

# The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY SINCE 1932

Vol. 91, No. 17 April 27 — May 3, 2023

Prince George's County, Maryland

Newspaper of Record

Phone: 301-627-0900

25 cents

## Prince George's County Native Reenlists at Naval Support Activity (NSA) Souda Bay



U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 2ND CLASS DELANEY S. JENSEN/RELEASED

**NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY SOUDA BAY, Greece (April 14, 2023)—Master-at-Arms 3rd Class Camryn Erby, a native of Prince George's County, Md., assigned to Naval Support Activity (NSA) Souda Bay, Greece, recites the Oath of Enlistment during her reenlistment ceremony on April 14, 2023. NSA Souda Bay is an operational ashore installation which enables and supports U.S., Allied, Coalition, and Partner nation forces to preserve security and stability in the European, African, and Central Command areas of responsibility.**

## County Council Passes Legislation Establishing Rental Assistance Program and Rental Assistance Fund

*Measure Builds on 'People's Council' Agenda and its Core Tenet of Supporting Working Families*

By ANGELA ROUSON

Prince George's County Council Media

The Prince George's County Council, during session on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, voted unanimously to enact CB-023-2023, legislation establishing the Prince George's County Rental Assistance Program and Rental Assistance Fund.

Under the measure, financial rental assistance will be provided to Prince George's County residents based on Area Median Income (AMI) level and rent increases, with monthly disbursements, up to 6 months provided over a two-year period. Eligibility requirements include renters whose household income is equal to or less than 60% of the AMI for the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area as established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

District 7 Council Member Krystal Oriadha, author of CB-023-2023, thanked her colleagues for their unanimous approval of the bill, and reaffirmed her commitment to

support working families, a core tenet of "The People's Agenda."

"We passed the rent stabilization bill, but there were so many people already impacted. We knew that the money from the pandemic was ending, and the voucher program in the County has been closed for years. The question was what people were going to do and how would we close that gap," adding, "This Rental Assistance Program is part of the continued conversation we must have around affordable housing. For too long we have focused on building and development, but not how to maintain affordable housing that currently exists or how to meet the needs of people who are trying the best they can. They are working every single day and can't survive."

Council Member Oriadha also challenged County resi-

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## Library Accepting Applications for 2023 Social Justice Camps for Teens

By NICHOLAS BROWN

Prince George's County Memorial Library System

LARGO, Md. (April 19, 2023)—The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) engages teens and youth through a wide variety of programs, service projects, and leadership development programs, including year-round Teen Action Groups, Summer Prince George's, County Executive Angela Alsobrooks' Summer Passport programs. Summer 2023 will feature the second annual PGCMLS Social Justice Camps for teens. This year's camps will be held at the Greenbelt Branch Library (July 10-14) and Spauldings Branch Library (July 24-28) from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day (with early arrival options, up to 9 a.m.). They are offered at no cost to participants through generous support from the PGCMLS Foundation and Pull Up Fund.

Teens interested in participating in the 2023 Social Justice Camps should apply here by Sunday, May 7.

Due to high demand, applications will be reviewed by a committee composed of PGCMLS teen services staff and decisions will be sent on Friday, May 12.

"The Library is pleased to make this transformational summer educational program available to local teens for a second year," said Isaiah West, Teen Services Specialist. "Last year's cohort of participants informed the development of the 2023 curriculum and we are excited to contribute to the development of the next generation of local leaders."

Launched in 2022, the Library's Social Justice Camps provide Prince George's County youth with engaging opportunities to develop skills such as leadership, research, time management, problem-solving, social entrepreneurship, ethics, community organizing, and the history of social justice movements in the United States. Modules are led by PGCMLS staff, local social justice practitioners, facilitators from partner organizations, and Pull Up Fund peer mentor interns and fellows who are alumni of the Social Justice Camps.



## Maryland's Stricter Gun Laws Await Moore's Signature

By JENNIFER GABLE  
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 20, 2023)—Going to pick up your child from school with your gun in your handbag, or going to the bar for a drink with your handgun in your concealed holster—these are both things that will likely be prohibited this October, even with a concealed carry permit, after the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation tightening gun laws, despite heavy pushback from Republican lawmakers.

Three important pieces of gun legislation passed in the final

days of the legislative session, one in the final hours, and not without heated debate. None have yet been signed by the governor.

The total package, particularly SB 1, which places limits on where a gun can be carried, "creates among the strongest gun violence prevention legislation in the country," said the bill's sponsor, Sen. Jeff Waldstreicher, D-Montgomery. "It is also without question, the strongest gun violence prevention legislation that we've had since 2013."

In 2013, the controversial Firearm Safety Act was signed into law, banning assault-style

weapons and placing limits on magazines larger than 10 rounds.

SB 1, The Gun Safety Act of 2023, passed in the House on April 10, the final day of Maryland's 90-day session.

The bill, originally sponsored by Waldstreicher and then-Sen. Susan Lee, D-Montgomery, would prohibit individuals from knowingly wearing, carrying or transporting a firearm onto private property without consent and prohibit guns in specified areas such as health care centers, schools, polling places, stadiums and places where alcohol is served, even with a concealed carry permit.

The bill was prompted by the Supreme Court's decision in the *New York State Rifle and Pistol Association v. Bruen* case last June, which held that lawful individuals do not need to prove they have a "good and substantial reason" to carry a concealed weapon, and that the "proper cause to carry" requirement used to obtain a permit in numerous states, including Maryland, was unconstitutional. Democratic lawmakers said this decision left a void in necessary gun control laws.

"We have a gun problem in this country, and for the Supreme Court to rule as they did in Bruen, to go from a "may issue" to a "shall issue," I think it was a very dangerous holding," said Attorney General Anthony Brown in an interview with Cap-

ital News Service. Brown said he expects Maryland and other states' gun laws to continue to be challenged in court.

"The Bruen case forced our hand," said Waldstreicher, in that the legislature had to act to fill the void in the law caused by the decision.

Gun violence continues to be a growing problem. From Jan. 1, 2023, to April 19, 2023, there have been 165 mass shootings in the United States, including six mass shootings in Maryland, according to the Gun Violence Archive. A mass shooting is defined as at least four people shot, either injured or killed, excluding the shooter, according to the archive.

"My concerns expand or extend beyond Maryland. It extends to all 50 states and the ter-

ritories in the United States and the District of Columbia," said Brown. "It used to be where we sort of kept track of the different types of venues where you had these mass shootings, it started in schools, and then movie theaters, and then nightclubs, and then synagogues and churches, now it's almost becoming easier to identify places that haven't been."

Democratic lawmakers say SB 1 will aid in curbing the growing gun violence epidemic if signed into law as expected.

However, the bill has raised eyebrows over its constitutionality, with gun rights activist groups saying it inhibits the Second Amendment rights of law-

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**ChildWatch:**  
**It's Always the Guns**

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**WSSC Water Commissioners Approve Temporary Water Bill Amnesty Program to Assist Customers**

During June, WSSC Water will temporarily suspend residential water service turnoffs to encourage program participation.

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# TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

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

### Rose Hoffman, former Morningsider, dies at 101

Rose (Bookhultz) Hoffman, longtime resident of Morgan Road in Morningside, died January 11 at the home she shared with her son Keith in Owings. She was an amazing 101.

She was born at Presbyterian Hospital in Washington, daughter of Neil and Helen Goen. She grew up in a house which—it turns out—was on land Andrews needed for the Base. Her father had planted several oak trees on that land. The trees are still there, but the Goen family moved to Upper Marlboro so Rose could graduate from Marlboro High School.

After graduation, she married her high school sweetheart, Floyd Bookhultz. Sometime in the 1940s the couple moved to 518 Morgan Road and are listed on the 1950 Second Anniversary Voting List published in Charles Kiker's History of Morningside.

Rose worked as a proof-reader for The Washington Star, a daily afternoon newspaper published between 1852 and 1981. She was later with OSI (Open Systems Interconnection) in Suitland.

In 1963, Rose and Floyd divorced. Rose later married John Hoffman and moved with him to a log cabin in Croom.

Her first husband, Floyd Bookhultz, died in 1995.

Rose is survived by her children, Ricky, Bruce, Donna, Mark and Keith, four grandchildren, several great-grandkids, and her sister Barbara Kritzer, of Colorado.

Rose's son Keith Bookhultz called me with the news of his mom's death. At the end of our discussion, I asked him for more information. He said, "My mom loved Morningside."

### Town of Morningside

The Morningside election is coming up May 1, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Municipal Center. The election is for two Council Seats. As of last week, the only candidates were incumbents Bradley Wade and Todd Mullins, both hoping to retain their current jobs on the Council. Todd has his sign out, reminding Morningsiders to "Re-Elect Todd Mullins!"

Upcoming Morningside meetings are the Work Session May 9 and the Town Meeting May 16, both beginning at 7 p.m. Info 301-736-2300.

And, sad to say, GI Liquors is still boarded up, following its invasion by a stolen car that plowed into its front. The three men involved are still at large.

### Neighbors & other good people

From a Reader: "My name is Mary, and I am a regular reader of your column in The Enquirer-Gazette. I read your article about Suitland Bowl and wanted to share that I bowl on the Wednesday Senior League. I am about to finish my second year with the league which has been great fun. We meet every Wednesday, August through May, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and it really is a lot of fun."

Wendy Meehan, who used to live on Woodland Road in Morningside, is in town visiting her old neighborhood. She currently lives in Tunkhannock, Pa. I looked it up: it's 51 miles NE of Wilkes-Barre.

### Changing landscape

Prince George's County is expanding its curbside composting program, PGC Composts, to 85,000 households, with plans for all residents receiving county trash and recycling services to get a green-wheeled cart by the end of the year.

The Navy unveiled five eye-catching design ideas last week for its new national museum on M Street near the Navy Yard in Southeast Washington. Among design ideas are a building with wings that look like sails, and one with a submarine conning tower in a pool of water out front.

When my kids—especially Mike, John and Brian—went sightseeing in Washington, they always hoped we'd go to the Navy Yard. All sorts of military stuff to look through, to fight with, to climb on! I'm sad to see that 60-year-old facility will go the way all the nice old buildings in DC go. But I'm sure the new museum will be awesome—even though my boys are too old to climb up the cannon.

A home at 6008 Maria Ave. in Skyline, has sold for \$415,000.

### Things to do, places to go: Legacy of Black-Owned Airline

"The Legacy of Herbert H. Jones, Jr. From Tuskegee Airmen to the First Black-Owned Charter Airline" is the theme of an upcoming panel—including the sons of Herbert Jones Jr.—which will discuss Jones Jr.'s involvement in the nation's first successful Black-owned airport. The panel will be held at the College Park Aviation Museum on Thursday, May 11. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Special tour, 6:40. Panel begins, 7:15. Free. Info: 301-864-6029.

### Camp Springs Civic Association

The next general meeting of the Camp Springs Civic Association is May 11, 7 p.m., at Central Baptist Church of Camp Springs, 5600 Old Branch Avenue. For more information, call Betty at 301-806-3565.

Free Shred Day, Saturday, April 29, 9 a.m. to noon, in the parking lot of Central Baptist Church, 5600 Old Branch Avenue. Up to two bags or boxes can be shredded.

### Netflix is saying goodbye...

...To DVD-by-mail. I've subscribed since 2011. My first "by-mail" was "The Great Gatsby," followed by "Moneyball" and "Cinema Paradiso." I prefer watching the actual DVD. Now, where will I get the classics?

Netflix plans to mail me my final disc on Sept. 29. Right now, I have "The Farewell" waiting for me to watch. I'll hurry to do so, so I can fast order more.

### Milestones

Happy Birthday to Lael McCune and Morningside Councilman Todd Mullins, April 30;

Kathryn Deaver, May 1; Ann Lacey, Ernestine Taylor Wood, Dante Ross Jr. and Janet Booth Kaye, May 2; my daughter Sheila (McHale) Mudd and Lori Williams, May 3; India Goodall and Ruby Haines, May 4; Jim Henderson, May 5; and Gretchen Ennis, May 6.

Happy Anniversary to Ben & Debbie Rose who wed 51 years ago, May 6, 1972.

*Happy May Day*

## Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

### BADEN COMMUNITY CENTER

Baden Community Center features picnic areas, picnic tables, picnic shelters, basketball court, gym, baseball/softball diamond, horseshoe pits, playground, soccer, soccer field, fitness room and healthy vending.

Programs are licensed before and after school kids' care programs, line dancing, TKA Karate, Xtreme Teens Programs, Yoga programs, summer playground. Annual special events are Baby Bunnies Spring Fling, Breakfast with Santa, celebrate Baden Day and Trunk or Treat.

Contact us: Baden Community Center, badence@pgparks.com. Physical Address: 13601 Baden-Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Phone: 301-888-1500. Maryland Relay 7-1-1 for customers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability. The hours are Monday to Thursday 2-9 p.m., Friday 2-7 p.m., 7-10 p.m., (Teens), Saturday 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Sunday closed.

### FIRST ANNUAL MD CANNABIS REFORM SUMMIT

Come hear from the architects of the MD Cannabis Reform Bills, and the Executive Director of MMCC, who will implement the new laws May 20 by Carrington & Associates, LLC. Carrington Associates LLC is a full-service public affairs, business development and government relations firm. They have been in business here in Maryland since 2006. The firm has worked with every level of government; federal, state, and local as well as representing trade associations, non-profits, and the private sector. Their firm is well known in political circles across the state.

This Summit will bring together the architects of the bills working their way through Annapolis that will set the framework for a dual medical and adult use cannabis industry. The bills are very complex with lots of moving parts. Come hear from the people who wrote the bills, and those that will be tasked with their implementation. This is a must-attend Summit, but seating is very limited due to space considerations. The event will sell out, please get your tickets early. Ticket sales end May 5th. Sponsorships are still available but will close out on May 5. Tickets are only \$135. Mobile eTicket. The event is 7 hours 30 minutes. Get your ticket at Eventbrite + ticketfly @2023 Eventbrite. No refunds.

The Summit will be held at Bowie State University, 14000 Jericho Park Road, Bowie, Maryland from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Agenda: 8:30 a.m.-9:55 a.m. Registration, Breakfast, Networking, Exhibit Hall Open. Get your MD Cannabis Reform Summit materials, program, enjoy a continental breakfast as you network and visit our exhibitors.

### BIKE BLESSING

Save the date Sunday May 21, 2023, and join us at 11 a.m.

Bring a fellow-riding buddy. Come grow with us. There will be a special bike blessing at Nottingham Myers United Methodist Church, 15601 Brooks Church Road, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772. Rev. Shemaiah Strickland, Pastor. Contact Minister Cary Montgomery at 240-381-5914.

### AN ALUMNI SOCIAL AFFAIR BRUNCH

Bowie State University National Alumni Association Prince George's County Chapter Annual Benefit Alumni Social Affair Brunch featuring "THE SKY SHOW" will be Sunday, June 25, 2023, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Martin's Crosswinds. The address is 7400 Greenway Center Drive, Greenbelt, Maryland 20770. Casual Attire/DJ/Dancing/Cash Bar/Vendors. Donation: \$60.00 \*4.75 Tax Deductible Contribution. Make checks payable to: Prince George's County Chapter/BSUNAA. Mail to Rose Coleman, 3703 Ivy Hill Ln, Bowie, Maryland 20715. For more information: Addie Martin 301-868-6081, Rose Coleman 301-518-4861. Proceeds support Prince George's County Chapter Scholarship Fund.

### READY SET SUMMER

Summer Camp Registration is open. With summer around the corner, do not wait to plan an awesome experience for your child. Registration is simple and flexible, with over six hundred sessions, you will surely find a camp they will enjoy. This summer let your child's imagination come to life as chef, Olympian gymnast, or even a robotics engineer.

We offer assorted camps that fit the imagination of your child, and your needs. To register for a summer camp, clubhouse, playground, teen center, or summer STEM program, please visit Parks Direct and search for the keyword of each program.

Disability Modifications/Supports: Department of Parks and Recreation encourages and supports the participation of individuals with disabilities. Register at least a minimum of two weeks in advance of the program start date to request and receive disability accommodation. For information about disability supports and modifications contact program access at program.access@pgparks.com or call 301-249-7200.

### JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

CGE- THE- CAMP-CRC- SITTING PRETTY ENT PRESENTS DMV'S LARGEST Juneteenth celebration, a cultural musical event Sunday, June 18, 2023, 7 p.m.-1 a.m. Live performances by DCVYBE w/special guest Frank "Scooby" Sirius. The Crank Crusaders featuring Raheem Devaughn, Black Alley and Top5. An evening celebration at the MGM Grand Ballroom, 101 MGM National Avenue, Oxon hill, Maryland 20745. The event is for six hours. Mobile eTicket. Eventbrite + ticketfly \$60-\$100. No refunds.

## Around the County

### National Second Chance Month

National Second Chance Month is recognized during the month of April. National Second Chance Month brings awareness to the importance of supporting the safe and successful reentry of individuals returning to the community following incarceration. The month of April highlights the role individuals, communities, and organizations play in providing meaningful opportunities for returning citizens.

In recognition of National Second Chance Month, on **Saturday, April 29**, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Prince George's Community College, the Returning Citizens Affairs Division the first annual Returning Citizens Summit. The event will feature a series of conversations and workshops on the transition from incarceration to home. Experts will share viewpoints, experiences, and resources focusing on reducing recidivism and improving public safety. Advance registration is required. To register, please visit Returning Citizens Summit Registration on Eventbrite.

### Tinker Creek Stream Restoration Project Recognized at BUBBA Awards

*The large-scale restoration project is one of the largest in Maryland*

LARGO, Md. (April 19, 2023)—The Department of Environment (DoE) Stormwater Management Division's (SMD) Tinkers Creek Stream Restoration Project was recently recognized as a second-place finalist for the Chesapeake Stormwater Network's (CSN) Best Urban BMP in the Bay Award contest (BUBBAs), in the Best Stream Restoration category. This prestigious honor recognizes the best three urban stormwater practices and programs in a category while highlighting local innovators who use creative approaches to protect and restore local watersheds.

"We are thrilled to be recognized by our peers for the Tinkers Creek Stream Restoration project. This successful project has helped to stabilize erosion in this area and improve water quality in the local watersheds and the Chesapeake Bay," said Andrea Crooms, Director of DoE.

CSN recognized the project's innovative approach to watershed-scale restoration in a highly urbanized and impervious setting. Its diverse design approach considered varied flow regimes and required careful coordination for successful project implementation.

The SMD Tinkers Creek Stream Restoration Project partnered with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) to implement a comprehensive project on private and public land, as well as GreenVest, LLC and Petro Design Build Group under the GV-Petro Joint Venture. The joint venture was formed to leverage each company's unique skillset and provide greater opportunities for Prince George's County-based and County located businesses to participate in the restoration project.

Construction of the Tinkers Creek Stream Restoration Project began in November 2019 and was completed in September 2021. Tinkers Creek is located on a five-mile stretch of the stream valley, from Old Branch Avenue to Temple Hill Roads, in Clinton and Temple Hills, Maryland. It is one of the most comprehensive stream projects in Prince George's County and one of the largest in Maryland, at over 40,000 feet.

The project helps DoE comply with its total maximum daily load (TMDL) and Impervious Acres Treated requirements as part of its Municipal Separate Storm Sewer (MS4) Permit obligations. Tinkers Creek has entered its five-year monitoring period, which will ensure the stream restoration is stable and functioning as designed.

For more information about the BUBBA Awards, visit <https://chesapeakestormwater.net/about-the-bubbas/>.

—Judith Hall, Prince George's County Department of the Environment

### Swim Camp Scholarships Offered by Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County

RIVERDALE, Md. (April 21, 2023)—The M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County is proud to offer the Aquatics for All Summer Swim Camp Scholarship this year. The scholarship will cover the cost of a designated swim camp session at a department facility for contest winners (does not cover before or after care).

Aquatics for All is a one-time scholarship for Prince George's County residents to increase access to swim camps and is available for first-time swim camp participants only. Applicants must complete the Aquatics For All Swim Camp Scholarship Application including completing an illustration for a Swim Camp (ages 6-12) or an essay for Junior Lifeguarding Camp (ages 11-14) by the designated deadline (May 5, 2023).

Applicants ages 6-12 interested in the camps listed below must submit with their application a drawing illustrating "Why I want to learn to swim and attend camp". With the picture, please include 1-2 sentences describing the illustration. During the application process, you will be able to select your top 2 choices of the camps listed below to attend if selected as a scholarship recipient:

- Dunk'n Dive Sports Camp at Allentown Splash, Tennis & Fitness Park, July 24-August 4, 2023
  - Dunk'n Dive Sports Camp at Allentown Splash, Tennis & Fitness Park, August 7-August 18, 2023
  - Swim and Fitness Camp at Fairland Sports and Aquatics Complex, July 24-August 4, 2023
  - Swim Camp at Ellen E. Linson Splash Park, July 10-21, 2022
- Applicants ages 11 to 14 interested in the Junior Lifeguard Camp must submit with their application an essay answering "Why I am interested in being a Lifeguard" (250 words or less).
- Junior Lifeguard Camp at Allentown Splash, Tennis & Fitness Park (Ages 11-14 Only) Essay Required, June 26-30, 2023

### Eligibility

- Must be a Prince George's County Resident
  - Must be a first-time swim camp participant for swim camp scholarship (not including Junior Lifeguard Camp)
  - Scholarship is only available for camps and sessions listed on the application
  - Must be at least 6 years old at the start of camp and no older than 12 by the end of the camp session for Swim Camps
  - Must be at least 11 years old at the start of camp and no older than 14 by the end of the camp session for Junior Lifeguard Camp
- To apply for either camp, visit <https://www.mncppc.org/FormCenter/Sports-17/Aquatics-for-All-Swim-Camp-Scholarship-2-388>.

# COMMUNITY

## We Are Artistic to Host Card Making Events for Cards for Hospitalized Kids

By PRESS OFFICER  
Cards for Hospitalized Kids

(April 17, 2023)—In May, June, and July We Are Artistic, an organization for young artists, will be hosting card-making events to make cards for Cards for Hospitalized Kids, a charitable organization that provides handmade cards to children who are hospitalized.

We Are Artistic, has scheduled three different dates for card-making events at the Upper Marlboro MD Library located at 14730 Main St., Upper Marlboro, MD 20772. The events will take place on **May 20, June 17, and July 15** from 1–3 p.m. The card-making events will be for all ages and everyone is welcome! If anyone wants to sign up to volunteer at events, they can do so at <https://forms.gle/vsi8Q4USdtKdY7W38>

### About We Are Artistic

We Are Artistic is a community for artists, artistic people, and people who appreciate art. They support artists in a variety of ways, including Artist Support Posts, Features, Collabs, and more. We Are Artistic also helps artists connect with one another by making it simple for them to do so, such as through our Discord. We Are Artistic also hosts in-person events around the DMV and virtual events!

### About Cards for Hospitalized Kids

Cards for Hospitalized Kids (CFHK) is an internationally recognized charitable organization based in Chicago that distributes uplifting, handmade cards to Children's Hospitals and Ronald McDonald Houses (RMH) across the country to spread strength &

smiles to hospitalized kids. Founded in 2011 by Jen Rubino, whose own experiences as a "hospitalized kid", undergoing 20+ surgeries, inspired her to found CFHK to help others. She was only 16 years old when she first started CFHK and worked to build CFHK from the ground up into the national charity it is today. Each card is handmade and unique—no two are alike, just like each of the kids who will receive one. Over 500,000 cards have been distributed by CFHK since its inception and this is just the beginning!

We Are Artistic will use CFHK's guidelines to make cards and will send them to CFHK for distribution to hospitals.

To learn more about CFHK, visit [www.CardsForHospitalizedKids.com](http://www.CardsForHospitalizedKids.com).

## Experience the World Without Leaving Your Home

Hosts needed for international high school students throughout Metro Region

By PRESS OFFICER  
AFS-USA

NEW YORK (April 12, 2023)—In an age when international relations are often tenuous, AFS-USA, a leader in international high school student exchange for 75 years, is focused on providing opportunities for intercultural exchange that can help lead to a more just and peaceful world.

AFS-USA invites families and individuals from the Washington, D.C. Metro Region to become hosts for international students for 12 weeks, a semester, or an academic year.

Hosting provides individuals, families, high schools, and communities with opportunities to

learn about the unfamiliar by exploring a diversity of cultures, all while sharing their own culture with a young person from a different country.

Exchange students represent nearly 80 countries and cultures, including Kenya, Ukraine, Egypt, Turkey, Italy, Germany, Chile, Thailand and more. They are among the more than 1,000 international AFS students hosted in the U.S. each year.

AFS-USA host families represent a broad range of U.S. cultures, including individuals and families of multi-national/ethnic backgrounds, those with and without children, those who are members of the LGBTQ+ community, and more.

Once students and host families are matched, they receive ongoing support from trained staff and are welcomed into their local chapter of dedicated volunteers, alumni, and fellow host families. One thing that sets AFS-USA apart is the network of almost 3,000 volunteers throughout the U.S. Many volunteers have hosted international exchange students or studied abroad with AFS and will support families, students, and schools in gaining the most from their hosting experience.

Hosts are expected to provide their student(s) with a bed, meals and support and encouragement throughout their program. Students arrive with their own spending money and medical coverage.

AFS-USA is the largest organization within the international AFS network that includes 54 partners around the globe.

### For More Information

Contact 1-800-AFS-INFO or visit [www.afsusa.org](http://www.afsusa.org).

## Marietta House Museum's Lunchtime Lecture Series presents One Duckett Family: Many Different Journeys

By STACEY HAWKINS  
Marietta House Museum

On **Wednesday, May 3**, 12 noon–1 p.m. Marietta House Museum will present a Lunchtime Lecture featuring histories of Amelia and Jacob Duckett's family. Their family was enslaved at Marietta, a tobacco plantation, in what is today, Glenn Dale, Prince George's County, Maryland. Amelia and Jacob's nine children all knew the travails and hardships of enslavement. Please join House Museum director Julie Rose as she shares multiple histories of the Duckett family members—stories of self-liberation, Underground Railroad, marriage, war, and life in

Washington, D.C. post -Emancipation.

Guests are welcome to bring their lunch and enjoy conversation and new friends. Tours of the house are optional following the lecture.

Self-guided walking tour packets are also available in kiosks by the parking lot.

This is a free lecture at Marietta House Museum. For more information and to register please call 301-464-5291 or email [mariettahouse@pgparks.com](mailto:mariettahouse@pgparks.com). We look forward to seeing you.

Marietta House Museum is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD. 20769, and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

## Prince George's County Offers FREE Drive-Up Cat and Dog Vaccination Clinic

The event will be held Monday, May 8, 2023; Registration is encouraged

By JUDITH HALL  
Prince George's County Department of the Environment

LARGO, Md. (April 17, 2023)—The Department of the Environment (DoE) Animal Services Division (ASD), in partnership with the Prince George's County Health Department, is sponsoring a FREE Drive-Up Dog and Cat Vaccination Clinic on **Monday, May 8, 2023**, at the Wayne K. Curry Sports and Learning Complex, 8001 Sheriff Road, Landover, MD. The FREE vaccination clinic will begin at 10 a.m. and continue until 3 p.m. while supplies last. The event will be held rain or shine.

The Drive-Up Cat and Dog Vaccination Clinic will provide rabies and distemper vaccinations and micro-chipping for Prince George's County residents. Free pet licenses will also be offered. Proof of residency is required.

"We are excited to partner with the Health Department to offer drive-up free rabies and

distemper vaccinations to County residents for their pets. The free services will help provide some financial relief to those owners who want to ensure their pets stay healthy and happy," said DoE Director Andrea Crooms.

In addition to showing proof of residency to receive the free services:

- Pets must be at least four (4) months old to receive a rabies vaccine. Rabies vaccines are good for one (1) year unless a prior rabies certificate is provided at service.
- Pets must be on a leash or carrier and always under control.
- Be prepared to stay in your vehicle for an extended period.
- Animals will be removed from your vehicle to receive vaccination(s) when it is your turn. Visit [pgcpetvaccineclinicmay2023.eventbrite.com](https://pgcpetvaccineclinicmay2023.eventbrite.com) to register for the free services. For more information, contact Marilyn Perez at (301) 780-7200.

## Local Charities Partner to Provide Feminine Hygiene Kits for Girls

By PRESS OFFICER  
Valuable Blessings, Inc.

Three charitable organizations based in Prince George's County, are partnering on an impactful new project—creating feminine hygiene kits for local girls. These organizations—Beta Iota Iota Beta, Valuable Blessings, Inc., and The Blessings Project, are currently collecting donations for the Prepared & Positive... Period! campaign. Nominations for schools that are interested in receiving the kits are also being accepted.

### Why It Matters

- In the United States, the average age for a girl to get her first period is 12, according to information from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health. However, a girl may start her period between ages 8 and 15.
- Approximately 500 million people in the United States lack access to menstrual products and hygiene facilities, according to a February 2022 article in the Journal of Global Health Reports.
- Access to affordable and safe feminine hygiene products and facilities to manage menstruation decreases the risk of infections, according to The World Bank.
- Through this partnership, we hope to help girls in the D.C.-metropolitan area feel prepared, confident, and comfortable as they transition to adolescence!

### How to Donate

The community can help support this project by donating needed supplies or through financial gifts. To donate supplies, see the project's Amazon Wish List. Monetary donations are accepted through PayPal at [info@beautyisinthebooks.org](mailto:info@beautyisinthebooks.org)

and through Cash App at [Sbeautyisinthebooks3](https://www.cash.app/s/beautyisinthebooks3).

### Background Information

Beta Iota Iota Beta (BIIB) is a nonprofit community sorority founded in 2021 by then 11-year-old Cailyn Davis. At age 7, Davis formed the Beauty is in the Books girls book club. A few years later, however, Davis desired to have a larger impact in her community, and founded BIIB to create a safe and empowering environment for girls locally and globally. Since its founding, BIIB has held several fundraising efforts and charitable events, including a sneaker ball, roller skating event, and partnering with The Blessings Project to collect outdoor winter clothing for those in need.

Valuable Blessings, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides educational, spiritual empowerment, non-violence, and entrepreneurial/leadership programs for children and adults. Valencia Clipper-Davis, Valuable Blessings, Inc.'s founder and CEO, started the non-profit organization following the death of her younger brother in 2009. Her brother, Dwight, was murdered by a 17-year-old young man. After her brother's passing, Clipper-Davis decided she wanted to be part of the solution and committed to providing positive outlets and programs for local youth to keep them on the right path. The organization offers free tutoring for students, assistance for senior citizens, anti-bullying programs, annual community events, and much more.

The Blessings Project is an initiative within Valuable Blessings, Inc., focused on partnering with organizations in the community to provide financial assistance to those in need. In the past, The Blessings Project has collected donations for families displaced due to fires and provided assistance to help high school seniors with prom expenses.

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

The Mayor and Council of the Town of Bladensburg proposes to increase real property taxes.

1. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2023, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by 2.8%, from \$549,258,390 to \$564,839,567.
2. If the Town of Bladensburg maintains the current tax rate of \$0.74 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by 2.8% resulting in \$115,301 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 \$0.7196, the constant yield tax rate.
4. The Town of Bladensburg 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 \$0.74 per \$100 of assessment. This tax rate is 2.8% higher than the constant yield tax rate and will generate \$115,301 in additional property tax revenues.

A public hearing on the proposed real property tax rate increase will be held virtually at 7:00 PM on May 8, 2023. The meeting will be streamed live on The Town of Bladensburg's Facebook page, YouTube, and via Zoom.

To join the video conference via Zoom, please access the following link:  
<https://zoom.us/j/97463669358?pwd=QkNNKzRDNFJUK3pWL0ZGc0E0NDdGZz09>

Enter the Meeting ID: [974 6366 9358](https://zoom.us/j/97463669358) and Passcode: [930725](https://zoom.us/j/97463669358)

To join with audio only, dial +1-301-715-8592 and enter meeting ID number 97463669358#

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 Mayor and Council for three (3) minutes. Public Comment may also be emailed to [clerk@bladensburgmd.gov](mailto:clerk@bladensburgmd.gov). All electronic comments must be submitted by 5 PM on May 8, 2023. Written comments can also be submitted to The Town of Bladensburg, 4229 Edmonston Rd., Bladensburg, MD 20710 and must be received by 5 PM on May 8, 2023. Comments received will be read into the record during the public comment portion of the meeting. Persons with questions regarding this hearing may call Bladensburg Town Hall at 301-927-7048 for further information.

### Rental from A1

dents to hold their elected officials—the County Council and the County Executive—responsible for the allocation of their tax dollars as the Council seeks a budget amendment to fund the measure.

"This can't be the end of the conversation. Passing this bill is just the first step. The next step is making sure that a budget amendment

for this bill is passed. It is so important that our budget aligns with our morals. Hold everyone on this dais accountable to make sure your tax dollars work for you. That is the agenda of this 'People's Council,' that you can feel the tax dollars flooding through the community in a way that truly impacts you."

CB-023-2023 will take effect 45 calendar days after it becomes law.

# COMMENTARY

## Marian Wright Edelman

Founder and President Emerita,  
Children's Defense Fund



### ChildWatch:

## It's Always the Guns

Gun violence takes a relentless toll in our nation. Every day more than 300 people are killed or injured by guns in the United States, and most of their stories never make the news at all. But this was yet another week when multiple gun tragedies made national headlines.

One of those tragedies started out as a celebration: Alexis Dowdell's sweet 16 birthday party at a dance studio in Dadeville, Alabama on April 15. She and her family had been planning the party for months, and the dance floor was filled with young people and a DJ when gunfire broke out. More than thirty people were injured and four were killed, including Alexis's older brother, 18-year-old Philstavius "Phil" Dowdell. Alexis remembered Phil pushing her to the ground to protect her in the chaos, but the next time she saw him he was lying in a pool of blood. She told an interviewer, "I got on my knees

and he was laying face down. And that's when I grabbed him. I turned him over, I was holding him. . . . I was trying to be strong instead of panicking. And so I said, 'You're going to be all right, you're a fighter, you're strong.' But Phil, a high school senior and star athlete who had a football scholarship to Jacksonville State University, was gone—along with another 17-year-old Dadeville High senior and two more young guests. Many of those injured remain hospitalized in serious condition.

The nonprofit Gun Violence Archive, which keeps track of mass shootings in the U.S. where four or more victims are killed or injured by guns, notes that there have been more than 165 mass shootings so far in 2023—more than one a day. On April 15 there were seven mass shootings, the most in a single day so far this year. So the devastating mass injuries and deaths at a birthday party that night

were heartbreaking, but they were not unusual for America. But those stories about the "everyday" trauma and tragedy of mass shootings were also joined this week by the latest headlines about a series of "mistake" shootings.

On April 13 in Kansas City, Missouri, 16-year-old honors student and musician Ralph Yarl was shot in the head and arm after mistakenly ringing the wrong doorbell while trying to pick up his younger brothers from a friend's home. The man who shot him said that when the 5'8", 140-lb teenager came to his door, he looked out and saw a 6-foot-tall Black man and felt "scared to death." Instead of asking any questions he immediately shot Ralph through the locked glass storm door. Two days later in Hebron, New York, 20-year-old Kaylin Gillis was shot and killed after she and a group of friends mistakenly drove into the wrong home's driveway. The young people, who were in a rural area with no cell phone service, had already realized their mistake and were trying to leave when the homeowner started firing on them, hitting Kaylin inside the car where she was sitting in the passenger seat. And on April 18 in Elgin, Texas, two elite high school cheerleaders returning from practice were shot after one of them mistakenly opened the door to the wrong car in an H-E-B grocery store parking lot. Eighteen-year-old Payton Washington, who was planning to attend Baylor University in the fall on an acrobatic and tumbling scholarship and who had already overcome physical challenges after being

born with only one lung, was airlifted to a hospital in critical condition with injuries to her spleen and other organs.

All of these only-in-America atrocities took place the very same week that many Republican politicians were attending the National Rifle Association's annual convention to pledge their allegiance to the gun lobby. Reuters Pictures shared a series of photos from the convention of children as young as six and seven holding guns whose triggers barely fit their small hands as they pointed them at the camera. Shannon Watts, the founder of Moms Demand Action, said afterwards in an interview, "Responsible gun owners and parents would not allow a child to put their finger on a firearm's trigger while pointing it at other people—even if they're props . . . . It's more clear than ever that the NRA's goal was never to teach children about responsible gun handling but to market guns and gun extremism to a new generation." But there is a large majority of Americans who favor common sense gun safety laws, who did not vote to put the NRA in charge of our national security, who are not grooming our own children and grandchildren to become gun extremists, and who do not want our children and grandchildren to be shot or killed because they attended a birthday party, recognized the wrong car in a parking lot, or accidentally drove to the wrong address. In our nation with more guns than people, we know we need to do something about the guns.

—April 21, 2023

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



### To Be Equal:

## State of Black America 2023: Confronting the Threat Within

*"Our sense of belonging and prosperity relies on freedom from violence. That freedom requires confronting the threat that armed violence poses to our democracy and the hate-fueled rhetoric that feeds it. Moreover, keeping voters and elections safe from political violence is necessary to advance free, fair, and secure elections and ballot access."*

—Project Code

There is a fire blazing in the United States of America.

That the fire is burning through classrooms, law enforcement, the right to speak, the right to assemble and the right to vote. It is the fire of hatred, extremism, and domestic terrorism. It is the fire of white supremacy.

This year's State of Black America® report, "Democracy in Peril: Confronting the Threat Within," raises the alarm on extremist ideology taking root in the nation's most vital institutions.

The mainstreaming of extremist ideology is an existential threat to American democracy, the rule of law, and decades of hard-won progress toward an equitable, inclusive, more perfect union. No

longer limited to passing out photocopied leaflets on street corners or huddling in corners of the dark web, conspiracy-mongers and white nationalists openly spew their bile across social media and cable television. They weave it into the public policy they impose on their constituents. It corrodes the trust between police and the military and the communities they are sworn to protect and serve.

Members of the U.S. Congress and state legislators across the country have promoted a conspiracy theory centered on a cabal of Satan-worshipping, cannibalistic child abusers that includes fellow lawmakers, Hollywood actors and business tycoons.

The leaked membership of a violent, anti-government militia group that led the January 6 insurrection included 81 people who either held or were running for public officer in 2022, 373 believed to be serving in law enforcement, and 117 believed to be active-duty military.

Restrictions on teaching the history of slavery and the Civil Rights Movement have grown so stringent that students planning a Black History Month in Alabama were not permitted to reference any events prior to 1970.

White supremacists committed 22 racially-motivated murders last year, including the 10 who were shot in a Buffalo supermarket by an 18-year old under the influence of the "Great Replacement" conspiracy promoted by prominent media figures.

From sea to shining sea, this flame of hate and manipulation which gave currency to foreign interference in the 2016 election grew into a five-alarm wildfire after the 2020 election when conspiracy theories about voter fraud in major cities such as Philadelphia, Detroit, and Atlanta, and in majority Black districts in battleground states fueled the greatest assault on voting rights since Reconstruction.

Hate crimes in the largest U.S. cities soared by 44% last year, according to the Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism at California State University in San Bernardino. Yet there has been a 22% percent decrease in the number of reporting agencies, according to the ADL; some of the largest cities in the country, including New York and Los Angeles, did not participate, nor did nearly the entire state of Florida or most of California.

Even more alarming, the FBI has warned agents that white supremacist and anti-government militia groups may be seeking to infiltrate law enforcement including police and sheriff's departments throughout the nation.

If hate groups can infiltrate law enforcement, then our democracy is truly threatened.

Lawmakers in 39 states introduced more than 400 bills intended to restrict, dilute, and undermine not only the votes of Black people, but of Latinos, disabled Americans, students, and the elderly. Another 150 bills introduced in 27 states would allow partisan interference in elections.

Many of those same lawmakers who spouted conspiracy theories about the results of the election to justify voter suppression are actively engaged in suppressing American history and the reality of sys-

temic and institutional racism. Since September 2020, more than 200 local, state, and federal government entities have introduced 670 bills, resolutions, executive orders, opinion letters, statements, and other measures to suppress and censor books, knowledge, history, and truth.

This movement may have reached peak absurdity when a group of Texas educators, in a delusional fit, proposed to the State Board of Education that slavery should be taught as "involuntary relocation."

Earlier this year, Florida banned AP African-American studies from being taught in its school, calling it "historically inaccurate." Despite the College Board's claim that Florida's decision had no impact on its decision to revise the course, it subsequently removed the Black Lives Movement and a list of prominent Black authors from the curriculum.

Now is the time for us to put this fire out.

We can put this fire out by demanding a new set of voting laws that ban voter suppression, gerrymandering and vote dilution, called the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

We can put this fire out by standing strong against the censorship of books, the suppression of the truth about slavery and discrimination, and suppression of the contributions of Black Americans.

We can put this fire out by banning assault weapons and insisting on background checks and red flag laws to prevent violent and unstable people from having access to guns.

We can put this fire out by enacting the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act to redefine and enhance public safety.

We have, as a movement and as a nation, the strength, the intelligence, the determination, the resilience, the energy and the aptitude, the foresight, and the attitude to extinguish the flames of hatred, extremism, and white supremacy forever.

—April 20, 2023

## Moore's Legislative Success Builds General Assembly Relationship for Future Years

By MICHAEL CHARLES  
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 19, 2023)—Gov. Wes Moore exits his first General Assembly session with all 10 items on his legislative agenda passing. And, despite the tweaks to those proposals from legislators, Moore laid the foundation for a strong working relationship with the legislative body, analysts say.

"If you're a governor and you're going into a (legislative) session and you make it clear at the outset that these are the things that I want to have accomplished, then the session comes to an end and you get to sign some variation of each of those things, that's the definition of success," said Todd Eberly, professor of Political Science and Public Policy at St. Mary's College. "In broad strokes, his agenda was passed, but when you get into the details, it's different from what he wanted and that shouldn't really be surprising."

Moore was inaugurated on Jan. 18, vowing to leave no Marylander behind. He compiled an agenda of 10 bills, spanning issues from raising the state minimum wage, alleviating child poverty, to aiding Maryland's veterans. Although most of his proposals en-

dured changes, Moore's early-formed relationship with the General Assembly made his successes possible and bodes well for future partnerships.

"I think he's going (to continue) to have a fantastic relationship with the General Assembly. After eight years of a Republican governor who did not see it as appropriate to go to the legislature and to testify behind bills that they want, Moore has taken a completely different approach," said Eberly. "(Moore) views them as a partner, went down, testified and sent folks to testify in favor of the legislation. That establishes a very different working relationship. I suspect that he's going to have a very productive and fruitful relationship with the assembly."

On Feb. 16, Moore became the first sitting governor to testify on a bill since 2014, when he spoke to the House Ways and Means Committee on his Keep Our Heroes Home Act. He testified several other times on his legislation and joined the General Assembly in celebrating its adjournment earlier this month.

That collaborative relationship with the General Assembly was also noticed by Len Foxwell of Tred Avon Strategies, a Democratic consulting firm.

"It has to be considered a success all around for Governor Moore. This session was less about the mechanics of legislative minutia and more about establishing his framework of leadership," said Foxwell. "He established a strong, substantive and stylistic contrast to his predecessor. It sends a clear message that he is planning to pursue a strong progressive policy agenda and do so with a sense of collegiality with the legislature, which hasn't always been there, even with Democratic governors in the past."

While Moore advocated strongly for his agenda, he empowered the General Assembly to do its job and make the necessary changes where they saw fit. One example of this was his proposals to address health care and tax cuts for veterans.

As a former captain and paratrooper with the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne, including leading troops into combat in Afghanistan, Moore emphasized supporting veterans from the outset of his campaign. This took the form of two bills addressing assistance—state health insurance for Maryland National Guard members, or the Health Care for Heroes Act, SB 0554; and a tax cut on military income during re-

tirement, the Keep Our Heroes Home Act, or HB 0554.

Both pieces of legislation passed with changes to decrease costs, although they have yet to garner Moore's signature. Moore's health care proposal was modified by legislators to provide \$60 monthly assistance payments to Guard members to help them with covering insurance prices. Similarly, the Keep Our Heroes Home Act, HB 0554, increases the amount of military retirement money for modest-income veterans that is exempt from state taxes to \$12,500 for veterans under 55 and \$20,000 for individuals 55 and above.

The amendments from lawmakers, Eberly said, gave the governor the programs he wanted at a rate the legislators could accept.

"In multiple instances, he didn't get exactly what he wanted. . . . Instead, he got the broad strokes of what he was looking to, but reflected what members of the legislature were willing to approve as well."

The governor said he's satisfied with his first time working with the General Assembly.

"For the last 90 days, our legislators and this team have worked together to advance our administration's bold, leave-no-one-be-

hind agenda, which earned overwhelming bipartisan support. We entered this session authoring 10 bills and all the 10 bills have passed with both Democratic and Republican support." Moore said in a video statement. "The 2023 session showed that not only is this administration keeping its

promises, but that Maryland is moving in the spirit of partnership. These legislative victories delivered targeted investments to folks across the economic spectrum to provide vital investments

See SUCCESS Page A6

## The Prince George's Post

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Contents © 2023, The Prince George's Post

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Prince George's County, Md. Member National Newspaper Publishers Association, and the Maryland, Delaware, District of Columbia Press Association. The Prince George's Post (ISSN 10532226) is published every Thursday by the New Prince George's Post Inc., 15207 Marlboro Pike, Upper Marlboro, Md. 20772-3151. Subscription rate: 25 cents per single copy; \$15 per year; \$7.50 senior citizens and students; out of county add \$1; out of state add \$2. Periodical postage paid at Southern Md. 20790. Postmaster, send address changes to Prince George's Post, P.O. Box 1001, Upper Marlboro, Md. 20773.

# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## Social Security Matters

### Ask Rusty:

## Why Can't I Get Social Security Disability on My Own or My Husband's Record?

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

**Dear Rusty:** I am considered disabled by State of Washington doctors, but Social Security has turned me down three times when I applied for disability saying I don't have enough work points. I am the wife of a retired, disabled veteran who served over 20 years in the US Navy. I raised three children, one of which is disabled. How do I get Social Security to accept my disability? **Signed: Frustrated & Disabled**

**Dear Frustrated & Disabled:** Social Security's criteria for disability eligibility are separate and distinctly different from any other authority such as the State of Washington. To be eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits, you must have earned a minimum number of credits on your own from working and contributing to Social Security, and that work must have occurred recently (you must have worked at least 5 of the last 10 years). If you did not personally earn the required credits through recent work, you cannot get SSDI benefits. I presume that is what Social Security has determined to be the case for you. And to clarify, you must be totally disabled (rendering you unable to work for at least one year) and that must be confirmed by your medical service providers, who will be contacted by Social Security's representatives.

For information, SSDI is an individually earned entitlement, thus your husband's lifetime earnings history applies only to him, and his earnings record does not extend to you for SSDI purposes (in other words, he might be eligible for early SSDI benefits on his own, but his eligibility for those benefits does not make you eligible too). Nevertheless, if your husband is collecting SSDI benefits and you are caring for your child who became disabled before age 22, or if your husband is collecting SS and any of your children are under age 16, you may be eligible for "child-in-care" spousal benefits. Child-in-care spouse benefits are available at any age, but your husband would need to be collecting either SSDI or his regular SS retirement benefit for you to be eligible for those benefits. And if your husband is collecting SS of any kind, his disabled child (or any minor children under 18) may also be eligible

for dependent child benefits from him, subject to the Family Maximum.

So, to answer your specific question about how to get Social Security to "accept your disability," unless you meet the recent work test and have earned the needed credits on your own as described above, and are totally disabled, you cannot. You may wish to confirm this by discussing your situation with an attorney who specializes in SSDI matters. You can find such an attorney online by searching for "SSDI attorney near me"—just be sure to fully vet any firm you are considering. SSDI attorneys should not charge for an initial consultation, and they will only take your case if they believe you can win (they take their fees from any back SSDI benefits they can secure for you). SSDI attorney fees are also limited by federal law, and seeking such counsel should not result in any out-of-pocket expense for you.

*The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] [www.amac.us](http://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.Amac-Foundation.org](http://www.Amac-Foundation.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](http://www.amac.us/join-amac).*

*This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website ([amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory)) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org).*

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

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Laurel in Prince George's County proposes to increase real property taxes.

1. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2023, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by 5.2% from \$3,672,105,096 to \$3,865,432,348.
2. If the City of Laurel maintains the current tax rate of \$0.71 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by 5.2% resulting in \$1,372,623 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 \$0.6745, the constant yield tax rate.
4. The City of Laurel is considering not reducing its real property tax rate enough to fully offset increasing assessments. The City of Laurel proposes to adopt a real property tax rate of \$0.71 per \$100 of assessment. This tax rate is 5.2% higher than the constant yield tax rate and will generate \$1,372,623 in additional property tax revenues.

A public hearing on the proposed real property tax increase will be held at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 8, 2023. The meeting will be held remotely via Zoom video teleconference. To join the video conference, please click the link below:

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.

When: May 8, 2023 05:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: 2ND BUDGET WORK SESSION

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://cityoflaurel-org.zoom.us/j/83464583878>

Or One tap mobile :

+13017158592,,83464583878# US (Washington DC)

+13126266799,,83464583878# US (Chicago)

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+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Webinar ID: 834 6458 3878

International numbers available: <https://cityoflaurel-org.zoom.us/u/keqwufwpkE>

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 submitted by 2pm on May 8, 2023. Comments received will be read by City of Laurel staff during the public comments portion of the meeting.

Persons with questions regarding this hearing may call 301-725-5300, extension 2236 for further information.

Sara Green, MMC  
Clerk to the Council

## WSSC Water Commissioners Approve Temporary Water Bill Amnesty Program to Assist Customers

'Get Current' Program Runs June 1–June 30

Eligible Customers Receive Bill Credits and Waived Fees Residential Water Service Turnoffs Temporarily Suspended During Amnesty Program

By PRESS OFFICER  
WSSC Water

LAUREL, Md. (April 19, 2023)—Working to help customers **Get Current** with delinquent water/sewer bills, WSSC Water Commissioners today approved a temporary water bill amnesty program for eligible customers with a delinquent balance as of May 1, 2023. The program, which will run the month of June, provides bill credits and 100 percent of late payment charges and turn-on fees waived for customers who qualify. During June, WSSC Water will temporarily suspend residential water service turnoffs to encourage program participation. As of late March, nearly 87,000 accounts are past due, totaling nearly \$57 million—the vast majority of which are residential customers.

Eligible residential customers whose household income is **below** 150 percent of area median income\* will receive the following benefits:

- Ten percent bill credit for pay-

ment in full of delinquent amount and 100 percent of late payment charges and turn-on fees waived; and

- Five percent bill credit for 50 percent payment of delinquent amount and successful completion of six-month payment plan. Upon completion of payment plan, 100 percent of late payment charges and turn-on fees are waived. The five percent bill credit is also applied after completion of the payment plan.

Residential customers **above** 150 percent of area median income are eligible for the 100 percent waiver of late payment charges and turn-on fees. Commercial and multi-unit residential accounts with master meters are also eligible for 100 percent of late payment charges and turn-on fees waived.

"We are pleased to offer this temporary amnesty program as the financial impact of COVID-19, coupled with economic uncertainty caused by current inflationary pressures, requires bold action to help our cus-

tomers in need," said WSSC Water Commission Chair Fausto R. Bayonet. "We encourage eligible residential customers to take advantage of the financial benefits of this program before it ends and turnoffs resume July 1."

"I thank our Commissioners for approving this amnesty program as we continue to focus our efforts on expanding financial assistance programs for our customers," said WSSC Water General Manager and CEO Kishia L. Powell. "Along with helping customers, the **Get Current** program is vital to fulfilling our public health duty by ensuring we recoup funds to invest in and improve our critical infrastructure."

To learn more about WSSC Water's **Get Current** program and to sign up to be notified when it launches on June 1, visit [wsscwater.com/getcurrent](http://wsscwater.com/getcurrent). Information on other customer assistance programs can be found at [wsscwater.com/assistance](http://wsscwater.com/assistance).

### \* Get Current 150 percent Area Median Income Limits by Household Size for Prince George's and Montgomery counties.

Household Size	1 PERSON	2 PERSON	3 PERSON	4 PERSON	5 PERSON	6 PERSON	7 PERSON	8 PERSON
Household Income	\$149,500	\$170,800	\$192,150	\$213,450	\$230,550	\$247,650	\$264,700	\$281,800

## Gun Laws from A1

abiding gun owners by restricting where individuals with permits can carry their weapons.

"We will challenge many of its provisions in court," said Mark Pennak, president of Maryland Shall Issue, a Maryland gun advocacy group. "So many of its provisions are just blatantly unconstitutional."

For gun control legislation to make it through the courts post-Bruen without constitutional scrutiny, the law must not violate the grounds of the Second Amendment and must have an analog from American history, specifically from when the Second Amendment was ratified in 1791 to when the 14th Amendment was ratified in 1868.

"There is no historical analog as required by the Supreme Court," said Pennak. "Federal district court decisions have held that banning carry on private property otherwise open to the public is flatly unconstitutional. ... SB 1 is basically lawless, and I think they know that."

Democrats say they are prepared to defend the bill's constitutionality in court. "We believe the areas that are defined and identified in this bill meet constitutional muster," said Brown.

Backers of the bill said there is a clear historical analog, or comparison, tracing back to the founders' days regarding gun restrictions. "There were still places and spaces then where guns were prohibited, and it's analogous to what we are proposing in Senate Bill 1," said Brown.

Another bill, HB 0824, Possession And Permits To Carry, Wear, And Transport A Handgun, passed the House on April 8, 98-40, also sending it to the governor to be signed into law.

This bill, sponsored by Del. Luke Clippinger, D-Baltimore City, and 15 other Democrats, would expand the existing prohibitions of access to firearms, increase the maximum fee for handgun permit applications, expand requirements for a firearms training course, and raise the age from 18 to 21 to lawfully possess a firearm, according to the filed bill.

"This legislation removes the 'good and substantial reason' language from Maryland law while also making changes to both our wear-carry permit process and to the process for getting a regulated firearm, that I believe will strengthen public safety," said Clippinger in a Judiciary Committee hearing for the bill in February.

The bill will raise the initial permit application fee, currently \$75, to at most \$125. The \$50 renewal application fee will rise to \$75, and the \$10 for a modified or duplicate permit will rise to \$20. These fees have not been raised since 1992, according to Clippinger.

Andrea Chamblee, widow of the late Capital Gazette journalist John McNamara and member of Moms Demand Action, testified in favor of the bill at the hearing, recounting the tragic

shooting at the Capital Gazette newspaper in 2018 that changed her life.

"I am sitting here, hoping no one will ever have to sit where I am sitting; on June 28, 2:38 p.m., about five years ago, a man with a criminal history of violence walked into the Annapolis Capital Gazette," said Chamblee. "He had spent years terrorizing the Capital Gazette staff with deadly threats after they reported on his crimes; he had a criminal record of violence against women that had been expunged in return for his showing up at anger management classes."

Chamblee said that the expungement of his record, despite his history of aggression, allowed him to obtain a gun, which he then used to kill five people at the Capital Gazette newsroom.

"We must take steps such as this bill ... to ensure that guns do not wind up in the hands of people who pose a danger to themselves or others," said Chamblee.

Gun rights advocacy groups are not pleased with the bill's passage, stating that it is imposing on constitutional rights by imposing barriers to legally owning firearms by raising the application fees and increasing limitations.

"It's not up to the state to decide who can get a permit and who cannot," said Pennak of Maryland Shall Issue. "The Supreme Court says that right belongs to all law-abiding Americans, and certainly that would include the rights of 18 to 21 year olds and people who haven't committed serious violent crimes."

The last bill, SB 0185, cross-filed as HB 0003, also referred to as Maryland State Police Gun Center- Firearms Surrendered Under Final Protective Orders, is sponsored by Sen. Pamela Beidle, D-Anne Arundel, nine other Democrats and one Republican. It passed in the House on April 4, 112-20.

This bill would expand the purpose of the Maryland State Police Gun Center to include the screening, vetting, and tracking of all firearms surrendered under final protective orders, and to report information regarding the firearm and the individual who surrendered it.

Final protective orders are restraining orders against domestic abusers issued by the court after evidence is presented showcasing abuse. If a final protective order is issued, the abuser must surrender their firearms to the state to be tracked and vetted thoroughly by the center under this bill.

Waldstreicher said he anticipates that Gov. Wes Moore will sign these gun control bills into law.

A spokesman for the governor's office said, "Governor Moore is committed to signing legislation to help curb the gun violence epidemic facing Maryland's communities, people have a right to feel safe in their own communities and the governor is committed to doing everything in his power to make Maryland a safer home for everyone."

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## Success from A4

in infrastructure, education, housing, and public safety."

Here are the other components of Moore's agenda. All have passed the General Assembly and either await Moore's signature or are now law:

- The **Family Prosperity Act**, introduced in both chambers as HB 547 and SB 552, was proposed by Moore and expands Earned Income and Child Tax Credits. The bill, effective June 1 and applicable to tax year 2023 and moving forward, eliminates the \$530 limit for adults without qualifying children, and expands the definition of "qualified child" to benefit taxpayers with children aged 6 and under who have a federally adjusted gross income of \$15,000 or less. This legislation was signed by Moore April 11 during his first batch of bill signings.
- SB 0555, the **Fair Wage Act**, will raise the minimum wage from \$13.25 to \$15 per hour beginning on Jan. 1, 2024. Moore's efforts to index this wage to inflation and start it as soon as October, were unsuccessful. This bill was also signed into law April 11.
- The **Access to Banking Act**, HB 0548 and SB 0550, will incentivize credit unions and banks to assist lower-income Marylanders. The legislation creates funds for both private and state revenue to aid this process.
- The **Clean Transportation and Energy Act**, HB 0550, would invigorate the state's energy program, primarily by creating a grant program for "qualified medium-duty or heavy-duty zero-emission vehicles."
- The **SERVE Act**, SB0551, has been a major goal for Moore since the campaign. Moore's vision is that this act will promote a spirit of community service and togetherness among all Marylanders, primarily youth, in the form of a service year option for high school graduates. Overseen by the newly created Department of Service and Civic Innovation, the program will begin with 200 participants in year one, and include 2,000 participants by year four.
- In a similar theme of building for the future, Moore's **Innovation Economy & Infrastructure Act**, HB 0552, looks to support technological innovation across the state. This legislation creates a grant program, up to \$2 million, that allows private companies, nonprofits, local governments, or colleges and universities in Maryland to invest in, "eligible innovation infrastructure projects." Such projects include, "advanced manufacturing; aerospace; agriculture; artificial intelligence; biotechnology; blue technology; cybersecurity; defense; energy and sustainability; life sciences; quantum; and sensor and robotics."
- Another campaign focus has been major investments in Maryland's youth through revamping the state's education system. An example of this is HB 1219, the **Educator Shortage Act**. To address a depleted teaching force, this legislation will create the Teacher Development and Retention Program with the goal of promoting futures as educators to college students. This bill also makes additional changes to the retention and recruitment of teachers.
- Finally, the **Study of Broadband Expansion Incentives** legislation was also passed and is awaiting Moore's signature. Through the Office of Statewide Broadband, this bill requires the study of how Maryland can "incentivize" broadband companies to expand its infrastructure to communities currently lacking such broadband services. Studies will also focus on how other states have executed similar plans and how federal broadband grants can be effectively spread throughout Maryland.

Getting the legislature to agree to the governor's agenda gets more difficult after the "honeymoon" phase of having a new officeholder fades. But the analysts say building these initial relationships may ease this process.

"The first year is always easiest. You have a new governor and the legislature that are all still becoming acclimated to the job, and the two branches are feeling one another out," said Foxwell. "There will inevitably be bumps in the road as you move forward, but what the governor was able to do in this first year was build a reservoir of goodwill and signal a sense of both collegiality and personal engagement in the legislative process that he'll be able to fall back on when inevitable differences arise."