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## Bowie Mayor Tim Adams Announces Candidacy for Comptroller of Maryland

Renowned tech CEO, philanthropist vows to work for accountability, justice and change

By LEN FOXWELL  
Tred Avon Strategies

BOWIE, Md. (March 30, 2021)—Pledging to serve taxpayers and small businesses across the state as an agent of fiscal responsibility, economic justice and social change, Bowie Mayor and acclaimed technology entrepreneur Tim Adams today declared his candidacy to become the 34th Comptroller of Maryland.

Adams, 62, would be the first Black Comptroller in state history. He would also become the first paraplegic to ever hold statewide office in Maryland.

"My life has been the embodiment of the very best possibilities of our country and state, and I am running to help provide every child in Maryland with the same opportunities for success and security that I've enjoyed," said Adams. "To do so, we must ensure that our tax dollars are invested wisely, everyone pays their fair share, and our business climate allows our small businesses and entrepreneurs to compete on a level playing field."

Adams announced his campaign today with a video that was produced and directed by Devine Mulvey Longabaugh, a prominent Democratic media consulting firm based in Washington, DC. The 2:35 piece, titled "Let's Roll," recaptures landmark moments in Adams' personal and professional journey. It features Timothy Adams, Jr., a drama major at New York University, in scenes depicting his father's earlier years.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/wyi2q8mx11a/xixl/Tim%20Adams%20YouTube.mp4?dl=0>

In declaring his candidacy, Adams promised to use the power of his office to help change a business and economic climate he

has frequently characterized as "adrift." As one of three votes on Maryland's Board of Public Works, which approves most state contracts greater than \$200,000, he promised to hold agencies accountable for procurement transparency, commitment to open bid competition, and compliance with Maryland's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) laws.

"For all of our talk about so-called 'government transparency,' Maryland's procurement system is still weighted in favor of incumbent vendors and those with the best political connections," Adams said. "This works out perfectly well for a handful of Annapolis insiders, but not for the taxpayers or for those emerging entrepreneurs who can offer better services at lower costs."

Adams was elected in 2019 to serve as the first Black Mayor in the 138-year history of Bowie, Maryland. He is the Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer of Systems Application & Technologies, Inc. (SA-TECH). Headquartered in Prince George's County, SA-TECH provides technology-based services for America's national security sector. SA-TECH has secured a spot on The BE 100s—the list of the nation's largest black-owned businesses, as developed by BLACK ENTERPRISE magazine. It has also been recognized by the Washington Business Journal as one of the 10 leading minority-owned companies in the Greater Washington region.

Adams promised to use a blend of proven technology, data analytics and better laws to collect money that is lawfully owed to the State of Maryland.

"Our existing tax policies are geared to protect international corporations and appease



PHOTO COURTESY  
TRED AVON STRATEGIES

Bowie Mayor Tim Adams

special interests while imposing an even greater burden on struggling families, consumers and small businesses," said Adams.

In addition to endorsing the policy known as "Combined Reporting," which eliminates the ability of multistate corporations to avoid Maryland tax obligations by sheltering profits in other states, Adams pledged to sponsor legislation to recapture taxpayer subsidies from businesses that fail to deliver their intended results.

Adams received his Bachelor of Science degree from Xavier University and his

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## Md. Bill Would Publicize Monetary Settlement With Police

By JACOB STEINBERG  
Capital News Service

Local law enforcement agencies could be required to submit an annual report detailing incidents that resulted in either a monetary settlement or judgment against a police officer to the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services.

HB1248, with sponsor Del. Alonzo T. Washington, D-Prince George's, passed the Maryland House of Delegates earlier this week.

The bill stipulates that on or before March 1, 2022, and every year thereafter law enforcement agencies would be required to submit the report detailing those incidents.

"What I came up with in this bill would directly increase the level of transparency on settlements and lawsuits for departments across the entire state," Washington said at a Feb. 23 House Judiciary Committee hearing.

"It's a huge benefit that we have more transparency," Washington told Capital News Service.

The report would include: the age, gender, ethnicity and race of both the officer and individual involved in each incident as well as the date, time and location of when it occurred.

Additionally, it would highlight the dates of when the civil action was filed, when it was resolved and the amount of settlement or judgment awarded to the plaintiff, according to the bill.

"I figured if we're having an issue in finding out where these numbers are, then other jurisdictions must be having the same issues as well," Washington added at the hearing.

Only civil complaints that have been finalized will be included, complaints that are

still in the process of litigation aren't subject to be included in the data.

Upon receiving the report, the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services would be responsible for compiling all of the data and submitting an annual report to the General Assembly on or before June 30 each year.

Washington co-chaired a workgroup on police reform in Prince George's County at the same time the General Assembly convened a similar workgroup focused on addressing police reform, what has become a focal point during this legislative session.

In the House, the Police Reform and Accountability Workgroup, chaired by Del. Vanessa E. Atterbeary, D-Howard, convened from June to August discussing police reform initiatives.

"I sat on a task force that looked at policing in my own county and it took them months to get the information that we needed to be able to review how much spending on police-involved incidents in the county," Washington said.

In order to find that information, Washington and the police reform group in Prince George's county had to ask the county's Office of Law to compile all of the information on settlements and judgments filed against police.

Those workgroups placed a heavy emphasis on increasing both transparency and accountability in police departments throughout the state.

"The issue that we're having right now is we don't know how much is being paid to every settlement and case that occurs," Washington said.

At least \$13 million in taxpayer money has been spent to settle claims lodged against

the Gun Trace Task Force in Baltimore for several violations including being wrongfully searched or falsely arrested, according to the Baltimore Sun.

These annual reports would centralize all of the data in one location on the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services website.

Therefore, the information would be easier to access rather than it being disseminated through news agencies or spread out across the website's of several law enforcement agencies.

The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services did not respond to requests for information regarding the fiscal effect of the bill, according to a state legislative analysis.

"The governor will carefully review this bill should it reach his desk," Heather Epkins, communications director in the governor's coordinating offices told Capital News Service.

Proponents of the bill explained that this aspect of the bill would be beneficial as it would allow for taxpayers and legislators to quickly find the amount of money provided in these lawsuits.

"I believe the taxpayers need to know how much they're spending on police involved incidents that occur throughout the state, as a taxpayer there should be some transparency in that for the money that I send to the state or these local agencies so that we know actually what's happening," Washington said.

After passing the House of Delegates with a 119-16 vote, the bill has been referred to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee with a hearing scheduled for March 31 at 1 p.m.

## Alzheimer's Association to Host Free Screening of "Grandpa's Hands" on April 8

Event to include Q&A with film creator, discussion of warning signs

By CINDY SCHELHORN  
Alzheimer's Association

MCLEAN, Va. (March 24, 2021)—The Alzheimer's Association National Capital Area Chapter will present a free screening of the film "Grandpa's Hands" on Thursday, April 8. The event will include a Q&A discussion with Darren Colston, creator of the film, and a discussion on the warning signs of Alzheimer's.

"Grandpa's Hands" is a short narrative film about Jackson, a young professional who makes a rare visit with his grandfather and struggles to reconnect due to his grandfather's dementia. The dementia echoes the pain of betrayal and racial discrimination. When Jackson's grandfather confronts an unwanted visitor, his past and present merge bringing Jackson along for an important lesson of love and respect.

"I'm excited to screen my film, "Grandpa's Hands", with Alzheimer's Association's National Capital Area Chapter," said Darren Colston, creator of the film. "I look forward to having a conversation with the community about the trials and triumphs of being a caretaker and family member of a loved one impacted by dementia and Alzheimer's disease."

"I wanted to show this film to spotlight the impact that Alzheimer's has on the individual, the family and the community," said Tara Davis-Rama, Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager with the Alzheimer's Association National Capital Area Chapter. "This film depicts the reality of a young man trying to balance his professional life while caring for his grandfather. I hope this film will highlight male caregivers as well as serve as an invitation to invite more young men to participate in Support Groups."

In addition to the film screening and Q&A session with Colston, the evening will feature a workshop and discussion on the warning signs of Alzheimer's. The workshop will start at 6 p.m. The film screening and Q&A with Colston will run from 7-8 p.m. The event is free. Registration is required. To register, visit [alz.org/nca](http://alz.org/nca) or call 800.272.3900.

The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia—by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia®. Visit [alz.org](http://alz.org) or call 800.272.3900.

## Prince George's Community College And Luminis Health Partner to Offer Covid-19 Vaccination Site

College essential staff and high-risk populations included in initial cohort

By COURTNEY DAVIS  
Prince George's Community College

LARGO, Md. (March 25, 2021)—Prince George's Community College (PGCC) announced today its partnership with Luminis Health established to accelerate COVID-19 vaccine distribution for Prince George's County residents, placing the community on a path to recovery. In addition to serving as the vaccination site, Prince George's Community College provides logistics, security, and staffing services in support of the effort.

"In order to safely see family and friends again, we must work together to vaccinate as many people as we can," said Deneen Richmond, president of Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center. "This partnership between Luminis Health, Prince George's Community College, and Prince George's County is a great example of a community coming together to help one another."

"I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Falecia Williams, president of Prince George's Community College, and her team for hosting and providing logistics for these vaccination clinics. I am also grateful to the wonderful staff at Luminis Health for working passionately to vaccinate our neighbors from Prince George's County," Richmond added.

To date, Luminis Health has vaccinated 5,462 individuals at the Prince George's Community College site since February. High-risk populations, as defined in phase 1B, in addition to the College's essential faculty and staff, receive priority appointments. Approximately 222 Prince George's Community College staff were vaccinated during the latest clinics. As the state's vaccine supply increases, Luminis Health will offer expanded opportunities for county residents and employees to receive the vaccine.

"Activating an efficient and organized COVID-19 vaccination site with Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center has provided an incredible opportunity to serve the Prince George's County community," said Dr. Meloyde Batten-Mickens, acting director of Public Safety and director of Emergency Management. "Welcoming community members to our site has been uplifting, as we are directly helping to stop the spread, thereby increasing the number of Prince Georgians who are Proud to Be Protected."

To register for a vaccine appointment at the Prince George's Community College site through Luminis Health, visit <https://living.aahs.org/community-vaccine-clinics/>. For more information about the partnership between Prince George's Community College and Luminis Health, contact Courtney Davis, assistant director of public relations, at [daviscl@pgcc.edu](mailto:daviscl@pgcc.edu).

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The National Urban League is fully committed to common sense gun violence prevention and reduction strategies ... We deserve to feel safe.

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# TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

## In & Around Morningside-Skyline by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

### We're losing our last department store—Marlow Heights Macy's

Like the old song says, I don't get around much any more, but last week I ventured to Marlow Heights for groceries at Giant. And then I saw it—a sign on the store front, announcing that Macy's is closing.

It's among 45 Macy's stores closing across the U.S. this year, though the Baltimore area is keeping their Macy's a while longer.

Hecht's preceded Macy's in that big Marlow Heights building. The store opened on August 29, 1960 and Maryland Gov. J. Millard Tawes himself was there to welcome it.

Then, nearly 50 years later, in about 2008, Hecht's became, or was taken over by, Macy's. I used both stores well.

I love big department stores. When we moved here, I shopped at Hecht's and Woodward & Lothrop in downtown Washington. I loved that they had their own parking lots, and lunchrooms.

I loved that there were clerks who'd say, "May I help you? And they did. I loved that they had someone to do alterations or to mail your purchase. I loved the elaborate counter displays. I loved the escalators and the elevators. I loved taking my children to Washington at Christmas to see the windows.

As the downtown department stores closed, I learned to love Macy's and Montgomery Wards and Sears. I used the Sears catalog for many years, even ordering bunk beds and a kitchen stove I found in the pages. (I still have a copy of the last Sears catalog.)

When Macy's was established in 1858, it was called the Great American Department Store. It had 800 stores across the U.S. Now, 163 years later it's defunct.

Have Americans outgrown department stores?

### Yes! We'll have fireworks on the 4th!

Susan Mullins, who heads the Town of Morningside July 4 Committee, says they're going ahead with plans for a Parade and fireworks on Independence Day.

The line-up will start at 10:30 a.m. sharp on July 4. The Parade will leave from the Morningside Fire Department, march up Suitland Road and end at the VFW.

In order to participate, you must fill out and sign the registration form and mail or deliver it to the Town Hall by June 25. For more information, email Sue at tinkerbell092573@yahoo.com or

call the Town Hall, 301-736-2300.

Please plan for your vintage car, scout group, club or church group, school band, clown, or almost any organization, to participate in the Parade. We need it this year. We deserve it! And I plan to be there under the big tree in the Baptist churchyard, cheering you on.

Then, at dusk, great fireworks. July 4th is back!

### Neighbors and other good people

Monsignor Godfrey Mosley, 67, former pastor of St. Columba Parish, Oxon Hill, and former associate pastor of St. Margaret of Scotland, Seat Pleasant, and Holy Spirit, Forestville, died March 16 at Providence Hospital. Mass of Christian Burial was at St. Gabriel Church, northwest Washington, with burial at Gate of Heaven Cemetery.

Former Morningsider Jim Peyton, diagnosed with Covid, has been discharged from the hospital, but he'll be on oxygen until he can breathe on his own. He sends thanks for your prayers.

Amor Wilson, a 6th grader at Bradbury Heights Elementary, has won the 2021 annual Prince George's County Spelling Bee with the word "solenoid". In July he heads to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Orlando where he'll represent Prince George's County. Runner-ups in the County Spelling Bee were: Elizabeth Curley, 7th grader at Benjamin Tasker Middle School, in Bowie, and Kristin Milburn, 8th-grader at St. Mary of the Mills School, in Laurel.

### Community outreach at Suitland Road Baptist Church

Pastor Kevin McCune extends an invitation to the community to journey with him on Friday mornings, 10:30 to 11:30, through the Book of First Thessalonians. You can dial the Bible class on 617-769-8377.

The church has virtual Sunday services every week at 4:30 p.m. This week it'll be a special Easter service. Dial 617-769-8377.

Pastor McCune hopes to resume in-person services as soon as possible. For more information, you can call him at 301-219-2296.

### Changing landscape

Up to 10,000 fans will be able to attend the Preakness Stakes in Baltimore on May 15. Tickets go on sale April 5.

Six Flags America has already

opened—its earliest opening ever. For information on times and protocol, go to [www.SixFlags.com/America](http://www.SixFlags.com/America). Masks are required for all, age 2 and older.

Dino Safari continues at National Harbor through April 11, so "Grab a prehistoric passport and join over 40 giant moving dinosaurs on an expedition, a completely drive-thru dino adventure for the whole family... Beware: along the journey, earthquakes might erupt, dinosaurs could battle, and your family might just have to help save a baby dinosaur's life!" Website/Ticket Link: [dinosafari.com](http://dinosafari.com)

The District plans to develop a new 136-bed hospital at St. Elizabeths East and also to improve the District-wide system of care with two new urgent care centers in Wards 7 and 8.

The fish market at the SW DC waterfront is, apparently, not going anywhere. Founded in 1804, it's still thriving after more than 200 years. My father, Washington native Dr. Richard Mudd, went there for oysters whenever he came from Michigan to visit me. I'll bet his father also shopped there. And, if you are a native Washingtonian, I'll bet you did, too.

Xiao Qi Ji, the National Zoo's giant panda cub, just tipped the scales at 30 pounds.

### Mary's Covid report

Capital Hill businesses are delighted to see some of the fences-with-barbed-wire taken down. Among them: The Monocle on Capitol Hill, Pete's Diner on 2nd St. SE, We the Pizza, Good Stuff Eatery and Santa Rosa Taqueria on Pennsylvania Ave. SE. (Am I making you hungry?) If you visit, mask up.

As of March 24, 5 p.m., Maryland has had 402,600 cases, with 1,173 new ones reported the day before. As for deaths in Maryland, we've had 8,214! Just the last day 19 new deaths were added.

### Milestones

Happy birthday to Wayne Booth, Susan Frostbutter, Douglas Mangum and James Whipple, April 1; Melissa Lytton, Sophia Cordero and Bernie Saylor, April 3; Motoko Howard, April 4; Earlene Erhardt Righter, Jimmy Shipman and Kaitlin Woods, April 5; Jonathan Charters, April 6; and Debbie Callison, April 8.

Happy 32nd anniversary to Walter and Fannie Dimes who were wed April 1, 1989, in Frederick, Md.

*A blessed Easter to you all!*

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

## Brandywine-Aquasco

### ANNUAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Bowie State University Women's Forum hosted its first Virtual Women's Expo that continued during History Month in March. "This was the third expo for the Women's forum but this virtual one was a lot of work," said Renée McQueen, the chair of the Bowie State University Women's Forum. The theme of this expo was "Still I Rise, Her Story, Her Becoming". There were panel discussions, key-note speakers and networking events. McQueen "said we hope to provide the same type of interaction and energy that people would get if they were on campus."

March 17, 2021, Bowie State University Office of Alumni Engagement with Carla Henry Hopkins continued profiling our amazing alumnae during Women's History Month with Dr. Morrow. A two-time BSU graduate and K12 Senior professional discussed the re-opening of schools in the COVID environment and what we all can do to support students in their transition.

Kamala T. Green, M.A. BSU class of 2000, Director of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Baltimore City Health Department "BSU" Winning Woman was in virtual alumni house March 24 at BSUOAE FB Channel discussing her "BSU experience"; what led her in her given career choice and what we need to know as we consider vaccinating or not to vaccinate?

### #KIANNA KREATIONS

"#KiAnna Kreations which was highlighted last week is a Black-owned, woman-owned business, #KiAnnas Kreations. KiAnna Deville is a former Army officer who turned her feel-good cakes into a batter busting business. What started out as sending care packages to fellow deployed troops has grown into a bespoke confectionary that has everyone coming back for more—from toddlers to Army generals, to #Amazon". Information from Ed Carl-Ayers. "I am truly humbled to be recognized for my craft, my passion is truly a blessing". "Thank you, Ed Carl-Ayers, there are no words."

### VACCINE CENTER INFORMATION

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital is distributing COVID-19 vaccines to members of the community. Community members can sign up now to request an appointment, and we will contact them when a vaccine appointment is available. MedStar Health Winter 2021.

To reserve a place in line, community members should go to [MedStarHealth.org/Vaccine](http://MedStarHealth.org/Vaccine) and fill out the COVID-19 vaccine appointment request form.

### UMES DECEMBER CLASS

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore bid farewell to its December Class of 2020 with a 36-minute commencement celebration video in lieu of a traditional ceremony typically held in front of thousands at the William P. Hytche Athletic Center.

The global pandemic forced UMES to start and end the fall 2020 semester earlier than normal and subsequently prevented small gathering graduation events around campus that the university had hoped to hold November 20, 2020.

Seniors in the 2020 November–December graduating class endured mandatory COVID-19 testing, had no intercollegiate athletic competition and fewer social activities. They finished the final semester of their undergraduate career following a "hybrid" schedule that meant they sometimes attended classes in person, and other times participated online.

When state and University System of Maryland leaders directed public colleges to take more aggressive safety steps to head off the spread of the virus, UMES invited December degree candidates to visit during exam week and have their pictures taken in caps and gowns at favorite locales.

"Congratulations to the class of 2020," Bryanna Turman of Clinton, Maryland, said into a cellphone-recorded video. "We did it, despite all that we've gone through. We were able to make it and graduate. I wish everybody the best of luck on their future endeavors."

Ashley Nwamara of Hyattsville, wearing her cap and gown smiled broadly into her camera-phone and declared: "The time is here. It is the end of an era. Now on to the next chapter." Olawoyin Akintelure of Capitol Heights, Maryland challenged classmates to "let's go make UMES proud."

In addition to remarks from Dr. Anderson and Hogan, a parade of faculty members offered heartfelt messages, including a handful who are also alumni.

"This is the closing of one chapter of your life and the beginning of another," said Dr. Marshall E. Stevenson, Jr. Dean of the School of Social Sciences, Education and The Arts. "You are ready to make your mark on the world."

Dr. Jennifer Keane-Dawes, a professor of English and Modern Languages, said graduation is akin to the light at the end of a tunnel, Welcome to the light, she said. "You are standing in it." A sentiment echoed by Dr. Richard Warren, a three-time UMES graduate and professor of education: "Welcome to the family." UMES THE KEY (a newsletter for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends February 2021).

## Around the County

### PGCPS Launches School Bus Safety Program To Protect Students

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (March 25, 2021)—Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) is launching a new school bus safety program in partnership with Prince George's County Police Department and BusPatrol, a leading provider of school bus safety technology.

All 1,216 buses in the PGCPS fleet have been upgraded with safety technology from BusPatrol and its technology partners Zonar, Samsung and Transfinder at no cost to the school system or taxpayers. Revenue generated from citations will be used to fund the installation and maintenance of the equipment.

The technology package includes cloud-connected stop-arm cameras on the side of school buses that can capture 180 degrees and up to eight lanes of traffic. These will deter drivers from illegally passing stopped school buses and putting children at risk as they step on and off.

The program will go live on Thursday, April 8, when the first set of students return to school. Drivers who ignore the school bus stop law on or after this date should expect to receive a \$250 citation in the mail.

"As operators of one of the largest school bus fleets in the nation, we are constantly exploring new ways to ensure safe and dependable student transportation," said Dr. Monica Goldson, PGCPS Chief Executive Officer. "The new stop-arm cameras that will capture video of traffic violations are just one way we are leveraging technology to improve student safety both on and off of school buses."

Jean Souliere, CEO and Founder at BusPatrol, believes the partnerships come at an important time: "School buses in Prince George's County have been off roads for several weeks and drivers may have forgotten the importance of school bus safety laws. There is no better time to launch a school bus safety program to protect students and educate motorists.

"Our program is proven to change driver behavior and 95% of drivers that are ticketed for passing a school bus never receive a second ticket. We are proud to work with Prince George's County to ensure as safe a return to school as possible for all students."

According to data from The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services, there are an estimated 17 million stop-arm violations each school year in the U.S. In Maryland, school bus drivers recorded a total of 3,194 violations in a single day in 2019, as reported in The Baltimore Sun. Every time a driver illegally passes a stopped school bus, they put a child at risk.

In addition to the program addressing the illegal passing of school buses, the newly acquired smart fleet management solutions include COVID-19 mitigation, sanitization and contact tracing tools to help protect student riders and school bus drivers. Cloud-connected interior cameras and Zonar student tracking and management tools such as GPS, RFID-enabled ridership cards, and tablets, will enhance contact tracing procedures for school transportation officials. Additionally, Electronic Verified Inspection Reporting (EVIR®), for verifying pre- and post-trip bus inspections and ensuring COVID-19 sanitization protocols are standardized and verified digitally, making it safer for student riders and school bus drivers.

The school bus stopping law in Maryland requires drivers approaching in both directions to stop for a stopped school bus with its lights flashing and stop-arm extended.

—Office of Communications, PGCPS

### M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County Announces Reopening of Select Facilities

RIVERDALE, Md. (March 24, 2021)—The Department of Parks and Recreation, part of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, announces the reopening of select facilities on Monday, March 29, to provide the Prince George's County community activities to live more, play more. Facilities reopening include:

**Fitness rooms and gymnasiums**—The Department is reopening 12 community centers and the Southern Area Aquatics and Recreation Complex to provide fitness rooms and gymnasiums for patrons. Reservations are limited to one individual/family per time slot depending on the activity. No walk-ins are allowed. Registrations can be made via [pgparksdirect.com](http://pgparksdirect.com).

**Nature Centers**—Visitors to Watkins, Clearwater and Mount Rainier Nature Centers will enjoy a self-guided tour that takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. The nature centers have up to 30 species of animals on display. Clearwater and Watkins Nature Centers also have an outdoor live bird exhibit to see more species of birds.

**Waterfront Parks**—Visitors to our Bladensburg Waterfront Park and Patuxent River Park can preregister for rentals of canoe and kayaks up to 2 weeks in advance. Patuxent River Park campsites rentals are currently available for weekends only. The park grounds are open during normal public hours.

**College Park Aviation Museum**—Visitors will take a self-guided tour—learning all about College Park Airport, the world's oldest continuously operating airport, as well as aviation history and innovation in Prince George's County and beyond. There will be four interactives available: the simulator, Sportcopter, the Imagination Plane, Kahoot challenges, plus many photo opportunities. Flight School is currently unavailable. In addition, upon exiting, guests will have the opportunity to purchase items from the gift shop. The experience takes about 30 minutes to complete.

**Brentwood Arts Exchange**—Visitors will be invited to peruse exhibits in our Main Gallery and Lab Gallery; currently on exhibit through April 17, 2021, Everyday: Finding Meaning in the Ordinary, exploring new perspectives on finding hidden beauty in everyday objects. Additionally, visitors will have the opportunity to make use of our Computer Lab, offering digital services including large scale and 3D printing. Finally, visitors are welcome to make purchases in our Artisan Shop. Gallery hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m. (closed major holidays) by appointment only. Admission is free.

**Montpelier Arts Center**—Visitors can explore the galleries of Montpelier Arts Center, a multifaceted, community-oriented facility that has been a complete arts destination for over 40 years. The three galleries housed at the Arts Center introduce changing exhibitions by local and national visual artists who work in a variety of media and styles. Gallery hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m. (closed major holidays) by appointment only. Admission is free.

—Angel Waldron, PG County Department of Parks and Recreation

# COMMUNITY

## Council Vice Chair Deni Taveras Welcomes New Vaccination Site to District 2

*COVID-19 Tests and Vaccinations Provided Through Partnership Between Luminis Health, City of Hyattsville, and First United Methodist Church of Hyattsville*

By ANGELA J. ROUSON  
Prince George's County Council Media

Prince George's County Council Vice Chair Deni Taveras (D – District 2), in partnership with Luminis Health, the City of Hyattsville, and First United Methodist Church of Hyattsville, welcomes a new vaccination site to District 2, located at First United Methodist Church of Hyattsville in Hyattsville, Maryland.

Vice Chair Taveras says District 2 has been heavily impacted by COVID-19 and this new vaccination site will greatly benefit the surrounding community.

“One out of five county residents with COVID-19 is a District 2 resident so it is important to have a location where residents are able to access resources, be tested and receive their vaccinations. I'm thankful to Luminis Health, the City of Hyattsville, and Hy-

attsville City Council Member Joseph Solomon for working collaboratively to bring these resources to District 2.”

The United Methodist Church of Hyattsville vaccination site will conduct COVID-19 tests on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, and administer COVID-19 vaccines on Tuesdays and Wednesdays by appointment only. To register for an appointment at this site, visit [https://askaamc.formstack.com/forms/community\\_vaccination?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://askaamc.formstack.com/forms/community_vaccination?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).

For the latest updates about COVID-19 vaccines in Prince George's County, or to learn more about the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, visit [mypgc.us/COVIDVaccine](http://mypgc.us/COVIDVaccine). For the latest County COVID-19 updates, visit [health.mypgc.us/coronavirus](http://health.mypgc.us/coronavirus).

## United Ways in Maryland Launch COVID-19 Survey To Better Assess Community Needs

By PRESS OFFICER  
United Way of the National Capital Area

WASHINGTON (March 26, 2021)—United Ways in Maryland today announced a joint effort to survey families affected by the pandemic throughout the state. The COVID-19 Survey will aim to gather information from residents about how their employment, housing and basic needs have been impacted. Previous reports, including the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) in Maryland: A Financial Hardship Study released in July of 2020, used data gathered before the pan-

demic, revealed that a record two million households were already one emergency away from financial ruin. As COVID-19 hit, the stage was set for the unprecedented economic impact we are seeing throughout the state of Maryland. All Marylanders are invited to complete the United Ways in Maryland COVID-19 Survey between March 15 and April 5, 2021.

The survey takes about ten minutes and is confidential, no private information will be shared. For more information, and to help United Ways in Maryland accurately assess the need in their communities, visit [uwcm.org/COVIDsurvey](http://uwcm.org/COVIDsurvey).

## Symposium “Listening to Our Ancestors, Hearing From Our Communities”

*Free Online Program presented by Marietta House Museum featuring Bettye Kearsse, author of The Other Madisons: The Lost History of the President's Black Family • April 8, 2021, 4–6p.m.*

By STACEY HAWKINS  
Marietta House Museum

GLENN DALE, Md. (March 29, 2021)—Marietta House Museum will launch the Giving Voice Initiative on **Thursday, April 8, 4–6 p.m.** with an interactive online public symposium that is free to attend.

The featured speaker is Dr. Bettye Kearsse, author of *The Other Madisons: The Lost History of the President's Black Family*. Dr. Kearsse will share her journey to learn her family's descendancy from West Africa and from President James Madison. Following, Dr. Kearsse and Smithsonian Institution Anacostia Community Museum Director Dr. Melanie Adams will open the on-line mic for questions in a forum style discussion with audience members to talk about family histories and the hard realities of lost and silenced histories.

This program helps launch Marietta House Museum's Giving Voice Initiative, says museum manager Dr. Julie Rose. The house museum is undertaking a major reinterpretation effort focusing on elevating and expanding the historical interpretation of the enslaved community who lived and labored at Marietta in the 19th century and sharing the stories of long-marginalized Marietta

workers and families into the early 20th century. Dr. Kearsse's book and role as girott (family oral historian) demonstrates the approach Marietta embraces for the Giving Voice Initiative. Prince George's County Natural and Historical Resources Assistant Division Chief Omar Eaton-Martinez explains, “The Giving Voice Initiative will allow us to cultivate our relationships with the community in the spirit of co-creation and co-stewardship.” Marietta House Museum is making plans to go beyond house tours and exhibitions. The historic site is vigorously taking on the initiative to engage visitors, including families, school groups, and tourists in conversations, interactive history programs, and processes of awareness, acceptance and social justice advocacy. Prince George's County Natural and Historical Resources Division Chief Christine Fanning commends the initiative saying, “Marietta is a fresh canvas on which to design a museum that addresses pathways to social justice through public history.”

To register, please visit [www.parksdirect.com](http://www.parksdirect.com) and use this direct link: <https://tinyurl.com/zb9amzrm> For additional information please contact Stacey Hawkins 301-262-0532 or by email [Stacey.Hawkins@pgparks.com](mailto:Stacey.Hawkins@pgparks.com).

## Prince George's County to Host Virtual Community Meeting on the Role Arts and Culture Play in Aiding Community Connectivity

By ANIKA JACKSON  
M-NCPPC

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (March 29, 2021)—Prince George's County will host a virtual community meeting to engage stakeholders on the role arts and culture play in aiding connectivity to make transportation corridors more inviting, safe, and accessible as a part of the Prince George's County Cultural Art Study (PGCCAS). The virtual meeting will be held on **Thursday, April 8, 2021** from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Transportation networks are ideal sites for creative projects. From art in subway stations to artistically designed crosswalks, manhole covers, and bus shelter designs, arts can help improve accessibility, safety, and make the environment more inviting to users. Pedestrian and cycling trails offer additional opportunities for creativity, including public art, landscape design, and wayfinding. Art can also reduce barriers in transit stations, integrating creative wayfinding symbols to ease congestion and help direct passengers. This meeting will examine how arts and culture can improve the County's connectivity and dis-

cuss some barriers or challenges for improvements.

PGCCAS is a comprehensive assessment of the diverse arts and culture ecology in Prince George's County. This study will align and energize the arts and culture sector, residents, and leaders, ultimately strengthening partnerships, community participation, and county government. PGCCAS is a collaborative effort between the Prince George's County Planning Department and the Department of Parks and Recreation of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Prince George's Arts and Humanities Council, Inc.

Community participation is integral to how the study will gather data, raise awareness, and better integrate arts and culture with the needs of Prince George's County. To participate, register at [https://pgccas\\_ac.eventbrite.com/](https://pgccas_ac.eventbrite.com/). Log-in information will be provided the evening prior to the meeting to all who register. Registration will close at noon, Thursday, April 8, 2021. For more information, visit <http://www.mncppc.org/4860/Cultural-Arts-Study>.

### TOWN OF BERWYN HEIGHTS

#### NOTICE OF A PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The Town Council of the Town of Berwyn Heights proposes to increase real property taxes.

1. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2021, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by 5.00%, from \$367,657,115 to \$386,057,652.
2. If the Town of Berwyn Heights maintains the current tax rate of \$0.545 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by 5.00% resulting in \$100,283 of new real property tax revenues.
3. In order to fully offset the effect of increasing assessments, the real property tax rate should be reduced to \$0.5190, the constant yield tax rate.
4. The Town of Berwyn Heights is considering not reducing its real property tax rate enough to fully offset increasing assessments. The Town proposes to adopt a real property tax rate of \$0.545 per \$100 of assessment. This tax rate is 5.00% higher than the constant yield tax rate and will generate \$100,283 in additional property tax revenues.

A public hearing on the proposed real property tax rate increase will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 14, 2021. This meeting will be held by video conference due to the ongoing COVID-19 health emergency and will be broadcast on Berwyn Heights cable TV channels and streamed on the Town website at [www.berwynheightsmd.gov/town-council/pages/watch-council-meetings](http://www.berwynheightsmd.gov/town-council/pages/watch-council-meetings). Residents can comment by joining the meeting via Zoom, calling 301-474-9570 or e-mailing Mayor Dewey at [adewey@berwynheightsmd.gov](mailto:adewey@berwynheightsmd.gov).

The hearing is open to the public, and public testimony is encouraged. Persons with questions regarding this hearing may call 301-474-5000 for further information.

### CITY OF HYATTSVILLE NOTICE OF A PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The City Council of the City of Hyattsville, Maryland proposes to increase real property taxes.

1. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2021, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by 3.2%, from \$2,300,213,895 to \$2,373,975,597.
2. If the City of Hyattsville maintains the current tax rate of \$0.63 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by 3.2% resulting in \$464,699 of new real property tax revenues.
3. In order to fully offset the effect of increasing assessments, the real property tax rate should be reduced to \$0.6104, the constant yield tax rate.
4. The City is considering not reducing its real property tax rate enough to fully offset increasing assessments. The City proposes to adopt a real property tax rate of \$0.63 per \$100 of assessment. This tax rate is 3.2% higher than the constant yield tax rate and will generate \$464,699 in additional property tax revenues.

A public hearing on the proposed real property tax rate increase will be held at 6:30 p.m., on April 19, 2021. The meeting will be held remotely via video teleconference. Register to join the video conference at [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_NQT9V3d5Sf2wIl-cHUjFBQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NQT9V3d5Sf2wIl-cHUjFBQ). To join with audio only: +1 301 715 8592 US, Webinar ID: 941 3264 4693.

The hearing is open to the public, and public testimony is encouraged. Participants who join the video/audio conference will be enabled to speak by the meeting chair. Speakers will be allowed to address the Council for two (2) minutes. Public Comment may also be made using the e-comment feature at [hyattsville.org/meetings](http://hyattsville.org/meetings) or emailing [cityclerk@hyattsville.org](mailto:cityclerk@hyattsville.org). All electronic comments must be submitted by 4:30 p.m. on April 19, 2021. Comments received will be read by City staff during the public comment portion of the meeting.

Persons with questions regarding this hearing may call 301-985-5009 for further information.

## NATURAL CONNECTIONS

### Exhibition of Works by Rose Jaffe Opens In-Person and Online April 16

By KATE TAYLOR DAVIS  
Pyramid Atlantic Art Center

HYATTSVILLE, Md. (March 29, 2021)—In a new series of etchings, monoprints, and sculptural works, Rose explores what a deep connection to nature looks and feels like. The work, mainly comprised of depictions of the human figure enveloped in plants and other instinctive flora, is vibrant and often playful.

NATURAL CONNECTIONS opens Friday, April 16 online and in person. The first weekend's in-person viewings are by appointment only. Starting April 21, the public is welcome during regular gallery hours without appointment. Admission is free and gallery hours are Wed.–Thurs., 10–8 p.m.; Fri.–Sat., 10–6 p.m.; and Sunday 12–5 p.m. Masks are required for entry and the number of concurrent visitors is limited to allow for social distancing. Pyramid Atlantic is located at 4318 Gallatin Street, Hyattsville Maryland 20781. More info at [pyramidatlantic.org](http://pyramidatlantic.org) or 301-608-9101.

Most of the work in NATURAL CONNECTIONS has been made in Pyramid's studios over the past 12 months. Of the show, Rose says “people feel most moved to help once they have created a meaningful connection to a person, place or thing. I believe the stronger bond we can build with the natural world that sustains us, one grounded in true compassion and empathy, the more we will feel moved to protect it. This show is inspired by a journey of reconnection to people, and to the land—seeking to draw the lines that truly link us all”

Rose is a visual artist, with mediums spanning mural painting, ceramics, printmaking, and

digital illustration. Born and raised in DC, Rose loves calling it home. She earned her BFA at the School of Art and Design at the University of Michigan and has pursued an art career full time after teaching middle and high school art. Rose has painted over 30 murals nationally and internationally, including over 20 in the District. Her art has been featured in over fifteen publications, including *The Washington Post* and *City Paper* as well as NBC, CNN, and Channel 9 among others. The themes of her work include political activism, social justice, natural healing, and spiritual grounding. She is dedicated to harnessing the power of art to find connections, build community, spark conversation and create social change.

This exhibition is made possible in part through support from the Maryland State Arts Council, The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Maryland Milestones, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County.

*Founded in 1981, Pyramid Atlantic is a nonprofit contemporary art center fostering the creative disciplines of papermaking, printmaking, and book arts within a collaborative community. We equip, educate, and exhibit in our historic Hyattsville home. Our vision is to create an artistic hub in Hyattsville that inspires and enables local, national, and international artists to create and innovate in our core disciplines; elevates the local arts and small business scene; and enhances the quality of life for artists and neighbors. We value artistic excellence, infrastructure for artists, hands-on experiences, and collaboration.*

# COMMENTARY

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



**To Be Equal:**

## Our Basic Right to Safety Is Undermined by Congressional Inaction on Gun Violence

*"At trauma centers across this country, we have seen the pain with our own eyes. We have cleaned the blood from our own hands. Sometimes the blood soaks through our scrubs and socks. We can wash away the blood, but the pain stays with us. I cannot fully grasp the tragic impact of the lives lost. Yet I am still hopeful. If we take concrete actions now, if we do the small things now, then we will create the big changes later. These changes will stem the tide of gun violence that has become such a devastating problem in our country."*

—Trauma surgeon Selwyn Rogers, Testimony to Senate Judiciary Committee, March 23, 2021

On March 12, Boulder County District Court Judge Andrew Hartman blocked the city of Boulder from enforcing its assault weapons ban. Four days later, a 21-year-old with a record of violence and mental instability purchased the Ruger AR-556 pistol he reportedly used to kill 10 people at a Boulder supermarket last week.

The gun used to kill eight people in an Atlanta-area shooting spree that targeted Asian women last week was purchased just hours before the killings; Georgia has no waiting period for firearms purchases.

We grieve the loss of these lives and the many

lives lost or forever changed by injury due to gun violence every year. Every day in the United States, 100 people are killed by guns. Without action at the federal level, innocent lives will continue to be senselessly lost. More guns were sold in 2020 than any year in history: at least 20 million, an increase of more than 7 and a half million over 2019.

There were more than 43,500 deaths by gunfire in 2020, including almost 300 children under the age of 11. Our basic right to safety is undermined by gun violence.

Earlier this month, the House of Representatives passed the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021, which requires background checks on all commercial firearm sales, including gun shows and online sales. Prospective online buyers are seven times more likely to fail a background check than other firearm purchasers or permit applicants, suggesting that prohibited buyers seek out opportunities to skip a background check.

The House also voted to close the "Charleston loophole," which allows the sale of a gun if a background check hasn't been completed in three days. The white supremacist who massacred nine Black worshippers at Charleston's Emanuel AME Church in 2015 obtained his firearm through this loophole. The "Charleston Loophole" has put over 75,000 guns into the hands of prohibited gun owners since 1998, according to South Carolina Congressman Jim Clyburn, who introduced the bill.

President Biden has also called for a reinstatement of the federal ban on assault weapons and

high-capacity magazines. Gun massacres during the ban period fell by 37 percent, compared with the 10-year period before the ban, and the number of who died in mass shootings fell by 43 percent, according to Columbia University researcher Louis Klarevas. In the 10 years after the ban lapsed, the number of mass shootings nearly tripled, and the number of people who died in mass shootings rose by 239 percent.

The National Urban League wholeheartedly supports all three of these measures.

The Senate Judiciary Committee convened this week to discuss these and other common-sense proposals to reduce gun violence. As Senator Richard Blumenthal, chair of the Subcommittee on the Constitution pointed out, even states with strong gun laws are still at the mercy of the ones with the weakest, because guns have no respect for state boundaries. That's why we need federal solutions to stem the tide of gun violence. Gun law inconsistencies from city-to-city and state-to-state leave our communities vulnerable to underground gun markets and loopholes, with Black and Brown communities suffering disproportionate rates of gun homicide as a result.

The National Urban League is fully committed to common sense gun violence prevention and reduction strategies and we call on every member of Congress to join us in that commitment. We cannot wait any longer. We deserve to feel safe.

## Benjamin L. Cardin

United States Senator for Maryland



## Cardin Lauds Signing of New Funding Bill for Maryland's Historically Black Colleges and Universities

WASHINGTON (March 24)—U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.) today released the following statement applauding the signing of breakthrough Maryland legislation to provide \$577 million in additional funding for Bowie State University, Coppin State University, Morgan State University, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore—following a 15 year-long lawsuit.

"This landmark legislation to

settle the long-standing lawsuit by boosting funding for Maryland's four HBCUs is long overdue. The additional funding will allow Maryland's HBCUs to provide greater levels of financial assistance for students, create new niche academic programs exclusively at their institutions, enhance existing programs at the universities and place these programs online to expand the reach of the schools.

"I am proud of the students

and alumni that first brought this case forward in 2006 and for the coalition of support amongst community and General Assembly leadership to reach a settlement and finally remove this ugly stain in Maryland higher education. Their sustained work to push to this settlement will ensure that future generations of students at Maryland HBCUs will have every opportunity to succeed."

## Van Hollen, Cardin, Join Colleagues in Introducing Resolution Condemning Anti-Asian Hatred, Discrimination Related to COVID-19 Pandemic

WASHINGTON (March 26, 2021)—U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen and Ben Cardin (both D-Md.) joined Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii), Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.), and 35 of their Senate colleagues in introducing a resolution to condemn all forms of anti-Asian sentiment, racism, and discrimination, and call on federal officials, in collaboration with state and local agencies and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community organizations, to address the rise in COVID-19-related hate crimes. The resolution was introduced in the wake of the Atlanta shooting—where eight people were killed, including six women of Asian descent, and following a new report that AAPIs were targeted in nearly 3,800 hate incidents across the country since last March.

"We cannot be silent in the face of the violence and hate targeting our Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. Each of us not only has a moral obligation to forcefully speak out against this bigotry and racism, but to also take action to stop it. That's why this resolution wholly condemns these despicable words and actions and calls on all levels of government to do more to combat this hate," said Senator Van Hollen.

"We need to stop the hate. Referring to this global pandemic by anything other than its appropriate, medical names has inflamed the worst stereotypes, fear, and xenophobia in the face of a health crisis. Irrationally blaming Asian or Asian-American neighbors and random strangers is simply wrong," said Senator Cardin. "The Senate, and every person in this country, needs to call out the hate, bullying and scapegoating whenever we see it and work together as one community to overcome COVID-19."

"Our country's AAPI community has experienced escalating verbal attacks and physical violence since the coronavirus pandemic began, including the devastating killings last week in Atlanta. We must reject all forms of xenophobia and address the harm to our AAPI communities. Passing this resolution would send a clear message, that hate, bigotry, and anti-Asian sentiment have no place in our country," Senator Hirono said.

"After a year of hateful, offensive rhetoric being used in an attempt to racialize the COVID-19 pan-

See **RESOLUTION** Page A5

## Maryland Delegates Argue Passionately Over 'Juneteenth' Bill

By CATHERINE SCOTT  
Capital News Service Annapolis Bureau

In support of a bill that would make "Juneteenth" a state and employee-paid holiday, a Maryland Delegate on Monday [March 22] gave an impassioned speech, which ended with a standing ovation from some colleagues.

Others in the Legislature were equally impassioned that including paid leave in the bill could be costly, especially during a year that many Marylanders have struggled financially.

Del. Joseline Peña-Melnyk, D-Prince Georges and Anne Arundel, argued in support of HB448 on the floor of the House annex on Monday as she and other colleagues fought for the bill to advance to the Senate.

"Powerful words from Joseline Peña-Melnyk this morning in support of making Juneteenth a paid state holiday," Del. Jheanelle Wilkins, D-Montgomery, wrote in a tweet Monday. "Proud to cast my vote green."

HB448, which would take effect on June 1, if passed, establishes Juneteenth National Freedom Day as a state legal and employee holiday on June 19.

"Let's talk about what Juneteenth is," Peña-Melnyk said on the House floor Monday. "It is the independence day of the African American citizens. It is the day that Blacks were recognized as people. It is the day that Blacks stopped being property. It is the day that Blacks could claim citizenship, but not many people know that."

On June 19, 1865, two years after President Abraham Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation, Union Soldiers arrived in Texas to inform people that the war was over and enslaved people were now freed.

That day, known as Juneteenth to many, was celebrated unofficially in the African American community, and in 1980, Texas became the first

state that had officially made Juneteenth a holiday.

"We are (ensuring) that the 6 million people living in Maryland know what that day stands for, so when they see someone that looks like me, they can think about what that community has gone through," Peña-Melnyk said.

Lead sponsor of HB448, Del. Andrea Fletcher Harrison, D-Prince George's, testified during a March 16 committee hearing that Capital News Service viewed that everyone should recognize this holiday, whether or not they identify as Black.

In 2014, a bill was passed that required the governor annually to proclaim June 19 as Juneteenth National Freedom Day, a commemorative day in Maryland.

"There has been very little done to truly appreciate the blood, sweat, and tears of those Blacks that built this state by way of their servitude," Harrison said. "It is time for us to celebrate this as a paid holiday."

Currently, Maryland recognizes 16 legal holidays and 12 State employee holidays, according to the bill's policy analysis, and if passed, Juneteenth National Freedom Day would join those dates.

The policy analysis also states that, "a State employee who is required to work on an employee holiday receives compensatory time for that work. An employee not scheduled to work on an employee holiday, but otherwise required to work on that day, is eligible for compensation."

Harrison also testified that establishing Juneteenth as a holiday would serve as a way for Maryland to recognize that the country has not fully addressed our past.

She cited the recent deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, all Black Americans who died last year and whose deaths she said sparked a revolution in America.

Harrison described the revolution as people around the world beginning to "open their eyes to

the plight of Black people in this country."

"It is important to recognize that Black Americans have been fighting for justice since this country's inception," Harrison testified.

During the House floor session Monday, Minority Whip Del. Kathy Szeliga, R-Baltimore and Harford counties, argued that the bill should be declared a legal holiday, but not yet an employee-paid holiday.

"When we have more than 1 million Marylanders on unemployment, should we give the 71,000 state workers a paid day off?" Szeliga argued. "I asked. I pleaded. I begged leaders here in the House of Delegates to make this a legal holiday that we can all get behind without it being a paid day off."

Szeliga argued that the small businesses who struggled during the pandemic would be the ones to pay the taxes to support this bill and would not be able to celebrate this paid day off.

The policy analysis for HB448 estimates state expenditures increasing at least \$1.9 million annually for overtime costs.

"I desperately want to vote for this bill, but I cannot burden those people with a multimillion dollar bill to help people who have had a paycheck over this pandemic."

Peña-Melnyk countered Szeliga and argued that Maryland has done a lot for the people that Szeliga referenced as struggling, citing the Maryland RELIEF Act and other bills that have passed to aid Marylanders during the pandemic.

"We are and have been responsible," Peña-Melnyk said. "However, this bill speaks volumes because many of those state workers are people of color. ... Many of them, while we can

stay home, risk their lives every day without proper PPE. They're taking care of us so that the economy can keep running."

Peña-Melnyk also argued that people of color and immigrant communities have experienced the disparate effects of the pandemic most.

She cited Prince George's County, a majority-minority county, and Hyattsville, a city with a large immigrant population, as having some of the highest-reported cases of Covid-19 in the state.

The bill advanced in the House of Delegates with a vote of 112-24 and has been sent to the Senate, where the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee will have a hearing on it.

## The Prince George's Post

The Prince George's Post  
P.O. Box 1001 15207 Marlboro Pike  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-3151  
Phone: 301-627-0900 • Legal Fax: 301-627-6260  
Email: pgpost@gmail.com  
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