rushern from A1

this is what we must do. If we want to be the new economic engine of the State, this is what we must do. And if we want the best for our children and the families of Prince George's County, this is what we must do. Our County is moving in the right direction. But we must embrace this challenge and lay the foundation for your children and this County for generations to come."

As a follow-up to today's "State of the Economy" address, tomorrow, County Executive Baker will participate in the groundbreaking for a new Dave and Buster's Restaurant moving to Prince George's County which will be located at Ritchie Station Marketplace in Capitol Heights, MD at 10:30 a.m. and will be visiting Eleanor Roosevelt High School at 12:00 p.m. for the 31st Annual Science Fair and Research Practicum Symposium for STEM students.

Text of County Executive State of the Economy Investing in Education: The Time is Now April 16, 2015

"Good morning! It is another great day in Prince George's County. I want to say thank you to the EDC, and its Board of Directors. And the Greater Prince George's Business Roundtable. I also want to say thank you for supporting so many of my administration's initiatives. I appreciate your commitment to making this County the best it can be.

President Barack Obama said, "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change we seek." He is so right. And for the last 4 years, change has been this county's mantra and together, we have made great strides moving closer and closer to our destiny.

Today we can boast of having 2 of the 3 sites the GSA is con-

sidering for the new FBI headquarters. Last year we broke ground on the new Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Next month we will be cutting the ribbon to celebrate the opening of the first state government agency in Prince George's County. A project that is jumpstarting development in New Carrollton.

In 4 years we've reduced crime 36%, and we are down 21% from last year. We have shown that our ability to continue to reduce crime is no fluke. Through programs like our Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative (TNI), we are proving that by working with communities to solve problems in a holistic manner we can make a difference. The TNI model has proven to be sustainable and effective.

We have reduced crime, which is helping to bolster our housing market. Housing sales and property values are improving and we expect them to get better. We are bringing in new development and we continue to chalk up wins like our first Whole Foods, Dave and Busters, Harris Teeter, as well as new hotels. Companies like Bozzuto and Thompson Creek Windows electing to stay in the County and expand their operations. Our major development projects are moving forward and we continue to tout \$6 billion dollars in development projects that are working their way through the pipeline, ranging from our \$650 million Regional Medical Center to the \$1.2 billion, MGM Destination Resort Casino.

But in order for us to continue this unprecedented growth, we must be BOLD, INNOVATIVE and WILLING to take aggressive measures that will ensure our economic future. This is why we made some hard decisions in the FY 2016 proposed budget. No longer could we dip into our reserves to resolve revenue short-fall. In order to maintain our AAA bond rating, it was imperative that we propose cost cutting

measures that will have longer term impact on our expenses.

So this year's budget proposes employee furloughs and layoffs in order to balance the budget. In addition, we asked agencies to once again make needed cuts. However, there are two areas we did not cut: Education and Public Safety. These are two key areas that define any jurisdiction.

We have turned around crime and brought in major economic development, but the one area that continues to be our Achilles heel is the perceived quality of our public school system. While we have made some important changes that have led to improvements both in how our schools are run and how our children perform, I am not satisfied with where we are at this point. Without a strong school system, our property values will continue to lag which will handicap our ability to attract more business and commerce to the County.

It is why we must do what our neighbors have done-- the District, Arlington, Fairfax, and Montgomery counties --- to attract people and businesses. They demonstrated their commitment to education by investing in their schools and their students. These are our competitors! This is a very wealthy region. 7 of the nation's top 13 richest counties are all around us and we are competing with them for residents, businesses and retail. We cannot lose sight of the fact that elevating our schools is paramount to our future success--it is an economic necessity.

Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich said, "Over the long term, the only way we're going to raise wages, grow the economy, and improve American competitiveness is by investing in our people - especially their education."

Improving the quality of our schools is the key to helping us accelerate our recovery from the recession. Without a strong school system, young families in D.C. or the surrounding area

think twice about moving here. Without a strong school system, it will be far more difficult for us to be the economic engine for the State of Maryland.

Our children and our schools are important and we cannot continue to kick their futures... our future...down the road like an old can. I will not stand idly by and let us marginalize ourselves or our children. If we want to have one of the top schools systems in the state, we have to invest in them. We must believe that we can make it happen. We must believe within our hearts and souls that our schools can move into top ten by 2020.

Every day, real estate agents are trying to sell houses in the County and their clients are asking, "So how are the schools in this neighborhood?" I want the answer to be "The schools are excellent." When your businesses are looking for strong candidates to fill jobs, you should not have to look any further than Prince George's County, because they are college and career ready. When our Economic Development team recruits corporations that are looking to move their headquarters here or open an office; we must be able to proudly say, "Our schools are great!" A strong school system will create greater demand for office space and homes. Education is Everyone's Business, and today, we ALL must realize that we have to make our schools our top priority. And that means increasing our investment in our children.

There has been a perception that our schools are not well-run and that my budget proposal to invest more in our schools is just throwing good money after bad. With the changes we made in the leadership of our schools, we are in a much better position to take on this very challenging task of catapulting our schools from the bottom to the top. You see, I un-

See RUSHERN Page A6

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OUT ON THE TOWN

ERIC D. SNIDER'S
IN THE DARK

Movie Review

“Ex Machina”

Ex Machina
Grade: B

Rated R, some harsh profanity, a whole lot of nudity (nonsexual), some strong violence
1 hr., 48 min

Alex Garland's first novel, *The Beach*, was turned into a movie by director Danny Boyle, who went on to direct two of Garland's screenplays, *28 Days Later* and *Sunshine*. Garland strengthened his sci-fi bonafides with solid screenplay adaptations of *Never Let Me Go* and *Dredd*, and has now graduated to directing his own original work — *Ex Machina*, a wry, ponderous story of artificial intelligence, natural intelligence, and good old-fashioned hubris.

Caleb (Domhnall Gleeson), a coder at a Google-like company called Bluebook, wins an employee lottery to spend a week with CEO Nathan Bateman (Oscar Isaac), an eccentric billionaire genius who lives in a remote, high-tech house on a mountain estate, the better to conduct his mind-blowing experiments without scrutiny. Nathan is disheveled, frequently drunk, gregarious, but secretive. He tells Caleb that what he needs him to do is conduct a Turing test on an A.I. device he built. He needs to know if this computer is smart enough to make people think it's a person.

It's certainly beautiful enough. The computer is in the form of Ava (Alicia Vikander), a sexy robot with a model's face, visible mechanical guts, and mesh skin. She looks remarkably human, and she converses with Caleb so intelligently that it's hard to believe she's not self-aware. Or maybe she is: when she has a moment alone with Caleb, she tells him not to trust Nathan.

Creations rebelling against their creators? Now we're talking.



Alex Garland, writer of *28 Days Later* and *Sunshine*, makes his directorial debut with the stylish and cerebral thriller, *EX MACHINA*. Caleb Smith (Domhnall Gleeson), a programmer at an internet-search giant, wins a competition to spend a week at the private mountain estate of the company's brilliant and reclusive CEO, Nathan Bateman (Oscar Isaac). Upon his arrival, Caleb learns that Nathan has chosen him to be the human component in a Turing Test—charging him with evaluating the capabilities, and ultimately the consciousness, of Nathan's latest experiment in artificial intelligence. That experiment is Ava (Alicia Vikander), a breathtaking A.I. whose emotional intelligence proves more sophisticated—and more deceptive—than the two men could have imagined. (C) A24

Garland is tackling familiar themes here, using tropes common to the A.I. genre. The film is smart but not brainy — it isn't dumbed-down, but it's unlikely to inspire any thoughts you haven't had before, either.

What makes it work as an above-average drama are the charismatic performances and the dynamics between the three central figures. Oscar Isaac is tragic, often comically so, as the man who wants to be a god; Domhnall Gleeson provides the viewpoint of a non-crazy person; and Alicia Vikander is somehow both alluringly warm and robotically chilly.

Caleb, a decent man with moral quandaries, is sexually attracted to Ava, and she seems to have interest in him too. Is

this by design? Is his affection reciprocated? Can it be reciprocated? He wants to know what Nathan is hiding in the parts of the house he doesn't have access to, and he wants to know more about Kyoko (Sonoya Mizuno), the silent maid who supposedly doesn't speak English and waits on Nathan hand and foot. He wants to know why Ava doesn't trust Nathan. But he isn't entirely sure he can trust Ava, either. The story becomes a web of people (and sexy robots) carefully choosing what to say and what not to say to one another. As a storyteller, Garland doesn't give us any more information than Caleb has, keeping us guessing what's going to happen next.

Those guesses will sometimes be accurate. Whether or not you've seen other movies about scientists who create machines that are smarter than they are, it isn't hard to imagine the possible outcomes. Furthermore, there are only so many different permutations of a three-person scenario, especially when one of the persons is a machine.

That being said, *Ex Machina* is far less predictable — and much better shot (by cinematographer Rob Hardy) — than its threadbare plot summary might make it sound. It only drags near the end, when all has been revealed and we're waiting for the wrapping up. And even then, it never stops being slick, cool, and polished, its intelligence not artificial at all.

Rushern from A5

Understand that voters and business people like you are looking at several key factors before you support a project or initiative. I knew we had to show people that things have changed and our schools are worth investing in.

Two years ago, we revamped and strengthened our school board and added, new members who brought extensive experience and education in business, higher education, finance and teacher quality. We hired one of the nation's top superintendents, Dr. Maxwell, who is a son of Prince George's County and who has worked in 3 school districts in the state of Maryland. We changed the name of his position from superintendent to CEO. Why? Because our schools are a major enterprise with a huge budget and countless assets. I wanted a leader who not only understood how to educate children, but also understood the business of running a school system.

So for the past two years, Dr. Maxwell, his leadership team and the Board, have been assessing the state of our schools. They have implemented programs and initiatives that have helped us make progress. Elevating our teaching expertise and now Prince George's County has the third highest number of National Board certified teachers in Maryland. Implemented cost saving measures that have led

to over \$70 million in savings. Enrollment is up and continues to rise. We had a historic improvement in graduation rates last year and 9th grade promotions are up significantly.

But to really move the needle and position us among the top ten school districts in the state, I knew it would require us to make a significant investment. In the first year, this plan will require an investment of \$133 million. An investment that will impact All schools across the County.

We are investing in programs such as:

- College & Career Readiness - \$3 million
- Digital Literacy - \$6 million
- Universal Pre-K - \$2 million
- Retention Pay of Education - \$20 million
- Family and Community Engagement - \$1 million

This is a significant increase, but it is an investment we must make to secure our future. It is the level of investment that our neighbors have been making for decades.

When comparing ourselves to our neighbors in Montgomery, Fairfax, Alexandria or Howard County, our local contribution to the total amount of money spent on education is the lowest percentage in the region. In fact, we contribute about 36% in County funds and the state contributes 57%. And Montgomery County contributes 66% locally and the state contributes 27%. The per-

centages are similar throughout the region.

The fact of the matter is...we have been limiting our improvement for far too long and this is our opportunity to change the course of things. It is time to make the investments that will take us out of the economic policies of the 1970s and 80s and do what we must do to position us for prosperity in the future. For 15 cents more... we can dramatically change our schools. For businesses, we are asking you to make a significant investment as well. You too will contribute to this investment through property, personal property and telecommunication taxes.

Look, I understand that no one wants to pay more in taxes. I don't either. But this is what we must do to change our trajectory. If we don't take ownership for investing in our children's success, who will? If we want to improve property values and bring more businesses here, this is what we must do. If we want to grow and expand our commercial tax base, this is what we must do. If we want to be the new economic engine of the State, this is what we must do. And if we want the best for our children and the families of Prince George's County, this is what we must do.

Every year at my budget hearings the most common request is for more money to: expand academic programs, reduce classroom size, improve

facilities; and provide all day pre-k. We can't keep talking about having better schools...but run and hide when the bill is due. Do you know what the most asked question that I have heard in my 20 years of public service to this County? "What are we going to do about our schools?" My friends, it's time for us to put up... or forever hold our peace. We either want the best schools or we don't. It is just that simple!

This is our moment...Now is the time. Will it be easy? Absolutely NOT! But I am confident we can through sacrifice, we will be successful. And with an unprecedented level of development projects on tap. A decreasing crime rate. An improving healthcare system with the new Regional Medical Center. And one of the top superintendents in the nation leading our school system. Our County is moving in the right direction. But we must embrace this challenge and lay the foundation for your children and this County for generations to come.

Remember, "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change we seek." This investment is about change. Dramatic Change! It is about us believing in schools and our children. I refuse to give up on us. But more importantly, I refuse to give up on the children of Prince George's County."

The Edge of Sports

by DAVE ZIRIN

Why the NCAA Should Move the Final Four Out of Indiana



As the world now knows, Indiana has become synonymous with the kinds of backward looking bigotry best re-mained in history's trashcan. The state's Governor Mike Pence has signed legislation under the guise of "religious freedom" that gives businesses the right to not serve someone if they believe them to be part of the LGBT community. The looseness of this law is frightening. Could a pharmacist refuse someone their HIV medication if they assumed they must have gotten the virus through gay relations? Could the owner of a restaurant, with a wink to his buddies, deny service to anyone with brown or black skin and just say, "You look gay to me"? And what happens to a gay couple that sits at—gee, I don't know—a lunch counter and is denied service? Will they be dragged away? At present there is an HIV outbreak in Southern Indiana so severe that Governor Pence has allowed needle exchange to slow the spread of the disease. One hopes that the pharmacists and hospitals in that part of the state have a greater sense of humanity than the Indiana statehouse.

This law, known as the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, or RFRA, is outrageous. It also raises immediate questions for one of the biggest operations in the state: the NCAA. The Final Four, the NCAA's most lucrative shining moment, is being staged in Indianapolis next weekend, just miles from their \$80 million headquarters. (Immediately after the legislation's passage, a petition online to get the NCAA to move, surfaced.) Already, NCAA President Mark Emmert has issued a strongly worded statement against RFRA.

"The NCAA national office and our members are deeply committed to providing an inclusive environment for all our events," the statement read. "We are especially concerned about how this legislation could affect our student-athletes and employees. We will work diligently to assure student-athletes competing in, and visitors attending, next week's Men's Final Four in Indianapolis are not impacted negatively by this bill. Moving forward, we intend to closely examine the implications of this bill and how it might affect future events as well as our workforce."

This has received fulsome praise from many in the sports world, including Yahoo Sports columnist Dan Wetzel in an article called "NCAA's response to Indiana's 'Religious Freedom' law is perfect." Wetzel wrote, "It's a good and bold threat by Emmert. This is the NCAA leading for a change." I agree with Wetzel that Emmert has correctly raised the stakes for Roger Goodell, Adam Silver and every sports commissioner that does business in Indiana to be heard. But I can't agree that it's perfect. Not even close.

If Emmert really wanted to make a statement, he'd move next week's Final Four out of Indianapolis. Emmert could announce that they were moving the basketball semifinals and finals to Cincinnati, less than 100 miles from the locale, so anyone who had their plane tickets or driving plans set wouldn't be egregiously inconvenienced. Play it at the University of Cincinnati—hell, play it at a Cincy YMCA—but just get it out of the clutches of Mike Pence. The economic cost to Indiana would be severe; hurting the hotel services industry as well as hundreds of low-wage workers. That's deeply regrettable, but it also wouldn't be the fault of the NCAA. It would be at the feet of lawmakers for passing such a discriminatory law. In other words, Charles Barkley, who has been wrong about so much in recent months, is absolutely dead-on when he said, "Discrimination in any form is unacceptable to me. As long as anti-gay legislation exists in any state, I strongly believe big events such as the Final Four and Super Bowl should not be held in those states' cities."

The only block to this happening by next weekend is that the NCAA gets over 90 percent of its annual operating budget from the Final Four and would lose millions of dollars. But Mark Emmert, even with his multimillion-dollar salary, always likes to talk about the NCAA's "mission" as a nonprofit is to be a force for education. It's why he says players can't be sullied with payment, even as their jerseys are sold and the games are plastered with more commercials than a Daytona 500 race car. Here is a time to actually show it. Here is a time to say that despite the branding, the swooshes and the ads everywhere, money is really not the most important part of college athletics. Here is a time, for once, to not be a symbol of incompetence, hypocrisy or exploitation but something that truly matters. If Emmert really believes, as implied in his statement, that this legislation actually makes Indiana unsafe for student-athletes and employees, then he has a responsibility to move the Final Four. For Emmert to make such a move would be a show of actual principle and courage from an organization that has for too long lacked either.

Calendar of Events

April 30 — May 6, 2015

Xtreme Teens: Movie Night

Date and Time: Friday, May 1, 2015 7-10 pm
Description: Join us for movie night! Tonight, teens will travel to Regal Theaters in Bowie to watch Avengers 2: Age of Ultron. Transportation will be provided from the center at 6:30 pm. Please bring money for your movie ticket and snacks.
Cost: \$12/person
Ages: 10-17
Location: Glenarden Community Center
8615 McLain Ave, Glenarden 20706
Contact: 301-772-3151; TTY 301-218-6768

Seniors: Hat & Tea Social

Date & Time: Friday, May 1, 2015 12:30-2 pm
Description: Evelyn Cole Senior Activity Center presents our annual Hat and Tea Social. Seniors will enjoy an assortment of teas, pastries and tea sandwiches along with live entertainment. Space is limited, so please register early.
Cost: Resident: \$10; Non-Resident: \$12
Ages: 60 & better
Location: Evelyn Cole Senior Activity Center
5720 Addison Road, Seat Pleasant 20743
Contact: 301-386-5525; TTY 301-446-3402

Open House on the Waterfront

Date and Time: Saturday, May 2, 2015 9 am-1 pm
Description: Help us kick off our Spring season! Enjoy a fun day in the park with free canoeing, kayaking, cycling, fishing rod, and boat rentals. All necessary rental equipment and materials provided. ID required for rentals. Rentals available while supplies last. Rental age restrictions still apply. Last free rental will be at 1 pm.
Cost: Free
Ages: All ages welcome
Location: Bladensburg Waterfront Park
4601 Annapolis Road, Bladensburg 20710
Contact: 301-779-0371; TTY 301-699-2544

Biological Flyers of Lake Artemesia

Date and Time: Saturday, May 2, 2015 8-11 am
Description: This guided bird walk to Lake Artemesia and back will introduce participants to see the variety of species that call the airport, and nearby lake, home. Please bring your own binoculars.
Cost: FREE with museum admission
Ages: All ages welcome
Location: College Park Aviation Museum
1985 Cpl. Frank Scott Drive, College Park, 20740
Contact: 301-864-6029; TTY 301-699-2544

Best Thoroughbred Alliance & MHSA Under Cover

Date and Time: Saturday-Sunday, May 2-3, 2015 8 am
Description: The Prince George's Equestrian Center will host the BEST Thoroughbred Alliance & MHSA Under Cover horse show.
Cost: Free for spectators
Location: The Show Place Arena
14900 Pennsylvania Avenue, Upper Marlboro, MD
Contact: 301-952-7900; TTY 301-952-7998

Washington Adventist University Graduation Ceremony

Date and Time: Sunday, May 3, 2015 10 am
Description: Washington Adventist University Graduation Ceremony
Cost: Private Ticketed Event (Tickets must be obtained directly from University)
Location: The Show Place Arena
14900 Pennsylvania Avenue, Upper Marlboro, MD
Contact: 301-952-7900; TTY 301-952-7998

Langley Park Day

Date & Time: Sunday, May 3, 2015 12 noon-4 pm
Description: Langley Park Day will be a family day with entertainment, food, children's activities and vendors.
Cost: Free
Ages: All ages welcome
Location: Langley Park Community Center
1500 Merrimac Drive, Hyattsville 20783
Contact: 301-445-4508; TTY 301-445-4512

Our Earth: What a Gas!

Date & Time: Wednesday, May 6, 2015 10:15 am & 12 noon
Description: Circus artists The Grand Falloons use vaudeville, song, and dance to examine the bubble of our atmosphere. In doing so, they start their young audiences on a life-long journey of awareness of our limited natural resources and the part everyone plays in keeping nature's balance.
Cost: \$8/person (general admission); \$6/person (groups of 20 or more)
Ages: Recommended for grades K-6
Location: Publick Playhouse
5445 Landover Road, Landover, 20784
Contact: 301-277-1710; TTY 301-277-0312

Afterschool Science Club

Date and Time: Wednesday, May 6, 2015 3-5 pm
Description: Bring the learning experience out of the book and into real life with hands-on experiments.
Cost: Free
Ages: 8 & Up
Location: Mount Rainier Nature and Recreation Center
4701 31st Place, Mount Rainier, MD 20712
Contact: 301-927-2163; TTY 301-699-2544

The Battle of Bladensburg

Date and Time: Thursday, May 7, 2015 1-2 pm
Description: The history of the Battle of Bladensburg: A recounting of events leading up to the battle, its participants, and its outcome.
Cost: Free
Ages: All ages welcome
Location: Bladensburg Waterfront Park
4601 Annapolis Road, Bladensburg 20710
Contact: 301-779-0371; TTY 301-699-2544

EARTH TALK ... Energy East: Worse Than Keystone XL

Dear EarthTalk:

The proposed KeystoneXL oil pipeline from Canada into the U.S. seems to get all the headlines, but shouldn't we also be worried about the Energy East pipeline?

— Art Shea,
Troy, NY

The Energy East Pipeline is a \$12 billion project proposed by TransCanada Corp. that will combine existing, converted natural gas pipelines with new pipeline construction to carry oil some 2,800 miles across Canada from Alberta's tar sands fields to export terminals in Quebec and New Brunswick. Unlike TransCanada's Keystone XL pipeline proposal, which aims to transport oil from Alberta to Nebraska, Energy East would not directly cross into the U.S. But environmentalists on both sides of the border are concerned since Energy East would transport 1.1 million barrels of tar sands oil a day—25 percent more than Keystone XL—and will be the longest oil pipeline on the continent.

Just as Keystone XL has been shrouded in controversy and debate in the U.S., Energy East faces fierce opposition in Canada, where groups like Environmental Defence and the Council of Canadians believe the pipeline threatens both sensitive ecosystems and populated areas with the risk of a spill. Ac-

ording to the report Liquid Pipeline: Extreme Energy's Threat to the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River, by Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians, Energy East would cross the northern end of the Great Lakes, including the St. Lawrence River Basin watershed, threatening many water systems along the way.

"In its preliminary project description filed with the National Energy Board in March 2014, TransCanada outlined details about its plans to build a port in Cacouna, Quebec, just north of Rivière-de-Loup on the St. Lawrence River," the report states. "Local residents are very concerned that any accidents involving either the pipeline or marine shipments along this route would put the already endangered beluga whale population at greater risk."

For its part, TransCanada says that it "understands the important role all aquifers, rivers and lakes play in maintaining sensitive and vital ecosystems across Canada," but asserts that "pipelines remain the safest, most efficient and most environmentally friendly mode of transporting energy across the continent." Before the Energy East pipeline goes into service, TransCanada plans to clean and thoroughly inspect the converted section of the pipeline. The company has also promised to avoid crossings of important water bodies to min-



PHOTO COURTESY EARTH TALK

Protestors from the Canadian activist group Defend Our Climate rally against TransCanada Corp.'s proposed 2,800 mile pipeline from Alberta to Quebec and New Brunswick.

imize disturbances of sensitive aquatic ecosystems. Highly-trained technical staff in TransCanada's control center would monitor the pipeline 24/7.

While construction and maintenance of the Energy East pipeline would create some 14,000 jobs during its first seven years while providing upwards of \$7.6 billion in tax revenue to pay for schools, roads and other public services across Canada, many Canadians remain concerned that a spill could threaten or destroy their livelihoods.

Regardless of these concerns, TransCanada is currently working to get final regulatory approval from Canada's National Energy Board (NEB) to start work on Energy East and hopes to have construction completed by the end of 2018.

Environmentalists are still holding out hope that NEB will reject Energy East on environmental and/or socio-economic grounds, and continues to drum up support across Canada and beyond for shelving the beleaguered pipeline.

CONTACTS: Energy East Pipeline, www.energyeast-pipeline.com; Environmental Defence, www.environmentaldefence.ca; Council of Canadians, www.canadians.org.

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Send questions to: earthtalk@emagazine.com.

Reform from A4

ing our children, our teachers and our schools. It has led to lower standards, narrowed curriculums and contains an inflexible 'one-size-fits-all' approach to the school improvements. That is why we must replace this failing law.

"I have always said that the best ideas come from the people. Washington doesn't have all the answers when it comes to improving our schools, supporting our teachers and knowing what kids need to succeed. That is why I've spent time in classrooms across Maryland - in our rural schools along the coast and in Appalachia, and in our large urban and suburban schools.

"I have heard from Maryland teachers, principals and administrators. They have all told me that NCLB and its arbitrary one-size-fits-all approach is not working. They tell me that they hope Congress will come together to provide schools with flexibility and resources that are needed to help our next generation succeed. That is why we must replace the failed tenets of NCLB. We must find ways to regulation, not strangle.

"When it comes to our public education system, I believe there are three R's we need to follow: Respect, Resources and targeted Reform. We need to respect our students, educators and schools. The way we show respect is to make sure there is money in the federal checkbook to help students and educators be all they can be, and to help schools address the academic and non-academic needs of students. Our students, teachers and schools need certainty in the budget. They need to make sure there is no sequester that sidelines them because of a budget gimmick. "We also need targeted reform. We need to make sure that reform is targeted in a way that makes sure we have the best policy in place that provides our kids with the

best education possible. I believe that this bill is a start.

"I want to make sure that what we do here does not hamstring my state's ability to remain one of the best public education systems on this country. I'm pleased to see that this bill does many things that will allow the great state of Maryland to move forward and not backwards.

"If our K-12 public education system is not preparing students for college or the workforce, then what are we preparing them for? This bill will give states the ability to determine appropriate 'challenging academic standards' that will allow students to enter post-secondary education without any remediation.

"This bill will provide resources to states and school districts to implement various activities that will support teachers, principals and other educators. It also helps ensure that teachers receive embedded and ongoing professional development, giving them the tools and resources they need to be the best they can be. Our children deserve nothing less.

"I am also pleased to see that this bill continues a federal investment in identifying and improving our nation's lowest-performing schools by giving states and school districts the necessary tools to implement evidence-based interventions and supports.

"In addition to supporting large-scale changes, I fought to include a number of other provisions in this bill. I have seen firsthand how gifted education can make a difference in the life of a child. I'm so proud of the Center for Talented Youth (CTY) at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. It was founded thirty-five years ago by the visionary Dr. Julian Stanley, who fought to study 'mathematically precocious youth.' Thanks to his tireless work, CTY is a pearl of gifted and talented programs, where brilliant students from around the world are able to attend summer 'geek camps.' It is an intellectual haven, where sev-

enth graders can work on college-level biology alongside the great minds of tomorrow.

"But there is a persistent bias against believing that gifted children and their teachers need help. There is a lingering perception that gifted kids are rich - that they don't come from the neighborhoods of West Baltimore, where they filmed 'The Wire.' Gifted students have unique needs. They need to be engaged, challenged and encouraged.

"Somehow or another - we've gotten away from believing that intelligence and ability is randomly distributed throughout our population. Serving students who are low-achieving is important, but so is nurturing students who have high ability and enormous potential. I believe we need to know more about these kids. Our teachers need to know how to help these children achieve and succeed.

"I am very pleased that components of the TALENT Act are included in the bill introduced by Senator Grassley, with my support. This bill will ensure that states continue to measure how students are performing at each level of achievement. It will ensure that states find ways to identify how they will assist school districts in addressing the needs of gifted students. And it will ensure that teachers will now get the professional development they need and deserve to identify gifted and talented students.

"However, factors from outside the classroom can have an enormous impact students' ability to learn and on a child's chances for a successful future as well. If a child is sitting in class with a debilitating toothache, that child is going to have a hard time focusing. If a child is taking a test and hasn't had a nutritious meal in weeks, that child is not going to perform up to their potential. If a child goes to school day in and day out with an undiagnosed mental illness, that child is going to have difficult time learning.

"We must acknowledge that what children face outside the classroom has an impact on how they do in the classroom. Earlier this year, I introduced the SUCCESS Act to address this problem. I'm pleased that the bill before us includes components of my bill. It ensures that Title I funds may be used for the provision and coordination of integrated services to help improve student achievements. It also ensures that school districts can use parent coordinators to connect families with much needed services. But integrated services for families are just one of the services our students need to succeed.

"When I was a social worker helping at-risk children, school nurses were my best allies. They are on the front lines as disease investigators, first responders and health care case managers. When a kid gets injured or sick at school, the school nurse stands ready to help, whether it's asthma, food allergies or bullying. It's time we recognize these nurses are important members of the school's education team. I'm very pleased the bill before us supports school nurses who will now be eligible to receive funds for training and personal development.

"I know that everyone in this room, regardless of their ideological beliefs, believes that all children deserve a chance to reach their full potential. The bill, the Every Child Achieves Act, supports teachers and principals in providing high-quality instruction. It ensures that disadvantaged students get the support they need to succeed. And it focuses attention on supporting states and districts in turning around low-performing schools and closing achievement gaps.

"This bill is a down payment on our children's future and on our nation's future. It is my hope that we move this bill forward and continue to work with Senators on both sides of the aisle to improve our school and put all our children on a path to success."



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