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Maryland Lawmakers Aim to Promote Black History Education Even as it Is Under Attack in Some States

By YESENIA MONTENEGRO
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (Feb. 22, 2023)—While the teaching of Black history is under fire and facing censorship in some states like Florida, two Maryland law-

makers have proposed legislation aimed at providing more federal support to promote and preserve Black history, culture and education.

Rep. Kweisi Mfume and Sen. Ben Cardin, both Maryland Democrats, introduced

their measures on Feb. 1, the first day of Black History Month.

The legislation would create a council of 12 presidential appointees to advise the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) on promoting Black voices, ensuring that Black history and culture is recognized in schools, providing resources to preserve Black history, and recommending national policies that would generate improved public understanding of African American history and culture.

"African American history is American history," Cardin said in a statement. "For too long our history lessons failed to fully acknowledge the role of Black Americans. And it happens in far more places than schools—so much of what we have learned for generations about history, music, culture and more has diminished the role of African American creators, writers, musicians and beyond."

"This bill pushes back against the attacks on African American history in our schools and communities," Mfume said in a statement. "We must ensure that Black history is told fully and accurately in America. While the truth of our journey may not be the easiest to tell, it should be protected and celebrated because the story of African American people is intricate and integral to the story of the United States of America—that history must be treated and admired as such."

School courses on African American history are generating political controversy. A new Advanced Placement African American studies course, which is currently being piloted across the country, has come under fire recently.

Gov. Ron DeSantis, R-Florida, and the Florida Department of Education attacked

See EDUCATION Page A2



YOUTUBE SCREENSHOT BY YESENIA MONTENEGRO/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE
WASHINGTON—Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Maryland, spoke on the Senate floor last week to commemorate Black History Month and to discuss his proposed legislation creating a 12-person council that would advise the National Endowment for the Humanities on promoting Black history and culture.

Maryland's First Ever High School Earth Optimism Club Celebrates African American Heritage and History Month With the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at the Chesapeake Math and IT Academy North High School

Educational partnership builds environmental literacy, leadership skills, and civic engagement

By MEGAN V. SENNETT
Chesapeake Bay Trust

LAUREL, Md. (Feb. 24, 2023)—Today, students at the Chesapeake Math and IT Academy North High School (CMIT), showcased their campus and community environmental work to officials from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Students in the Earth Optimism Club, the first in Maryland, are part of the Earth Optimism Youth Action and Leadership (EOYAL) program, an educational partnership that establishes a network of national and local organizations to advance youth-led conservation and environmental justice projects. The presentation was part of a school-wide Black History Month celebration.

Through the EOYAL program, high school students across the country are introduced to environmental literacy and leadership skills to inspire positive change in their communities. Part of a partnership between the Smithsonian Institution, the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History, Baltimore, Md., and the World Wildlife Fund, the students in CMIT's Earth Optimism Club identified environmental issues in their community, then created and executed project-based, community-focused solutions to those issues.

Students' solutions were made possible through seed funding provided by the Chesapeake Bay Trust. Examples of student projects include stormwater pollution, addressed through environmental art and litter excluders on storm drains; biodiversity loss, addressed by installing bird boxes and pollinator gardens with native plants; food waste, addressed by establishing a school-wide pilot compost program with Prince George's County; electronic waste, ad-

ressed by instituting e-waste collection program and using recycled e-art to help change behaviors.

Since spring 2022, students in the Earth Optimism Club have had the opportunity to work directly with and be mentored by subject matter experts from the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, the Smithsonian, and the World Wildlife Fund, as well as participate in varied field trips with local environmental groups, supported by funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust. Through these experiences, students have learned about environmental concerns and solutions, environmental justice, and the power of community stewardship.

"We are honored to be part of this day celebrating African American History and bringing focus to the strong ties between students, communities, and our natural landscape," said Dr. Kandis Boyd, Director of the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program. "Young people are our future, and I learned so much from these young people today about what they are doing to play a role in the future of our planet."

By collaborating with young people on student-led solutions to the issues that are most meaningful to them, the EOYAL partners strive to achieve the program's mission—demonstrating to students the power of their voices and ideas as agents of change who will conserve the Chesapeake Bay for generations to come.

"We are committed to helping the students of Maryland in their pursuit of environmentally just solutions to conserve the Chesapeake Bay," said Terry Taylor, educator at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture in Baltimore. "CMIT's Earth Optimism club has inspired the way that the program's partners work with additional high schools across the state. Together we

are nurturing Maryland's future generation of environmental stewards."

This is the first Earth Optimism Club in Maryland, joining a network of motivated young people in over 15 states being mentored by the Smithsonian since 2019, and the program's partners have already begun scaling the model to other high schools in Maryland. As part of the EOYAL program, students make presentations to a panel of reviewers including scientists, government officials, and community leaders, to compete for seed funding for civic environmental action. The students also go on field trips, meet their local environmental leaders, learn about internship and career opportunities in environmental conservation (including paid internships with the Smithsonian), and gain volunteer service hours and leadership experience. Students deepen their understanding of the effects of local and global environmental change and human behavior on the health of their communities, as well as how they can affect sustainable behavior at the community level.

"We are excited by the work of the Earth Optimism club at Chesapeake Math and IT Academy North. Their success demonstrates the core message of the Smithsonian's Earth Optimism initiative," said Jennifer Brundage and Brian Coyle, co-directors of the EOYAL program. "With hope and positive action, EVERYONE can make a difference for our future on a sustainable planet."

This award is one of many provided by the Chesapeake Bay Trust to engage students through regional K-12 environmental education programs. "We are so proud of and inspired by these students," said Jana Davis, president of the Chesapeake Bay Trust. "Young people show us every day what is possible, and how each one of us can show Earth Optimism!"



PHOTO COURTESY OFFICE OF TREASURER DERECK DAVIS

Treasurer Derek E. Davis

Treasurer Davis Sworn In as Maryland State Treasurer

Receives Majority Vote for Four-Year Term

By SHAREESE N. CHURCHILL
Office of Treasurer Derek Davis

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Feb. 21, 2023)—Treasurer Derek E. Davis was today sworn in as Treasurer of the State of Maryland for a four-year term. Treasurer Davis initially took office in December 2021, completing the term of former Treasurer Nancy Kopp.

"It has been an honor and privilege to serve the citizens of Maryland these past 14 months," said Treasurer Davis. "I thank the members of the General Assembly for their vote of confidence and remain committed to acting as a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars and ensuring that the state receives full value for our investments."

On February 14, Treasurer

Davis had an interview before the Joint Committee on the Selection of the State Treasurer and received a recommendation to advance to today's ballot vote in a joint session of the Maryland General Assembly.

Since taking office, Treasurer Davis has outlined four priorities: preserving Maryland's Triple AAA bond rating (the next bond sale is scheduled for March 15); supporting minority businesses; encouraging financial literacy; and modernizing the office's policies and practices. This legislative session Treasurer Davis proposed three bills that will allow the office to conduct its business in a more efficient and effective manner.

PGCC Students Joined Annual Student Advocacy Day

By COURTNEY DAVIS
Prince George's Community College

LARGO, Md. (Feb. 21, 2023)—Students from Maryland's 16 community colleges joined in support of Student Advocacy Day [Feb. 21], an annual event sponsored by the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) that provides a platform for students to meet directly with elected officials to make a case for continued state support of community colleges. Twenty-six Prince George's Community College (PGCC) students will attend the virtual event.

"SGA and other student leaders look forward to participating in the virtual Student Advocacy Day rally," said Sadichhya Shahi, president of PGCC's Student Government Association. "This is an opportunity for students to meet with legislatures to advocate for funding and other legislative priorities that will benefit students."

For more than 16 years, PGCC has participated in Student Advocacy Day. This year's key legislative themes include college access, affordability, and improved facilities. Specifically, students will have the opportunity to advocate for strong financial support for community colleges; support for the Governor's FY24 capital budget; changes to the Community College Promise program; and state reimbursement for tuition waivers.

Student Advocacy Day also includes individual legislator meetings for each college, in which students discuss and make advocacy pitches to legislators. Delegate Kim Taylor, District 23, and Delegate Karen Tooles, District 25, will host 15 PGCC students in Annapolis on March 10.

Support for community colleges is an investment in Maryland's future workforce. According to MACC, 90% of community college students are Marylanders who remain in-state after graduation. Furthermore, the state's economy can utilize the rewards of state money invested through a more skilled and productive workforce, thereby increasing the efficiency and profitability of Maryland's businesses.

For more information about Student Advocacy Day, contact Paulett McIntosh, program director of Student Engagement and Leadership, at mcintopd@pgcc.edu. Learn about Prince George's Community College at <https://www.pgcc.edu/about-pgcc/why-pgcc/>.

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ChildWatch: "An Appeal for Human Rights"

As Dr. Carter Woodson, the founder of Black History Month, taught us ... "What this age needs is an enlightened youth not to undertake the tasks like theirs but to imbibe [their] spirit ... and answer the present call of duty."

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Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation Celebrates 5th Year Anniversary of Its Premiere Business Incubator

Innovation Station Business Incubator is directly connected to the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation and its mission of growing the County's tax base ...
Business and Finance, Page A5

TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

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

Estelle Woods: see whose phone numbers are in her address book

Estelle Gaines Woods, 97, career journalist and former Acting Editor of The Enquirer-Gazette and Clinton columnist for the Star Leader, died Dec. 3, 2020. Last year she was buried in Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery where her husband, Walter Wood, Washington Post combat press correspondent during WWII, is buried.

Born in Birmingham, Ala., Estelle began her journalism career as Editor-in-Chief of Phillips High School's yearbook and weekly newspaper. She went on to study English and chemistry at Alabama Polytechnic Institute.

During WWII she was one of the few women on the copy desk at the Birmingham News and the Atlanta Journal. She came to Washington to work for Georgia Congresswoman Helen Douglas Mankin.

She worked at Voice of America in the late '60s and covered news for the Washington Times-Herald. She visited Times-Herald owner Cissy Patterson at her home, His Lordship's Kindness, on Woodyard Road in Clinton.

She worked with Jacqueline Bouvier before she married John F. Kennedy. In 1950 she traveled with President Truman on a trip from Washington to Coulee City, Wash. On August 10, 1952, she married Walter H. Wood, Picture Editor of The Evening Star.

Estelle and Walter raised their four children in Prince George's County. Students from Surrattsville Senior High may remember her standing in the bleachers ringing her cowbell, supporting the Hornets.

Her address book includes phone numbers for Jack Benny, Charlie Chaplain, Joan Crawford, Governor Dewey, Mrs. Phil Graham, Cary Grant, William R. Hearst II, Howard Hughes, Burl Ives, Boris Karloff, Gene Kelly, Jack Kennedy, Ethel Merman, Mary Pickford, Frank Sinatra, Shelley Winters, Ed Wynn, and Loretta Young, political/city page editors of major daily newspapers, Park and Metropolitan Police, and the D.C. morgue.

Neighbors & other good people

Estelle Woods. I fondly remember seeing this amazing woman at an awards meeting years ago. She remains for us all a reminder of what journalism used to be.

Byrne Harder, who grew up on Marianne Drive, in Morningside, son of Donald and Betty Harder, died recently. He graduated from Suitland, Class of 1966. In recent years he lived in Charlotte Hall, Md.

Kathy Elborne, formerly of Boxwood Drive, gave me an update: daughter Karen teaches first grade in Prince George's County and son Paul is a bridge inspector for the State of Florida, and she adds, "Two of my wonderful grandchildren are here, and the other was here for a visit at Christmas."

Jean Conlon Ferrante, also formerly of Boxwood, emailed about the Boxwood Drive house recently damaged by fire. She wondered if it was the "white brick house." Kathy Elborne says yes. Apparently that white brick house was once a farmhouse on extensive farmland, back before Morningside became Morningside.

Town of Morningside

Bingo Bunny Breakfast and Egg Hunt are coming up. Watch this column for day and time. Also on the docket is the annual election May 1.

March Meetings: Town Work Session, Tuesday, March 14, 7 p.m.; Town's Regular Meeting, Tuesday, March 21, 7 p.m. Information, 301-736-2300.

Changing landscape

The buds on Washington's famed cherry trees at the Tidal Basin are starting to develop.

Washington's most famous bald eagle couple, Mr. President and Lotus (short for Lady of the United States), has moved into a new nest at the U.S. National Arboretum and laid at least one egg inside it. The egg is expected to hatch in mid-March.

U. S. Senator Tom Carper, a Democrat from Delaware, has introduced a bill—The Washington, D.C. Admission Act—which would allow the District of Columbia to become the 51st State.

A home at 6721 Boxwood Drive just sold for \$470,000! (It sold for \$139,000 in 1995.)

Applause

WSSC Water, which makes it possible for me to wash my dishes, my clothes and myself, has been awarded the 2023 National Environmental Achievement

Award for its Introduction to Wastewater Treatment Virtual Unit., educating the public on the effects of wastewater treatment and pollution control.

Places to go and things to do

National Kite-Flying Day is coming up Saturday, March 25, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., on the Washington Monument grounds. Get busy on your kite(s).

Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Museum is open for tours Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays, noon to 4 p.m., at 3725 Dr. Samuel Mudd Road in Waldorf. Admission, \$10 for everyone 13 & up, \$3 for ages 6–12, under 5 and Members, free. I highly recommend these tours, as probably Dr. Sam's oldest surviving great-grandchild.

Seeking a summer job?

The Department of Parks & Recreation held their first 2023 Job Fair on Feb. 28. The next one will be in March, date TBA. They're looking for life-guards, drivers, Summer Camp & Playground positions, course instructors, park maintenance, and much more. Before applying in March, check out jobs available by going to www.governmentjobs.com/careers/mncppc. Years ago, several of my kids got good summer jobs through Park & Planning.

Only a box

I just received an Amazon order, in a small cardboard box. On the side is a sweet message: "Just a box, standing in front of a door, waiting to be opened."

Wordle report

I have played a year of Wordles—365. I've had 13 2's to celebrate, but mostly 4's. I hope to improve over the next Wordle year. And you?

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Shelley Lynn Cook, March 2; Roy Derrick, March 6; Jon McKlveen, Shirley Dodgson and my grandson Richard Shearer, March 9; Angelo Meoli, John F. Latimer, Karl Kaufman Jr., Alberta M. Smith and my amazing son-in-law John Mudd, March 10; Karen Cordero, Blake James Shipman and Father Scott Hahn, March 11.

Happy Anniversary to Larry and Susan Frostbutter on March 5.

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

CELEBRATING BLACK EDUCATORS

During Black History Month I would like to honor two special people in my life who played a very important part in educating children in the Public School System. Rudell Jones who I call my brother and Gwendolyn DeVille, my sister-law. Thanks for playing a very important part in the lives of many children. Submitted by Audrey Johnson.

"As a child in Cambridge, Maryland, I was exposed to two types of jobs in the Black Community. The people I saw on a daily basis were either factory workers or teachers. After seeing the long hours my father and others worked on their jobs in the local factories, I knew the type of career was not for me, so I decided to become a teacher. After graduating from Bowie State College (now Bowie State University) in 1977, I was hired by the Talbot County Public School System as an intermediate math teacher at St. Michaels Elementary School in St. Michaels, Maryland".

It was the love of music that led Gwendolyn DeVille to pursuing an academic career. "She stated, when I went to High school, the class I enjoyed most was music, especially the choir under the direction of Mr. Earl Walter Pearson. I always wanted to go to college after graduating from high school, but I could not decide which career I wanted to pursue. I concluded, that if I liked music, why not major in music. I went to Morgan State College (now Morgan State University) and majored in music. Upon graduating from college, I was able to get a job in Prince George's County Public Schools as a music teacher at Frederick Douglass High School. If I had to do it all over again, I would choose the same career path. I have had so many blessings by trying to bless others."

Rudell and Gwendolyn continue to share their wisdom and experiences with others. Rudell advises Black educators of today to "establish a positive rapport with the families of your most challenging students, make an extra effort to implement strategies needed for their success, and encourage and motivate all students to exceed their potential. Also, I would tell Black Educators to be lifelong learners, get a degree higher than a bachelor's degree, and apply for administrative positions. Our Black students need to see people who look like them working in all levels at their schools".

Gwendolyn remarks "To Black Educators, I would say our children need you, it is not an easy career, and it can be frustrating, but the rewards of helping a child or adult make it through some difficult situations will be a blessing to you and the child/adult. You can't put a price on it, and you will be rewarded knowing you made a difference in their lives."

Information from The Messenger February 2022 Nottingham Myers and Christ United Methodist Churches Cooperative Parish Newsletter. Joyce Lee Brown/Reverend Shemaiah Strickland.

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH HALL

Good Food-Good Eating March 11, 2023, at St. Philip's Church Hall 13801 Baden Westwood Road Brandywine, Maryland from 12 noon until sold out. Chicken or Fish Dinners \$18.00. Sandwiches on sale. (All dinners served with String Beans, Sweet Potato, and Bread). Baked Goods on sale. Vendors on site. Vendor table available-Call. "Pre Orders-must be paid in advance." Shirley Cleaves 302-630-4260, Vivian Rich 804-301-9530, Michele Chase 240-882-3369. "Thank you for your support in advance" Sponsored by: Peter A. Gross, Sr. Scholarship/Memorial Fund Inc.

VISIT US

Bowie State University welcomes visitors to our Campus. Experience our campus in person or during a virtual tour. With easy access to some of the nation's most exciting metropolitan areas, Bowie State University is located in Bowie, Maryland, just east of Washington, DC, and south of Baltimore, Maryland.

TRAVEL BY RAIL: The campus has a train stop on the Maryland Commuter Rail (MARC) Penn Line that runs between Baltimore's Penn Station and Washington Union Station.

TRAVEL BY BUS: Bowie State also is a stop on three Metrobus lines operated by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority: B21, B22, and B27. These bus lines connect the University with the New Carrollton station of the Washington, DC. Metro subway system.

TRAVEL BY AIR: The closest airport is Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the brilliance that continues to be BOWIE STATE. Bowie State University nursing student Justina Miles stole the show at Super Bowl LVII through her gift of sign language at the Super Bowl Game. #BSU4LIFE. Thanks Justina.

CONGRATULATIONS

Tony award winner, Grammy nominee and Bowie State University's own Myles Frost was honored by the State of Maryland at the Maryland State House in Annapolis, Maryland for his work with @mjthemusical. Myles is BSU4LIFE.

Around the County

Wellpoint Supports Saturday Enrichment Academy for Prince George's County Children

Wellpoint Maryland is partnering with the Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation to launch a new student enrichment program for students, grades 1–3. The Saturday Enrichment Academy helps give children an edge on subjects including English Language Arts and Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics.

The program is free for students, ages 6–9, who are residents of Prince George's County. Lunch is provided! The program starts March 4 and is FREE to Prince George's County residents. For more information email customerservice@pgparks.com.

Community in the Courthouse

Mark your calendar for our March Community in the Courthouse in which we will be celebrating Women's History Month with a panel of extraordinary women discussing key issues. Be sure to sign up.

This will be a virtual event via Zoom and streamed live on Facebook. If you would like to attend, please visit www.pgsao.org/event.

WHEN: March 28, 2023, 6–7:30 p.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Leslie Johnson - lejohanson@co.pg.md.us.

Local Student Graduates From UW-Madison

MADISON, Wisc. (Feb. 24, 2023)—Just over 1,750 students received degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison during a commencement ceremony at the Kohl Center on Dec. 18, 2022.

About 1,200 of them took part in the ceremony at the Kohl Center. Total attendance, including graduates, was 6,609. The ceremony was livestreamed so that friends and family from around the world could join in.

Comedian Charlie Berens, the keynote speaker, told the graduates he worked many jobs—bike mechanic, salesman, model for ShopKo, news reporter—before eventually hitting it big with "Manitowoc Minute."

"Time will move fast," he told graduates. "Your job isn't to slow it down. Your job is to fill your days with what lights your soul. And don't worry if you can't see the path. Once your soul is lit, the path will reveal itself. And on your path—and this is most important—make sure you watch out for deer."

For more information about UW-Madison, visit <http://www.wisc.edu>. View the ceremony at <https://www.wisc.edu/commencement/> and read about it at <https://news.wisc.edu/winter-commencement-2022-pomp-poignancy-and-geez-louise-charlie-berens/>.

Here are the degree recipients from your area:

Beltsville, MD: **Naomi Adedokun**, School of Nursing, Bachelor of Science-Nursing, Nursing

Education from A1

some of the topics being covered in the course, including so-called critical race theory and the Black Lives Matter movement.

The AP course's official framework has since been revised. Supporters of Black history education claim that texts by scholars focusing on critical race theory have been removed from the course and that essential topics were left out. According to a statement from the College Board, however, no such changes were made.

"We must also clarify that no Black scholars or authors have been removed from the course. In fact, contemporary scholars and authors are never mandated in any AP framework," the College Board said in a Feb. 8 letter to the Florida Department of Education.

The College Board also wrote that no topics were removed because "they lacked educational value."

In an updated statement on Feb. 11, the College Board said it should have been more clear about the framework and topics of the course, differentiated between the final curriculum and the early framework, and denounced the Florida Department of Education's "slander" of the course.

The course is being piloted in Maryland at the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, part of Baltimore City Public Schools, and is one of only 60 schools in the country participating in the pilot program during the 2022–2023 school year.

In a Feb. 1 tweet, Cardin wrote that he was proud that the course is being piloted in Baltimore.

"Any kind of censoring or shielding students from #BlackHistory is a disservice to our nation & the people who came before us. Black History IS this nation's history," the senator said.

As of December, 31 students were enrolled in the AP course, according to Dennis Jutras, coordinator of Gifted and Advanced Learning at Baltimore City Public Schools. The district has not received any direct responses from students or families regarding the course, which "is typically the case when things are going well," he said.

"The problem is that traditional history classes do not give equal bandwidth to all voices," added Jutras, who taught AP U.S. History for nine years. "AP African American Studies—what it's doing is trying to balance the equation and giving a greater bandwidth to part of U.S. history that is oftentimes neglected."

Jutras said the legislation proposed by Cardin and Mfume would have minimal impact in Baltimore City schools.

"I definitely see a need for it in maybe some other districts in the state of Maryland," Jutras said in an interview with Capital News Service. "And, of course, if national legislation would follow, there's certainly states that could use those kinds of protections, but in Baltimore City, we have a long history of genuinely appreciating academic freedom."

At a hearing earlier this month by the House Education and the Workforce Committee, Virginia Gentles, director of the Education Freedom Center at the Independent Women's Forum, a conservative nonprofit, said she "absolutely" supports the teaching of African American history in schools.

However, she added: "I don't think from a federal perspective that Congress needs to get involved in what a state should or shouldn't teach. That isn't the role of the federal government."

During the hearing, Rep. Aaron Bean, R-Florida, defended his state's choice to restrict the teaching of critical race theory.

"Let's teach subjects that matter, reading, writing, arithmetic. The so-called CRT, (critical race theory) we've said 'no' in the state of Florida, 'no' to CRT. There's no value. There's no value to teach kids to hate each other based on race. There's no value in teaching kids to feel guilty just because they're of a certain race," Bean said.

Rep. Susan Wild, D-Pennsylvania, countered: "CRT, otherwise known as critical race theory, is not taught in K–12 schools ever. This is a talking point that has been used by the opposition party to try to inflame parents and people and it is simply not done, and we need to stop talking about it."

COMMUNITY

More Details in Road Rage Shooting Released as Investigators Continue to Seek Information Leading to Suspect

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland State Police

PIKESVILLE, Md. (Feb. 24, 2023)—As the one-year anniversary of a fatal road rage shooting approaches, investigators release more details and continue to seek the identity of the suspect pictured in video footage captured during the incident.

On March 19, 2022, Delonte Hicks, 29, of Washington, D.C. was shot while driving a tow truck in Prince George's County. He was transported from the scene to an area hospital where he later succumbed to his injuries. Autopsy results indicate his cause and manner of death as homicide by multiple gunshot wounds.

Investigators believe the suspect vehicle is a 2018 or 2019 Hyundai Sonata. The color of the vehicle is either black or gray. The suspect appears in the driver's seat in the photo at



Suspect

right.

Hicks was traveling on eastbound Route 50 at Route 410/Veterans Parkway in Prince George's County. At approximately 4:45 p.m. police believe

Hicks was exchanging words with the driver of a Hyundai Sonata when he pulled out a weapon and fired into the vehicle, striking Hicks. The gunman continued eastbound on Route 50.

Maryland State Police homicide detectives are continuing the investigation with assistance provided by the Prince George's County Police Department. Police urge anyone with information relevant to this incident to call or text 410-365-5941. All callers may remain confidential.

Police urge motorists who feel they are engaged in a road rage incident to drive to a public place or the nearest police station. If possible, report aggressive driving incidents and any vehicle or suspect description to police.

Police urge motorists to avoid dangerous behaviors on the road and avoid the following:

- unnecessary use of high beam headlights



Suspect Vehicle

PHOTOS COURTESY MARYLAND STATE POLICE

- unnecessary use of horn
- using hand gestures at other drivers
- tailgating and following to close
- Police urge motorists to practice courtesy towards other motorists:
- use turn signals well in advance of changing lanes or turning
- avoid distracted driving and erratic driving
- drive the speed limit
- provide safe stopping distance by

driving 2-seconds behind the car in front of you

- stay attentive and drive defensively

If another driver is exhibiting dangerous and aggressive behaviors, create a safe distance between their vehicle and yours. Do not engage in an exchange with the other driver. Continue driving and call police if the situation escalates before you can get to a police station.

Maryland-Delaware-D.C. Beverage Association Supports Victims of the High-Rise Fire in Silver Spring With a \$10,000 Donation

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland-Delaware-D.C. Beverage Association

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Feb. 22, 2023)—The Maryland-Delaware-D.C. Beverage Association announced today that it is making a \$10,000 donation in support of the victims of the February 18 apartment fire in Silver Spring.

The funds will be delivered to the Montgomery Housing Partnership, which is managing a relief fund at the request of Montgomery County.

"Our donation will help support the victims of a tragedy that has left so many without homes," said Ellen Valentino, Executive Vice President of the Maryland-Delaware-D.C. Beverage Association. "Members of the Maryland-Delaware-D.C. Beverage Association are committed to the communities that they serve and where they operate."

"Our members, who include PepsiCo, Coca-Cola Consolidated and Canada Dry Potomac Corp., operate within a 10-mile radius of this location," Valentino said.

The Maryland-Delaware-D.C. Beverage Association is the regional trade association for local soft drink bottlers, manufacturers and distributors including PepsiCo, Coca-Cola Consolidated, and Canada Dry Potomac Corp. These companies not only manufacture and distribute soft drinks in Maryland but employ thousands of residents. Visit us on Facebook Twitter and LinkedIn.

Prince George's Community College Appoints Chanelle Whittaker as Vice President for Equity, Culture, and Talent

By PRESS OFFICER
Prince George's Community College

LARGO, Md. (Feb. 27, 2023)—Prince George's Community College (PGCC) announced [Monday] the appointment of Chanelle Whittaker, Esq., as vice president for Equity, Culture, and Talent. Whittaker was selected for the position from a diverse pool of highly qualified candidates and assume[d] her role on February 27.

"We are pleased to welcome Chanelle Whittaker to our senior leadership team, where she will oversee our most critical resource here at Prince George's Community College: our burgeoning talent," said Falecia D. Williams, Ed.D., president of the College. "She has the expertise and management skills to help guide this institution into an extraordinary future."

For the past 13 years, Whittaker has served in higher education leadership in Sacramento and Oakland, California. As an executive leader, she oversaw district-wide functions for human resources; employee and labor relations; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and legal affairs. Before entering higher education, Whittaker enjoyed a legal career focusing on labor and employment, civil litigation, and civil rights.

Throughout her career, Whittaker demonstrated a commitment to advancing racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. She has created several diversity programs of distinction that have garnered more than \$50,000 of California state funding.

In her new role, Whittaker will oversee the College's talent, training, and development as well as organizational and change management.

"I am extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to be a part of the Prince George's Community College family," said Whittaker. "My entire life has been steeped in education, and I've seen firsthand the ability the community college system has to transform the trajectory of one's life."

Whittaker will bring "an unwavering commitment to foster togetherness and human engagement throughout the entire College community."

"I am very much looking forward to working with the faculty, staff, and students to promote equal access to education, and to continue building a human resources department that works in partnership to those we serve," said Whittaker.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Howard University in Washington, D.C., and a Doctor of Jurisprudence from Hofstra University School of Law in Hempstead, New York.

Prince George's Community College is an equal opportunity employer. To learn more about available administrative, faculty, and staff employment opportunities at the College, visit <https://pgcc.peopleadmin.com/>.

Hoyer Remarks at Bowie State University Event Highlighting Biden Administration's Efforts to Strengthen Homeownership Opportunities

BOWIE, Md. (Feb. 22, 2023)—[Last Wednesday,] Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-05) delivered remarks at a Bowie State University event with Vice President Kamala Harris to recognize the Biden Administration's efforts to strengthen first-time homebuyer opportunities for new borrowers. Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery:

"Good afternoon; I'm glad to be here today with Dr. Breaux, Governor Moore, and Vice President Harris.

"Affordable housing and homeownership are integral to building a stronger, more equitable economy. Owning a home is essential to 'the pursuit of happiness' that defines America. It allows workers and families to live in greater financial security, to build

wealth, and to pass it on to future generations.

"For too long, however, many Americans have been excluded from that crucial opportunity. From redlining to predatory lending, Black Americans and other communities of color have faced significant barriers to homeownership for generations. Indeed, a few months ago, Pew found that the gap between white and Black homeownership in America was two points larger in 2022 than it was in 1960.

"This disparity is fueling our nation's racial wealth gap and is holding these communities—and our country—back. It is an issue that requires coordination between every level of government and community partners

like Bowie State and HomeFree-USA.

"Their partnership on the Center for Financial Advancement, for instance, is helping to build a more inclusive real estate industry and to prepare thousands of HBCU students to become first-time homebuyers.

"I also look forward to continuing to work with Governor Moore and the Biden-Harris Administration to open up new pathways to homeownership for first-time buyers throughout our state and country.

"We must ensure that our people have the opportunities they need to make it in Maryland and to Make It In America. Together, we can set families up for success in that great 'pursuit of happiness' which drives our nation forward. Thank you."

New Calls by Biden, Democrats for Assault Weapons Ban Face Familiar Foe: Most of GOP

By MICAELA HANSON
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (Feb. 23, 2023)—Despite renewed calls for an assault weapons ban following a string of mass shootings, prospects for passage of any new gun safety legislation in a divided Congress are poor.

"There's very little chance of any movement in the House. I don't want to say never, because you never say never," Tanya Schardt, senior counsel and director of state and federal policy at the Brady Campaign, told Capital News Service.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, who was involved in a bipartisan gun safety bill that became law last year, saw no appetite among GOP lawmakers to do more.

"I'd be surprised if the House would be willing to take something up," Cornyn said on NBC last month after two mass shootings in California.

Gun violence is an epidemic in the United States. And 63 percent of Americans are dissatisfied with the nation's gun laws, according to a Gallup Poll released Wednesday [Feb. 15]. That is the highest level of public disapproval in the 23 years the poll has tracked the issue.

The Michigan State University shooting that killed three and injured five on Feb. 13 marked the 67th mass shooting since the start of 2023, reported the Gun Violence Archive, an independent data collection organization.

The shooting occurred less than a week after President Joe Biden's State of the Union address in which he urged: "Ban assault weapons now. Ban them now. Once and for all."

The differences among lawmakers were on display during the week of the speech: some Republicans wore assault rifle lapel pins; some Democrats wore lapel pins saying "March for Our Lives,"

produced by a gun violence survivor group of the same name.

Democrats hold a slim majority in the Senate, while Republicans have a very narrow majority in the House. Most GOP lawmakers have opposed major gun safety bills. Any gun bill would have to get the nod from the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, who is a strong opponent of an assault weapons ban.

"They're coming for your guns," Jordan declared during a House debate last year on an assault weapons ban measure.

In early February, House Natural Resources Committee Republicans defeated a push to explicitly ban firearms from the House floor.

"I feel I need one everywhere here. There are often times we are harassed in the hallways. We walk alone," said Rep. Lauren Boebert, R-Colorado, during the committee meeting.

Rep. Andrew S. Clyde, R-Georgia, handed out the assault weapons lapel pins. Clyde described his motives in a tweeted video on Feb. 2, the second day of National Gun Violence Survivors' Week.

"Well, I give it out to remind people of the Second Amendment of the Constitution and how important it is in preserving our liberties," Clyde said.

Nevertheless, Democratic lawmakers are pressing ahead with new gun safety legislation.

In late January, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-California, who, with then-Sen. Biden pushed for the assault weapon ban in 1994 that expired 10 years later, sponsored a new bill to restore the ban. Among the 41 co-sponsors of the new bill are Maryland Sens. Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen, both Democrats.

Rep. David Cicilline, D-Rhode Island, introduced a companion version of the assault weapons ban in the House.

On Feb. 7, Cardin and Van Hollen joined 26 colleagues to re-introduce the

Keep Americans Safe Act, a bill that would outlaw high-capacity magazines.

Twenty-four senators, including Cardin and Van Hollen, have co-sponsored a separate measure raising the minimum age to purchase an assault weapon from 18 to 21.

On Feb. 1, the chairman of the House Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, Rep. Mike Thompson, D-California, and Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Pennsylvania, reintroduced the Bipartisan Background Checks Act. The bill, which would establish new background checks for firearm transfers between private parties, was initially passed in the House last session but not in the Senate.

If passed, all the bills would build on historic bipartisan gun control legislation signed into law by Biden last year.

A rare moment of accord between the two parties on gun safety, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act provides \$750 million for states to enact "red flag laws" and invest in programs to expand mental health and support services in schools.

"I am absolutely certain that the law that we passed last year, the first gun safety measure passed by Congress in 30 years, is as we speak saving lives," Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Connecticut, said earlier this month on MSNBC.

On Tuesday [Feb. 14], the Justice Department announced over \$200 million to be sent out to help administer "red-flag laws" and other crisis-related services authorized by the act. Maryland will receive \$5.12 million.

"These are not extreme steps," David Pucino, deputy chief counsel at Giffords Law Center, an organization advocating for an end to gun violence, told Capital News Service. "These are incremental, important, gun safety laws that respect the rights of law-abiding gun owners, but that simply will do important work to reduce gun violence in America to protect all people from gun violence."

COMMENTARY

Marian Wright Edelman

Founder and President Emerita,
Children's Defense Fund



ChildWatch:

“An Appeal for Human Rights”

As the Children's Defense Fund proudly reinvigorates its Black Student Leadership Network for Children for a new generation, the close of Black History Month provides one more chance to look back at earlier waves of activism that helped bring us this far on the way. When my Spelman College classmate and fellow Merrill Scholar Roslyn Pope passed away earlier this year, it prompted many people to remember her key role while serving as Spelman's student body president at a pivotal moment in 1960: drafting the “Appeal for Human Rights” that became the manifesto for Atlanta students in the Civil Rights Movement.

It is not often in a young person's—or anyone's—life when great leaders and great turning points in history converge and sweep us up in a movement, and my generation was blessed beyond measure to be in the right places at the right times to experience and help bring transforming change to the South and to America. Black students had been galvanized by the February 1, 1960 sit-down

demonstration by four Black North Carolina A&T (Agricultural and Technical) State University students at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Many Black students in Atlanta and elsewhere were equally ready to strike our blow for freedom. In March, student leaders and the student body president from each of the Black colleges making up the Atlanta University Center—Morehouse, Spelman, Clark, Morris Brown, Atlanta University, and the Interdenominational Theological Center—came together to sign “An Appeal for Human Rights,” which was published in full-page ads March 9, 1960, in the Atlanta Constitution, Atlanta Journal, and Atlanta Daily World, reprinted in The New York Times and elsewhere, and read into the Congressional Record.

The Appeal stated that “every normal human being wants to walk the earth with dignity and abhors any and all proscriptions upon him because of race or color. In essence, this is the meaning of the sit-down protests that are sweeping this nation today. We do not intend to wait placidly for those

rights which are ours already legally and morally to be meted out to us one at a time. We want to state clearly and unequivocally that we cannot tolerate, in a nation professing democracy and among people professing Christianity, the discriminatory conditions under which the Negro is living today.”

It detailed the gross inequalities and discrimination in education, jobs, housing, voting, hospitals, movies, concerts, restaurants, and law enforcement, and after calling on all the adults in authority of all races and on all leaders in civic life—ministers, teachers, and business people—“and all people of good will to exert themselves and abolish those general injustices,” we announced our “plans to use every legal and nonviolent means at our disposal to secure full citizenship rights as members of this great Democracy of ours.”

Students had carefully drafted the Appeal at the behest of our college presidents, who had gained a whiff of our ‘secret’ meetings where we were planning sit-downs like the highly publicized ones in Greensboro. While they were very mixed in their attitudes towards their students' impatience and plans to protest against segregation, my college diary noted, “There was one place where we were all together: the need for clarity and purpose.” Morehouse president Dr. Benjamin E. Mays told an Atlanta University audience years later, “Before the students did anything, we wanted to make it clear what they were striking about or grumbling about or protesting about.” The presidents not only provided the money to pay for the ads (a freedom that private, unlike public, colleges could exercise), but they also read it and were in full accord with

it. The evidence for this is plain from a slip of paper with scribbled notes concerning the Appeal that also includes comments from Dr. Mays that fell from my college diary thirty-seven years after I'd put it there. Dr. Mays' comments called it a “great document” that set forth a philosophy and made the case in a way that “nobody has said the same way.”

We students believed in the Appeal and the meaning behind it with our whole minds and bodies and souls and were prepared to go to jail and even to die for those beliefs. We followed up the appeal by sitting in on March 15, 1960 at seven white-only restaurants in Atlanta, and I and seventy-seven other students were arrested that day for our actions. As I wrote in my diary the next day: “SOMETHING WORTH LIVING AND DYING FOR!” Our series of demonstrations and boycotts eventually led to an Atlanta Compromise: seventy-five stores officially opened up 177 counters to Black citizens, and in September 1961 Atlanta became the 104th city to desegregate lunch counters after the student sit-in movement began.

Now a new generation of students is preparing to make the change we need today. As Dr. Carter Woodson, the founder of Black History Month, taught us, the purpose of knowing about those who have gone before us is always to help us to keep going in the future: “The world does not want and will never have the heroes and heroines of the past. What this age needs is an enlightened youth not to undertake the tasks like theirs but to imbibe [their] spirit . . . and answer the present call of duty.”

—February 24, 2023

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Desantis Has Learned the Wrong Lessons From History. He Wants to Make Sure No One Else Learns the Right Ones.

“Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And the process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right.”

—George Orwell, 1984

The Jacksonville ballfield where Henry “Hammerin’ Hank” Aaron played as a 19-year-old minor leaguer in 1953 now bears his name.

It's where he and two of his teammates, Felix Mantilla, and Horace Garner, endured hostile

taunts from fans. Off the field, they received death threats. When the team traveled, they couldn't stay at the same hotels where other teammates stayed or eat with them at the same restaurants.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis doesn't want the high school students who play on that field—at least the white ones—to know why. Other governors and elected officials, looking to capitalize on the racial resentment and white grievance DeSantis hopes will propel him into the White House, are following his lead. This insidious campaign is an effort not merely to warp Americans' view of our past, but to thwart the dismantling of systemic and institutional racism.

To paraphrase an old business adage, you can't

manage what you can't measure, and you can't measure what you can't see.

White students might feel “guilt” or “anguish” to learn that Aaron was forced to hide under his bed as a child when the Ku Klux Klan marched through town. Or that after he and his teammates ate in a Washington D.C. restaurant, they listened as the staff shattered every dish they'd used. Or that he received as many as 3,000 racist, threatening letters a day as he closed in on Hank Aaron's home run record.

That's why school administrators in Duval County, where Jacksonville is located, temporarily barred the children's book Henry Aaron's Dream from its libraries and classrooms. Other books kept off the shelves were Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates, Thank You, Jackie Robinson, Sonia Sotomayor (Women Who Broke the Rules Series),

Following a nationwide outcry, those books and others that broached the topics of racism and discrimination have been reinstated, and DeSantis has tried to pass off the ban as “a joke” and a publicity stunt. But DeSantis' own Stop WOKE Act, which restricts the discussion of race and diversity in schools, and the Parental Rights in Education law—better known as “Don't Say Gay”—explicitly require the reviews that forced the district to remove the books.

Among the 47 books the district returned to the publisher after review were The Life of Rosa Parks, and Separate is Never Equal.

Politicians in other states are embracing the DeSantis Stop WOKE ploy like cynical moths drawn to the flames of a burning cross.

At least 36 states have adopted or introduced laws or policies that restrict teaching about race and racism. In North Dakota teachers effectively are forbidden to acknowledge the existence of systemic racism. Researcher Jeffrey Sachs, who tracks such legislation for PEN America, said, “The law now is saying that whenever a teacher talks about racism, they may only describe it as a product of an individual's own biases or prejudices. They cannot describe it—even when the facts command them to—as something more endemic or embedded within American society.”

“It's a way essentially of preventing teachers, I think, from being honest about a lot of the uglier sides of American history and contemporary society.”

If DeSantis and his imitators get their way, our schools will produce an entire generation of Americans oblivious to the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow, to the decades of redlining that shaped our communities, trapping families within an endless cycle of poverty and violence, to the pervasive myths that deny Black patients medical treatment and pain relief.

When Americans saw the images of Elizabeth Eckford taunted by racists as she entered Little Rock Central High School, of Alabama state troopers bludgeoning John Lewis on the Edmund Pettis Bridge of police dogs attacking teenagers in Birmingham, they were galvanized into action by what they saw. DeSantis and his imitators have learned the wrong lessons from history. They want to make sure no one else learns the right ones.

—February 24, 2023

Bowie Business Innovation Center Appoints New Executive Director

Will oversee the launch of new \$3MM 8(a) Government Contracting Center of Excellence

By PRESS OFFICER

Bowie Business Innovation Center

BOWIE, Md. (Feb. 23, 2023)—The Bowie Business Innovation Center (Bowie BIC), is pleased to announce the appointment of June Lee Williams Evans as its new Executive Director.

Evans takes the helm of the Bowie BIC at a critical time in its growth, as some of its services are positioned to become a national model for business development.

Evans began leading the Bowie BIC in September, 2022 after having served for 13-years leading the Center for Minority Business Development, Center for Entrepreneurial Development, Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and the Innovation Hub at Prince George's Community College.

In these roles, Evans differentiated herself as a dynamic thought leader, innovator, and program designer in the entrepreneur support space, working with over 300 entrepreneurs and small businesses to strengthen their value proposition, build capacity to accelerate growth, and access resources to thrive in emerging markets.

“I'm excited to be here,” said Evans, it was a natural progression. “The Bowie BIC is a small organization with award-winning programs that have had a great impact, but my goal is to grow that impact by expanding

access, as well as growing the support infrastructure so that we can directly support more entrepreneurs.”

The Bowie Business Innovation Center is a pioneering non-profit business accelerator located at Bowie State University. It provides entrepreneurs and small businesses located in Prince George's County the support needed to accelerate their revenue, growth, and ability to create jobs.

Under Evans' leadership, the Bowie BIC is set to launch the 8(a) Government Contracting Center of Excellence; a new \$3 million Federal pilot program that will deliver targeted resources to strengthen HBCU's by helping socially and economically disadvantaged companies to fully participate in the U.S Small Business Administration (SBA) 8(a) Business Development Program.

The 8(a) Center of Excellence will strengthen support for diverse and inclusive entrepreneurship by expanding partnerships with HBCUs across the country to provide procurement capture strategy training, 8(a) mentorship programs, access to commercial online market intelligence tools, and access to legal expertise in government contracting.

Evans said, “I'm super proud of the opportunity to actually launch a center of excellence focused on 8(a) government contracting. It speaks to the great work that the Bowie BIC has done in their 8(a) accelerator

program, working with 8(a) businesses and helping them to really leverage the 8(a) program for growth. That's what it's all about. We are proud to expand upon the model we created for the City of Bowie and Prince George's County nationally.”

Evans holds a master's degree in Public Administration from California State University, Dominguez Hills and a bachelor's degree in Organizational Communication from Loyola Marymount University.

She lives in Bowie, MD with her husband and two daughters.

Bowie BIC is an award-winning entrepreneur support organization located at the Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community on the campus of Bowie State University, the oldest historically Black college or university (HBCU) in Maryland. Technology companies, women-owned businesses and government contractors in Prince George's County, MD access key business scale-up resources at Bowie BIC, such as customized business support, professional counseling, mentoring and competitively priced office and collaborative workspace. Bowie BIC's 8(a) Accelerator program is one of its signature business support initiatives. A Maryland nonprofit organization, Bowie BIC was the first business accelerator to locate on the campus of an HBCU in Maryland. www.boweibic.com or www.boweibic8a.com

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Can International College Students Get Social Security Benefits?

By RUSSELL GLOOR,
National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation,
the non-profit arm of the **Association of Mature American Citizens**

Dear Rusty: We have hosted international college students for years, all of whom needed to apply for a Social Security Number upon arrival in the United States. Would these students be entitled to some Social Security funds at some point? Some have worked as paid graduate assistants, but others have not worked while going to school. **Signed: Wondering**

Dear Wondering: In order to collect Social Security benefits later in life, the students you host would need to have at least 40 “quarters” of credit working and earning in the U.S. and contributing to U.S. Social Security from their “substantial” U.S. earnings. Forty is the minimum number of credits for anyone to claim Social Security retirement benefits. Foreign students who earn only some “quarters” of U.S. Social Security credit (minimum of 6) may, later in life, be able to collect U.S. benefits depending on their country of citizenship/residence. The U.S. has bilateral “totalization” agreements regarding Social Security eligibility with most of its allies and, in some cases, a foreign citizen can “totalize” their Social Security credits from both countries to become eligible for U.S. benefits. Eligibility rules, however, vary somewhat by country, and Social Security payments cannot be made to certain countries (e.g., Cuba and North Korea). Payments to those living in countries with which the U.S. has no bilateral Social Security agreement may also be restricted.

In any case, U.S. Social Security benefits would not be available to any of these students until they are at least 62 years old, and then only if they had worked and earned sufficient U.S. credits (40) to be independently eligible for U.S. benefits on their own U.S. earnings record, or they later became eligible for U.S. benefits because they worked some in the U.S. and were eligible for benefits under a “totalization” agreement between the U.S. and their home country. In any case, any U.S. Social Security benefits earned under a totalization agreement would be based only on their actual U.S. earnings (and not earnings in their home country) and, thus, would likely be very small.

I assume that most international students you host are only in the U.S. for a short time, perhaps one year. The maximum Social Security credits that can be earned each year is four, so it’s highly doubtful that the students you host for such a short time would later become eligible for U.S. Social Security benefits, unless they extend their U.S. presence and continue to work and earn in the United States long enough to later become eligible for U.S. benefits.

The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] www.amac.us is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation’s capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation (www.AMACFoundation.org) is the Association’s non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting and educating America’s Seniors. Together, we act and speak on the Association members’ behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at www.amac.us/join-amac.

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Prince George’s County Economic Development Corporation Celebrates 5th Year Anniversary of Its Premiere Business Incubator

Innovation Station Business Incubator is the Agent of Change for Many Innovative Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses

By PRESS OFFICER
PGC Economic Development Corporation

LARGO, Md. (Feb. 27, 2023)—Prince George’s County Economic Development Corporation is celebrating the 5th anniversary of Innovation Station Business Incubator (ISBI), the County’s elite business accelerator agent and entrepreneurial ecosystem hub. This dynamic business resource has a host of successful company graduates and members that continue to operate in our community and in the global marketplace.

The celebration [was] on Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2023, five years from its founding.

“Five years ago, we invited our ecosystem partners and community members to join us for the grand opening of this new collaborative co-working space,” said David Iannucci, President and CEO of Prince George’s County Economic Development Corporation. “We got off to a powerful start with two of our early co-working member companies winning the Start-Up Maryland Competition in 2018 and 2019. They, along with others, now have product sales online, internationally, and in big box retailers and so much more. It takes a village to grow a company and we have a mighty powerful village.”

Innovation Station Business Incubator is directly connected to the Prince George’s County Economic Development Corporation and its mission of growing the County’s tax base and economy by supporting job creation, business attraction, business expansion, and retention efforts. By supporting tech and creative entrepreneurs and innovators as they commercialize their product and service offerings, ISBI is fostering sustainable growth-focused technology-enabled businesses in our community.

To Date, ISBI has Facilitated:

- Special Minority Business Development Agency programs, one-on-one meetings and information sessions to our minority-owned business members.
- Grant-funded CEO Meetup Series fostering peer-to-peer learning.
- SBDC CEO Accelerator Program
- SBIR proposal training, ICorp Programs, and Maryland Business Innovation Association funding

“Innovation Station was a vital partner that helped support the early growth and success of Wave Welcome by providing my team and me affordable access to centralized space, resources, and opportunities that were critical and otherwise inaccessible during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Vennard Wright, President/CEO, WAVE Welcome, a former ISBI graduate.

ISBI tenants are connected to the extensive PGCEDC services and receive access to collaborate with other business incubators and entrepreneurial resources in the County, state, nation, and world.

“Innovation Station has been an excellent resource for information on educational programs, funding opportunities, and business coaching including access to the MD PTAC and SCORE,” said Katoshia Ford, President/CEO of FORD Management Services. “They have shared information about opportunities in Prince George’s County and throughout the Washington Metropolitan region.”

Powered by Prince George’s County Economic Development Corporation, Innovation Station Business Incubator is another reason Expansion Starts Here in Prince George’s County.

For more information about ISBI, please visit www.pgcedc.com/innovation-station

Mt. Rainier Delivers Renter Win With New Rent Stabilization Law

Renters Look to Prince George’s County Law Next

By PRESS OFFICER
CASA

MT. RAINIER, Md. (Feb. 22, 2023)—After working on the bill for years, tenants celebrated last night [Feb. 21] as the Mount Rainier City Council voted in favor of rent stabilization unanimously 5-0. The tenants, organized by immigrant advocacy powerhouse CASA, testified that rent stabilization keeps rental costs reasonable and predictable so they can raise their families in homes they can afford.

The city of Mount Rainier has passed a permanent Rent Stabilization bill capping rent increases at 3% annually, making it the first municipality in Prince George’s County to pass such a measure.

Yvette Bonilla is a Mount Rainier tenant who organized and testified in favor of the bill. “My rent increase was a whopping \$120, but as a single mom that barely left anything left to buy food for my children. Thank you. I am very grateful to the mayor and the council for listening to our concerns and demands and moving forward with this much-needed rent stabilization law.”

Bordering Washington, DC, Mt. Rainier

is a largely Black and brown city in Prince George’s County, Maryland, with 47.5% African American population and 30.9% Latine population according to U.S. Census data.

“The City of Mount Rainier is made up of over 75% renters, mostly people of color, and hardworking families who have been impacted with the continuous rent increases and at this rate they are being pushed out of our cities. This is their community. We had several months of hearings and the community spent several hours telling us how the mobility even from one bedroom apartment to a two bedroom apartment due to cost have become practically impossible and mobility from an apartment to a home in our city is a dream they are losing faith in accomplishing, how seniors and families on stable income are being pushed out of a city they have lived in and help transformed to what it is today and how families have to make hard decisions to give their kids the stability to stay in their community schools and in a city they love and call home. Increases of rent from \$100 to over \$300 a month with little to sometimes no warning continue to happen,” said Mount Rainier

Mayor Celina Benitez.

“I applaud Mayor Benitez and the city council of Mt. Rainier in their commitment to the more than 75% of city residents that are renters. We look forward to working alongside her in not just passing CB-7, but working towards a permanent solution countywide,” said Councilmember Krystal Oriadha who is one of six sponsors of the Prince George’s County legislation CB-7 that would limit rent increases for the next year to 3%.

It’s been 42 years since Maryland has passed a rent stabilization bill. With Mount Rainier joining Takoma Park in rent stabilization, this marks a changing tide for Maryland. Rent stabilization bills are moving in Montgomery and Prince George’s County Councils and have been quickly gaining traction.

“Maryland is swiftly moving in the direction that offers renters the ability to stay in their homes. This means less displacement and stronger community. Rent stabilization also incentivizes landlords to invest

See **RENTER** Page A6

Cannabis Interests Compete for Bill Changes

By GREG MORTON
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Feb. 23, 2023)—More than 80 scheduled speakers and dozens of others converged on the House Economic Matters Committee Friday for one of the biggest days on the legislative calendar: a hearing on the omnibus bill to create a legal market for cannabis in Maryland. The speakers, some representing private industry, some speaking only on behalf of their own businesses, and some simply concerned Marylanders, came mostly to propose amendments.

The bill, a massive 88-page piece of legislation, creates a framework for the legal sale of cannabis in Maryland after voters approved legalization in November’s election. Lawmakers have made it a priority to create a regulatory structure to avoid an unregulated market when cannabis is officially legalized on July 1.

Dozens stood at attention (indeed, many had no choice as the room had run out of seats) as committee Chairman C.T. Wilson, D-Charles, prepared to kick off the hearing with testimony in favor of the bill that he co-sponsored and his committee was preparing to take up.

“As I’ve said multiple times I’m not

here to create a cash cow for the state or just a marketplace for intoxicants. I’m here to make sure we can stop young people from being arrested and dying,” said Wilson.

Though most of the testimony on the bill skewed favorable about the bill’s overall goals—particularly in terms of fostering social equity in the cannabis industry—most were there to advocate for changes to the bill.

Threat to the hemp industry

Many of the speakers, including several who provided emotional testimony, came from the hemp industry, which sees the bill as an existential threat.

“As this bill is written, it will literally translate to at least 100 families losing the ability to produce income,” said Derek Spruill, owner of Cherry Blossom Hemp in Silver Spring.

Hemp businesses and hemp representatives worry that the bill would force many hemp-based products from shelves because of limits it would impose on THC products that could be sold without a recreational license.

“Just thinking about the tincture bottles (of CBD)...they’re absolutely going to have more than that cap in milligrams,

but they’re going to be well below the federally legal 0.3% (of THC per serving),” said Elly Cowan of Compass Advocacy group, a firm that represents several members of the hemp industry. “What you have there is an issue because you’re translating something that was by volume before...into a weight,” she added.

Wilson has remained unconvinced by the industry’s arguments.

“Let’s be clear...the people growing hemp, this does not affect them,” said Wilson after Wednesday’s legislative session. “The concern is that the individuals that are testifying are selling a derivative of hemp that intoxicates people.”

Cowan and other hemp industry representatives have pushed back on this accusation and urged Wilson and other committee members to reconsider.

There are “bad actors” in any unregulated industry, Cowan said, but her clients self-regulate, pay for their own testing, abide by current law and try to assure children do not have access to their products.

The right to organize

Union representatives, including speakers from United Food and Com-

mercial Workers, a labor union that represents cannabis workers in Maryland, proposed an amendment to ensure cannabis workers are covered by what is called a “peace agreement” by making adherence to such agreements a condition of obtaining a license.

Peace agreements, which were also conditions of casino licensing in Prince George’s County, are meant to create more favorable conditions for unionization and to prevent some of the tactics businesses have traditionally used to stymie labor organizing.

“If the workers decided to organize, the employer would have to remain completely neutral, they wouldn’t be able to sway or influence or retaliate against their employees,” said Kayla Mock, a representative of UFCW Local 400, which represents cannabis workers in Maryland. “It would create a truly free and fair process for workers to organize,” she added.

Wilson, who notes that labor unions are not precluded from organizing under existing federal law, seemed apprehensive about including a peace order mandate in the final bill.

“The government doesn’t have to get involved in every aspect of somebody’s life,” said Wilson. “Federally, you can’t stop somebody (from unionizing).”

Union representatives, while acknowl-

See **COMPETE** Page A6

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Renter from A5

in the property because they must show significant investment in order to raise the rent above the city limit," closed Jorge Benitez-Perez, CASA lead organizer.

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Compete from A5

have the option to convert their licenses and be among the first to access the legal market.

However, to curb a potential first mover advantage, the bill also imposes strict limits on the number of dispensaries a medical license owner can operate, a concern for some of the more ambitious and enterprising medical operators.

"I'm really looking at opportunities to scale my business, and to be able to partner with other like-minded entrepreneurs to help them avoid some of the mistakes that I made," said Hope Wiseman, owner of the Prince George's County dispensary Mary & Main, who testified in favor of amendments that would allow current medical operators to open more locations and to foster increased cooperation with the new market entrants who will receive licenses through the bill.

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