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Bowie High School NJROTC BHS NJROTC Cadet Receives Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) 107 Pilot Wings

By PRESS OFFICER
Bowie High School
NJROTC

On Friday, January 17, 2025, the Bowie High School NJROTC held a wing pinning ceremony for their first Certified Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Drone Pilot, Cadet Petty Officer 3rd Class (C/PO3) Elizabeth Blackwood. She was pinned by Mr. Kelvin Wilson, the Area 4 Manager. Cadet Blackwood serves as the Bowie High School NJROTC Battalion Drone Team Commander. She faced the significant challenge of passing a sixty-question test to earn her certification, which required her to study for countless hours. This certification now enables C/PO3 Blackwood to fly drones commercially. Cadet Blackwood can now proudly wear her flight suit and wings on her



Cadet Petty Officer 3rd Class (C/PO3) Elizabeth Blackwood during the wing pinning ceremony.

uniform. She is the first cadet in the Bowie High School NJROTC Battalion and among Area Four Schools in Mary-

land to achieve drone certification. Cadet Blackwood has set the standard for other cadets to follow.

—Assistant PAO
C/Seaman Omowunmi Ogunbanwo

Police Drones Are Flying Over Maryland. Will State Lawmakers Regulate Them?

By PAUL KIEFER
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Jan. 22, 2025)—On an afternoon in mid-January, a Montgomery County police drone tracked a shoplifting suspect as he made his way from a Wheaton CVS to the entrance of a nearby Metro station, where a patrol unit intercepted and arrested him.

Police flight records show that the drone, piloted by officers at a command center in Rockville, then returned to its station on a nearby rooftop to await the next 911 call.

The drone is one of four operated by the Montgomery County Department of Police. The year-old drone response program is the first of its kind in Maryland, with drones stationed in Gaithersburg, Silver Spring and Wheaton. The drones have responded to nearly 2,000 calls since the program's launch, often reaching the scene before police officers get there.

"We hear the emergency as you're describing it, and we can just send the drone," said Commander Jason Cokinos, who leads the department's drone program. "We're cheating time."

Reactions to the program are mixed, with some observers enthusiastic about the flexibility it provides and others concerned about the technology's privacy implications. This year, Maryland lawmakers are considering regulating the use of drones for police responses before a more widespread adoption of the technology occurs.

Some Maryland lawmakers worry that current state law doesn't offer clear guidance on how or when law enforcement

can use drones as the first or only responders to emergency calls.

The police are operating in a legal gray area, said Del. Robin Grammer Jr., a Republican representing Baltimore County and a member of Maryland's House Judiciary Committee.

"Now, it's reactive enforcement," Grammer said. "You can come back to this moment in time in a year, two years from now, and some jurisdiction's going to be sending out drones proactively. That's not the world I want to live in."

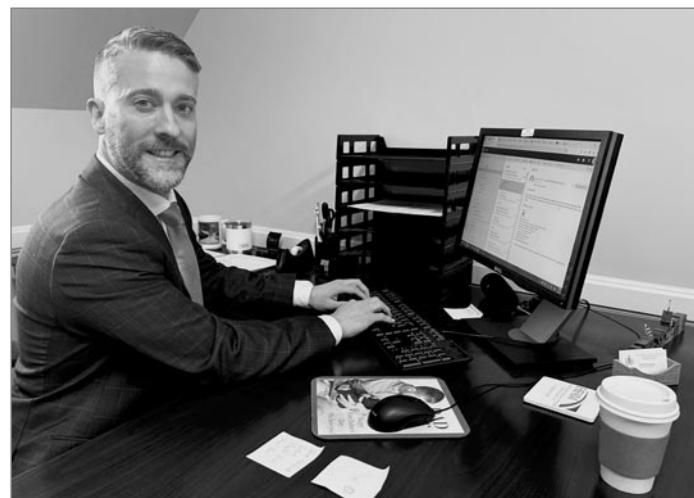
Montgomery County police say they reached out to community members and civil liberties groups to develop rules for their use of drones and the storage of aerial surveillance footage before implementing their program in November 2023.

But it wasn't until this month that the Maryland General Assembly began weighing whether to set state-level rules for more expansive drone programs. House lawmakers summoned police and a spokesperson for the American Civil Liberties Union to Annapolis last Wednesday to review Montgomery County's program.

In that meeting, Cokinos emphasized that his department has taken a narrow approach to aerial surveillance.

"We want to have the least amount of visual intrusion [on] anybody on the ground level that we can," Cokinos told lawmakers.

Police only dispatch the drones in response to emergency calls involving "safety issues," Cokinos said, and they do not send drones to calls with-



PAUL KIEFER/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Del. Robin Grammer, Jr., a Republican representing Baltimore County, is a vocal skeptic of expanding law enforcement use of aerial surveillance.

out a suspect present. Those can range from assaults in progress to children playing hockey on potentially thin ice, according to the department's flight records.

Pilots do not point the drones' cameras downward nor begin recording until they reach the scene, he added, and the drones do not record audio or use facial recognition technology. Members of the public can view details of drone responses within 24 hours of a deployment.

Cokinos said that the drone's live feeds have helped officers avoid at least one confrontation with an armed suspect. He argued that the use of the drone helped to de-escalate a response that "very well could have resulted in an officer-involved shooting."

While the drones aren't a replacement for police officers, Cokinos said, the department has responded to nearly 300 emergency calls with drones alone since November 2023. If there's no need for a police officer, he said, they don't dis-

patch one.

More widespread adoption of the technology by law enforcement agencies appears to be just over the horizon.

As the prices of drones fall, other law enforcement agencies across the state will likely be able to launch their own programs for far less than the roughly \$773,000 the Montgomery County Department of Police spent last year. The FAA could offer a less costly waiver to fly surveillance drones over large areas, potentially enabling smaller departments to launch their own programs. **The Prince George's County Police Department is currently considering whether to launch its own first responder drone program.**

But civil libertarians say Maryland lawmakers should get ahead of that trend.

Jay Stanley, a senior policy analyst with the ACLU's Speech, Privacy and Technology Project, warned lawmakers

See DRONES Page A2

Prince George's County Health Department Unveils New Logo

New logo symbolizes a renewed commitment to health equity, disease prevention, and the overall well-being of all residents

By PRESS OFFICER
Prince George's County Health Department

LARGO, Md. (Jan. 23, 2025)—The Prince George's County Health Department is excited to announce the launch of its new logo, which reflects its ongoing dedication to promoting and protecting the health and well-being of all Prince Georgians. The unveiling of this new logo marks an important milestone in the Department's efforts to enhance its identity and engage more effectively with the public.

"We are thrilled to introduce our new logo, which captures the essence of our vision and mission," says Dr. Matthew Levy, Health Officer for the Prince George's County Health Department. "This logo is more than just a visual representation; it's a symbol of our commitment to the health and well-being of every resident in our community."

Vision: All Prince Georgians are their healthiest at every age and every stage.

Mission: To lead, engage, and empower our community to work collaboratively towards

disease prevention, health equity, and total well-being.

The design process included feedback to ensure the logo resonates with the County's diverse population. The Health Department is confident that the new logo will enhance its visibility and foster a stronger connection with the community.

As part of the rebranding, the Health Department is also introducing new wraps on County vehicles, which will be seen throughout the community. These vehicle wraps showcase the new logo and branding, serving as a mobile reminder of its presence and commitment to the community's health. Residents are encouraged to look out for these newly wrapped vehicles as they travel through the County, providing essential services and support.

For more information about the new logo and the Health Department's vision and mission, please visit the Department's website at: health.mypgc.us.

Bowie State University Celebrates 160 Years of Excellence

University to Host Anniversary Gala on April 5

By PRESS OFFICER
Bowie State University

BOWIE, Md. (Jan. 22, 2025)—Bowie State University recently commemorated a monumental milestone, celebrating 160 years since its founding on Jan. 9, 1865. Originally established as the Baltimore Normal School for Colored Teachers at Calvert and Saratoga streets in Baltimore, the institution proudly relocated to its current location in Bowie, Maryland, in 1911.

What began as an institution dedicated to offering educational opportunities for Black teachers has flourished into a vibrant university offering more than 65 bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and certificate programs. Among its diverse offerings are cutting-edge disciplines in STEM, including cybersecurity, data analytics, artificial intelligence, and an exciting new master's program in the Internet of Things. According to Bowie State University President Aminta Breaux, Bowie State's evolution encompasses a broader vision.

"We're living in a rapidly changing world," Breaux said. "We want our students to be at the forefront and leading the way with an entrepreneurial mindset."

In a significant display of growth, the university recently inaugurated the new Martin

Luther King, Jr. Center, which houses the Communications, Humanities, and History Departments, as well as the ROTC program. The Fine and Performing Arts Department continues to shine, exemplified by the University Concert Choir's recent collaboration with Grammy Award-winning artist Samara Joy in a community Messiah concert, reflecting the university's unwavering commitment to the arts.

Throughout the year, Bowie State will host a series of events honoring its rich legacy and vibrant future. Celebrations will include a Founder's Day event and a 160th Anniversary Gala on April 5, along with the university's upcoming 90th Homecoming this fall. These events aim to engage alumni, students, and the broader Bulldog community in a festive homage to Bowie State's history and ongoing commitment to academic and cultural excellence.

As Bowie State looks ahead, the university remains determined in its mission to educate, inspire, and empower future leaders while honoring the legacy of its past.

Founded in 1865, Bowie State University is the first Historically Black College/University (HBCU) in Maryland and one of the ten oldest in the country.

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The commutations of drug sentences address a shortcoming in the First Step Act which the National Urban League has advocated for years to repair. **Commentary, Page A4**

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

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

Spring is coming—shop at Ed's

Ed's Plant World has sent an email announcing, "Roses Arriving February 11." Which means Valentine's Day is coming. Also, that the roses are red, white, pink "and other assorted colors."

Maybe you prefer growing seedlings. "The key to success when growing seedlings is in creating the proper environment. We can help. Stop by and we'll show you our extensive offering of seed starting supplies and answer any questions that you may have."

I always enjoy dropping by Ed's, and always buy. It makes me feel like Spring is really coming. Ed's is at 11811 Branch Avenue. Info: 301-372-5590.

Town of Morningside

Town Elections will be held Monday, May 5. Up for election will be Mayor and 2 Council Members. Candidate Petitions for Office must be turned in by March 3, 5 p.m.

Morningside will hold a Work Session February 11 and a Town Meeting Feb. 18, both beginning at 7.

If you would like to host an event at the Municipal Center, the meeting room is available for rentals hosting groups of 70 or less. Call 301-736-2300 to reserve the space now as dates for 2025 are filling up fast.

Mayor Cann, in the Town newsletter, notes that there are quite a few new residents. He asks that you welcome them if you live in Morningside. Also, that new residents "reach out to the Town Administrative offices and check out the Town website so they will be informed of all

the great things happening in the town."

House numbers in the Town must be attached to the dwelling and placed in a position clearly visible from the street.

Morningside offices will be closed Feb. 17 for Presidents Day holiday.

VFW Auxiliary hosting blood drive with Red Cross

The Blood Drive is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 18. I'll have more information on this in my next column.

Changing landscape

Some of our favorite restaurants are disappearing across the country: Boston Market, Red Lobster and TGI Friday have declared bankruptcy.

However, National Harbor now has multiple shops and restaurants—many inspired by the pandas. You can buy a colossal, Instagram-ready black-and-white shake from the Yard Milkshake Bar, panda milk tea with free toppings at the Panda Tea House, and a panda-themed session at Muse Paintbar.

A home at 10709 Quaking Aspen Way, in Clinton, just sold for \$719,000.

College enrollment up

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center found undergraduate enrollment climbed to 3.2 million, up 4.5% in the fall, compared with the previous year. Student head-counts have rebounded from COVID-19 time. Community colleges have particularly improved numbers.

The Inauguration

I've attended inaugurations—regard-

less of politic party—for years. I find it interesting, even exciting, to be there. For years I "attended" by standing in the cold with thousands of others. This year, at my advanced age and the freezing cold outside, I watched it all on TV. Beyond that, I have no more to say.

Happy Birthday, Dad

My Father, Dr. Richard Dyer Mudd, was born January 24, 1901, at home in Anacostia, District of Columbia. He attended Gonzaga High School and earned about five degrees—including PhD—from Georgetown before marrying my mother, Rose Krummack R.N., whom he met at Henry Ford Hospital where he interned. He was a doctor for General Motors, served in the Army (later Air Force) during WWII, and at General Motors plants in Saginaw, Mich., where he raised seven children (I was oldest) and where he retired. He died at 101 on May 21, 2002.

Along with Grandson Conor, his wife Heather, their children Mary and Wesley, I am celebrating Dad's 124th birthday with dinner at Mama Stella's.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Donna Young and Robin Sawyer, Feb. 1; Stanley Holmes, Feb. 2; Philip Desmarais and Ashley Lee, Feb. 3; Adam Cook, Feb. 5; George Desmarais and Diane McCrone, Feb. 6; Theo Carter, Rita Beall and J.B. Thomas, Feb. 7; Jesse Ritter and my great-granddaughter Molly McHale, Feb. 8.

Happy Anniversary to William & Betty Fitzpatrick, their 75th (!) on Feb. 4.

Upcoming Poetry Events in Prince George's County

By J. JOY "SISTAH JOY" MATTHEWS ALFORD
Prince George's County Poet Laureate Emerita (2018–2023)

Greetings Poetry Family and Friends: Thank you for your ongoing support of poetry events and poets that present community arts events in Prince George's County. Below is a list of upcoming poetry events that I hope you are able to attend. Please feel free to share this information with family and friends. All events are free unless noted. Some events include an Open Mic. We would love to have you join us when you can.

- **Saturday, February 8** (1–2 p.m.)—"Celebrating Black History Through Poetry"—Spauldings Branch Library, 5811 Old Silver Hill Road, District Heights, MD 20747. Featured Artists: Sistah Joy, Djembe drummer, Doc Powell and Visual Artist, Amira Rasayon. See <https://www.pgcmcls.info/events>
- **Saturday, February 15** (1–3 p.m.)—"Ekphrastic Poetry Workshop & Performance"—National Harbor - Arts' tination, 162 Waterfront St., Oxon Hill, MD 20745 *(Workshop Facilitator: Sistah Joy)
- **Monday, February 17** (11 a.m.–3 p.m.)—The Society, Inc.—Harbor City Chapter presents "A Black History Teen Poetry Slam" *(Cash Prizes!) Hyattsville Busboys & Poets, 5331 Baltimore Ave., Hyattsville, MD 20781
- **Friday, February 28** (6:30–8:30 p.m.)—Ebenezer Poetry Ministry presents its annual Black History Month Poetry & Praise Open Mic Night, "Black, Strong and Pressing Forward", at Ebenezer AME Church, 7707 Allentown Rd., Fort Washington, MD 20744. *Featured Poet: Sekeithia Johnson, Djembe drumming by Doc Powell. This event includes an Open Mic.
- **Saturday, March 8** (1–3 p.m.)—Collective Voices presents "A Tribute to Nikki Giovanni," a Women's History Month event. Venue: TBD. Special Guest Poet: Sekeithia Johnson. This event includes an Open Mic.
- **Saturday, April 12** (1–3 p.m.)—Collective Voices presents its 2025 National Poetry Month celebration, "From The Page To The Stage" at the Oxon Hill Library's Sojourner Truth Lecture Hall, 6200 Oxon Hill Rd., Oxon Hill, MD 20745. Guest Poet of Distinction: Past Maryland State Poet Laureate, Grace Cavalieri. See <https://www.pgcmcls.info/events>
- **Saturday, April 19** (2–3 p.m.)—Harmony Hall Regional Center presents "Messages of Conscience, Messengers of Inspiration" a National Poetry Month program featuring Collective Voices, 10701 Livingston Rd., Fort Washington, MD 20744. *(Tickets: \$8)
- **Saturday, April 26** (1–3 p.m.)—The Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts, Inc. (CAAPA) presents its annual National Poetry Month Celebration with Featured Poet, Sistah Joy and Special Guest Poet, Catrice Greer. CAAPA Cultural Center, 1900 Tucker Rd., Fort Washington, MD 20744

Drones from AI

against allowing the use of surveillance drones to proliferate without guardrails.

Law enforcement agencies have used drones in less sophisticated ways for years, Stanley said, but so-called "Drone as First Responder" programs raise a much larger range of privacy and transparency concerns for civil liberties groups.

"When there's a brand new technology that's controversial ... government agencies tend to be on their best behavior," Stanley said. But as the technology becomes more ubiquitous and scrutiny subsides, he added, "We could see it expand to routine patrols to cover an entire city."

Stanley also underscored that other law enforcement agencies may not adopt Montgomery County's transparency mechanisms and privacy protections.

"[As] this technology spreads to other counties in Maryland, and perhaps someday all counties in Maryland, are they all going to have these same protections?" he asked.

Even Montgomery County's program, he added, may still evolve in ways lawmakers do not anticipate.

Grammer, the Republican lawmaker, shares Stanley's concerns. "These marginal benefits—I don't think they outweigh the costs of, frankly, living in a society where the state's surveilling you 24/7 in 10 different ways," Grammer said.

After the Baltimore Police Department launched a controversial aerial surveillance program to capture images of nearly the entire city in 2019, Grammer introduced legislation to require law enforcement to obtain warrants before using aerial surveillance to gather evidence in criminal investigations. Despite reintroducing the bill each year, Grammer hasn't managed to pass it.

Grammer told Capital News Service he approached fellow lawmakers for signatures on the latest iteration of his bill ahead of last Wednesday's hearing.

"I'm talking with people in the committee on both sides of the aisle that are uneasy about how we didn't take this unmanned aerial surveillance [and] put guardrails there," he told CNS.

Though the General Assembly has yet to act on the subject, Stanley says Maryland may actually be ahead of other state legislatures by taking an interest in the Montgomery County program.

"I'm not aware of any other state legislatures that have begun to really think through the questions that the DFR programs bring forth," he said.

So far, legislation has yet to materialize in Maryland's General Assembly.

The Prince George's Post

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CARTER G. WOODSON

Carter G. Woodson (1875–1950) was the son of former slaves and the second African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He developed the idea for Negro History Week to promote the history, culture and achievements of African Americans and other people of color worldwide. Woodson recognized the importance of establishing an initiative that could be celebrated annually and on a national scale.

Designed to coincide with Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass celebratory birthdays, Woodson launched Negro History Week in February of 1926 as a coordinated effort to develop lessons and encourage the teaching of Black history across the nation's communities and public schools.

TRIBUTE TO MY SISTER

Brenda Lee Turner Johnson departed this life on Wednesday, July 25, 1984. She was born February 10, 1948, in Washington, D.C. She was the daughter of the late James Garnell and Ruth E. Turner of Brandywine, Maryland.

Brenda attended Malcolm Elementary School, Pomonkey High School and LaPlata Senior High School, LaPlata, Maryland. She became a clarinet player at the elementary level and continued to excel for six years at the high school level. After graduation from high school, she attended the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, Maryland.

Brenda had an incredibly happy childhood. She traveled with her family to church where she and her sisters sang praises to God as the "Turner Sisters Chorus." She became a member of the former John Wesley United Methodist Church at an early age. Brenda was a member of the Youth Choir and the Methodist Youth Fellowship for many years. She also served as Secretary of the former Washington Conference Youth Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church for four years.

Brenda was united in marriage to Ernest F. Johnson, Jr. on March 18, 1968. Out of their bond of love came two precious sons, Ernest F. Johnson, III and James Weldon Johnson. Brenda spent three years with her husband in Springfield, Missouri, while he attended school and later spent two years in Quantico, Virginia, while Ernest completed his duties in the United States Marine Corps.

Brenda was a devoted wife, mother, daughter and sister, and was greatly loved by all with whom she came into contact. She loved life and spent a lot of time with her boys, taking them to movies, beaches, scout activities, and bringing Ernest, III to serve as an acolyte in church whenever her health permitted. She enjoyed cooking, shopping and spending quiet times with

her family. She was a very organized and loving person, always wearing a smile for everyone that she would meet.

CONSTANCE BAKER MOTLEY

February 23, 1965, Constance Baker Motley elected Manhattan Borough president, the highest elective office held by a Black woman in a major American city. Black History Month <https://www.southhamptontown.gov>. What happened this day in Black History: February 24? On this day in 1864 Rebecca Lee became the first African American woman to receive an M.D. degree. On this day in 1931, Lillie Brown, the Civil rights activist was born in Troy, Alabama. On this day in 1974, the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice (NABCCJ) was founded.

TOWER ROAD DOCUMENTARY

Thursday, February 3, 2022, a documentary called "The Tower Road Bus" premiered on Howard University TV (WHUT) on FIOS Channel 532 and Comcast Channel 802. It is a story of forced segregation in Prince George's County in the 1970s. This documentary has won several awards. Tower Road is in Brandywine, Maryland, Southern Prince George's County.

While tension grips the Washington, D.C. area over school integration in the early 1970s, an African American School principal guides his students and teacher through the storm of forced school busing and the aftermath of a shocking murder. There was a panel discussion with Delegate Susie Proctor.

A TRIBUTE TO THE LEGENDS

Join us at the Harmony Hall Arts Center for a spectacular tribute to the legends of music, including Ray Charles, Billy Preston, Otis Redding, Bill Withers, and more, presented by Bryan Fox and friends. With roots in the church where he discovered his musical gift at the age of 13, Bryan Fox has become a dynamic force in the music scene. Renowned for his unique sound and electrifying performances, Fox and his band promise an unforgettable evening celebrating the timeless classics of legendary artists. The spectacular tribute will be Saturday, March 8, 2025, from 1–2:30 p.m. All ages. Ticket price: \$25. harmonyhallarts@pgparks.com (301) 203-6070. The address is Harmony Hall Arts Center, 10701 Livingston Road, Fort Washington, Maryland. Event Category: Arts Performances Senior Youth. Event Program & Series: Harmony Hall Arts Center Senior Art Series.

McDaniel College Announces Dean's List

By PRESS OFFICER
McDaniel College

WESTMINSTER, Md. (Jan. 24, 2025)—McDaniel College announces its fall 2024 dean's list, recognizing full-time undergraduate students for outstanding academic achievement, including:

Blessing Edoh of Upper Marlboro (20772), who has been recognized with Honors.

Zena Vasquez of Hyattsville (20784), who has been recognized with Honors.

Mikey Simmons of Upper Marlboro (20774), who has been recognized with High Honors.

Kelly Ross of Clinton (20735), who has been recognized with High Honors.

Eli Romero Cruz of Beltsville (20705), who has been recognized with High Honors.

Kaami Effa of Bowie (20720), who has been recognized with Highest Honors.

Teja Squire of Suitland (20746), who has been recognized with Honors.

Cindy Rivera of Riverdale (20737), who has been recognized with High Honors.

Jayla Pickeral of Aquasco (20608), who has been recognized with High Honors.

Eyuel Reta of New Carrollton

(20784), who has been recognized with High Honors.

Robert Wood of Laurel (20707), who has been recognized with Honors.

Rose Lopez of Bowie (20721), who has been recognized with Honors.

Gabby Gooden of Laurel (20708), who has been recognized with Highest Honors.

Highest honors are earned for a semester grade point average of 3.90 or higher, high honors for a grade point average of 3.70–3.89, and honors for a 3.50–3.69 grade point average.

For more information about McDaniel College, visit www.mcdaniel.edu.

COMMUNITY

Marietta House Museum February Programs

By STACEY HAWKINS
Marietta House Museum

Marietta House Museum Lunchtime Lecture: Benjamin Banneker's Journal

Please join us on **Wednesday, February 5**, noon–1 p.m. for Marietta's Lunchtime Lecture: Benjamin Banneker's Journal. Archivist Micah Connor takes a deep dive into the 19th century pages of Benjamin Banneker's journal.

Banneker was a mathematician, astronomer, and one of the first African Americans to be recognized for his scientific achievements. The journal contains notes on everyday life, correspondence with Thomas Jefferson, graphic projections for solar and lunar eclipses, practical descriptions of how he obtained his data about the planets and stars, and his dreams.

This is a free hybrid program. Recommended for ages 8 & up. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Walk-ins are welcome. Guests may bring a bag lunch. Registration is required for online participants to receive a TEAMS link. Register at this direct link: <https://tinyurl.com/4wbzrfu9>

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.

Marietta House Museum Black History Month Talk: Nottingham Middle Passage

Please join us on **Thursday, February 20**, 6:30–8 p.m. for Marietta's Black History Month Talk, Nottingham Middle Passage Project. Enslaved Africans disembarked in Nottingham in Prince George's County, MD between 1751 and 1771.

Join historian Janis Hagey to learn about ongoing research about the people who were trafficked in the trans-Atlantic human trade along the Patuxent River, a site of memory today.

This is a hybrid event. Registration is required for online participants to receive the TEAMS link. Suggested for ages 12 & up. \$5/adult, Ages under 12 free. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Walk-ins welcome. Register at this direct link: <https://tinyurl.com/4na8j9yu>

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.

PG Bold...PG Proud... PG BRAVE!

PG Valor Sports Announce the Launch of New Semi-Pro Football Team in Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER
PG Brave Football

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Md. (Jan. 21, 2025)—PG Brave is excited to announce the formation of a new semi-professional football team in Prince George's County, Maryland.

As an expansion team of the Atlantic Coast Football Alliance (ACFA), the PG Brave are set to bring thrilling football action to the local community, with plans to begin their inaugural season in September 2025.

The team is currently seeking coaching and game day staff, dance/cheer team leaders, and accepting sponsorship partnerships from businesses and community members who are looking to support local athletics and the growth of adult semi pro football in the region. Sponsorship opportunities offer a chance to be part of a new sports legacy in Prince George's County, MD with exposure at games, online and various other potential outlets throughout the season.

In addition, the PG Brave are actively working on securing their official home venue and are seeking a state-of-the-art gym to serve as their training facility. As the Brave prepare for their first season, they are dedicated to creating a professional environment for players, coaches, and fans alike.

The team is also now recruiting male athletes aged 18 and older who are passionate about football and looking for an opportunity to play at a competitive level. Aspiring players can apply to join the team and be a part of the Brave's exciting journey into the Atlantic Coast Football Alliance.

For sponsorship inquiries, player applications, or additional information about the PG Brave, please visit the official website

of PG Valor Sports, LLC www.PGValor.com and click on PG Brave or contact pgbravesfootball@gmail.com or on social media platforms @pgbravefootball.

About PG Brave:

The PG Brave is a dynamic and competitive semi-professional football team based in Prince George's County, Maryland. Our mission is to foster a high level of athleticism, community involvement, and sportsmanship while providing an exciting experience for both players and fans alike. As part of the American Continental Football Association (ACFA), we compete at a semi-pro level, offering talented athletes an opportunity to showcase their skills and passion for the game.

Our team is made up of players dedicated to the sport, who train hard and play with heart to represent Prince George's County on the football field. The PG Brave is committed to excellence both on and off the field, aiming to build a team that is not only strong in competition but also in character.

We pride ourselves on creating a family-oriented atmosphere on field and online where fans, sponsors, and players can come together to celebrate the spirit of football. Whether you are joining us as a player, a coach, or a spectator, we welcome you to be a part of the PG Brave journey, as we aim to make an impact in the community and compete at the highest levels of semi-professional football.

Join us and become a part of the Brave legacy! Whether you're on the field or cheering from the stands, together we will take on every challenge, and show the world the pride and strength of the PG Brave.

Bowie High School NJROTC CyberLioness Team—Making History

By PRESS OFFICER
Bowie High School NJROTC

On Thursday, December 12, 2024, the Bowie High School NJROTC CyberLioness (CyberPatriot) Team participated in the 17th CyberPatriot competition rounds and reached the state round. Their advancement to this level marked a first and a significant milestone for the team. As an all-female group, they set a new standard for Bowie High School NJROTC. The CyberLioness comprises team commander C/SR Taylynn Wilson and members C/PO2 Kira Mack, C/PO3 Alissa Walker, C/Seaman Alexis Manga, C/SA Sofia Rivera, and C/SA Karen Zelaya Luna. CyberPatriot is the National Youth Cyber Education Program created by the Air & Space Forces Association to inspire K–12 students toward careers in cybersecurity or other STEM fields that are critical to our nation's future. Congratulations to the CyberLioness for their participation and dedication to NJROTC.

—Assistant PAO
C/Seaman Omowunmi Ogunbanwo



PHOTO COURTESY BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL NJROTC

The Bowie High School NJROTC CyberLioness (CyberPatriot) Team participated in the 17th CyberPatriot competition rounds and reached the state round, marking a first and a significant milestone for the team.

The MIL Corporation President to Chair 2025 Alzheimer's Association Ride to End ALZ® Nation's Capital

Marisa Daley to lead national cycling event raising funds for Alzheimer's, dementia research

By CINDY SCHELHORN
Alzheimer's Association

ARLINGTON, Va. (Jan. 21, 2025)—Marisa Daley, president of The MIL Corporation (MIL), will serve as the Executive Leadership Chair of the 2025 Alzheimer's Association Ride to End ALZ® Nation's Capital on Saturday, May 3 in Leesburg, VA.

Ride to End ALZ is a cycling event to directly impact the pace and momentum behind the fight to end Alzheimer's. Inspired by science and driven by a determination to end this disease, participants raise funds and awareness to advance research toward the first survivor of Alzheimer's. One hundred percent of funds raised support Alzheimer's and dementia research.

"I accepted the generous invitation to chair the 2025 Ride to End ALZ Nation's Capital because this is a worthy cause," said Daley. "There is a need to expand awareness of the mission of the Alzheimer's Association and this event and I can help accomplish that. As an avid cyclist, I know my professional and athletic networks can bring new faces and connections to expand the success of this ride in its fourth year!"

Daley's passions for cycling and athletics are a natural tie to the interest in research exploring lifestyle modifications that may help to reduce the risk for cognitive decline and dementia. According to the Alzheimer's Association, two-thirds of Americans have at least one major risk factor for dementia. Scientists estimate that up to 40% of dementia cases worldwide may be attributable to modifiable risk factors.

The Alzheimer's Association, the world's largest private funder of Alzheimer's research, is funding the U.S. POINTER Study, a two-year clinical trial



PHOTO COURTESY ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

Marisa Daley, president of The MIL Corporation

evaluating the impact of lifestyle interventions that are simultaneously targeting multiple risk factors. The study encourages increased physical exercise, a healthier diet, cognitive and social stimulation and self-management of heart and vascular health. Findings will be presented this summer at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC) in Toronto, Canada.

"We are thrilled to have Marisa's leadership in 2025," said Jessica Wells, National Director, Ride to End ALZ. "Her commitment to helping us grow the Nation's Capital Ride through her connections in the corporate and cycling communities and her keen interest for fitness will be invaluable as we continue to drive growth and success in the year ahead. We look forward to achieving new milestones together under her guidance."

Now in its fourth year, this special event

will be held at Morven Park in Leesburg, VA. More than 500 riders from Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia, as well as states as far away as Texas and Colorado, are expected to participate in this year's event. Since its inception in 2022, the Nation's Capital Ride has raised \$1,310,788 for Alzheimer's research. The goal for this year's event is \$750,000.

Participants will enjoy spectacular views along scenic routes in Loudoun County ranging from 10–100 miles. The fully supported event will have rest stops with snacks and amenities along every route, as well as trained Support and Gear (SAG) crews. Riders will enjoy breakfast and an after-party complete with catered meals and beverages.

Interested individuals can register for Ride to End ALZ Nation's Capital at alz.org/ridedc. All participants must be 18 years of age or older. Riders are required to make a \$75 registration donation and agree to raise the fundraising minimum of \$500 in order to participate. Fundraising incentives include the exclusive Ride to End ALZ jersey.

For more information on Ride to End ALZ Nation's Capital, visit alz.org/ridedc or contact Jessica Wells, National Director, Ride to End ALZ, at 407.415.8611 or jwells@alz.org.

The Alzheimer's Association® is the leading voluntary health organization dedicated to Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to lead the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia —by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia®. Visit alz.org or call 800.272.3900.

Governor Moore Celebrates the Formation of the ENOUGH Alliance and \$100 Million Dollar Philanthropic Investment to End Child Poverty

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Jan. 23, 2025)—Governor Wes Moore today applauded the formation of the ENOUGH Alliance and a multi-million dollar investment from the philanthropic community dedicated to investing in children and families to end child poverty. To amplify the impact of the ENOUGH Act, philanthropic and private sector institutions are coming together with an initial commitment of more than \$100 million to form the ENOUGH Alliance and calling on other institutions to join their efforts. The coalition highlights Maryland's commitment to ending childhood poverty, increasing economic opportunity, and uplifting communities in need.

"Partnership produces progress, and nothing else does. Marylanders are coming

together across all levels of society to end child poverty in our state," Gov. Moore. "By joining forces across the public sector, private sector, philanthropic sector, non-profit sector, and beyond, we can marshal the broad support necessary to elevate our communities and leave no one behind. Today marks an important step forward in our continued work to ensure every child, regardless of background or zip code, thrives."

The ENOUGH Alliance is a coalition of local and national philanthropy and private sector organizations dedicated to investing in children and families to end child poverty in Maryland. The alliance activates philanthropic investment to supplement other private and state resources directed to communities with the highest rates of generational poverty.

The funding announced today demon-

strates the social sector's alignment with the State's ENOUGH Initiative, which provides resources to communities through partnerships with community organizations, non-profit organizations, and anchor institutions to improve the quality of life for Marylanders experiencing multi-generational poverty. The ENOUGH Initiative was authorized by the ENOUGH Act, which was signed into law in 2024 to address historic inequities in the state and tackle the root causes of poverty.

"Philanthropy works best when it is done in partnership and the work of investing in the future of our children and our communities requires cross-sector collaboration and alignment," said Founder and President of Harlem Children's Zone and

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Commutations Cement Biden's Legacy as a Champion of Justice and Racial Reconciliation

"American communities, disproportionately Black and Brown, have long borne the scars of the Drug War. Extreme and racist sentences for crack cocaine offenses tore apart families. Children grew up visiting their parents behind bars. Those parents are now elders, yearning to hold their grandchildren. Justice is served by allowing these individuals to return home. Their debt to society was long ago paid."

—Kara Gotsch, Executive Director of The Sentencing Project

Chief Justice John Marshall described a presi-

dential grant of clemency as an "act of grace." The President's Constitutional power to grant pardons and reprieves descends from the "prerogative of mercy" of English law.

Few acts of clemency exemplify the ideals of grace and mercy more fully than President Biden's historic commutation of the sentences of almost 2,500 people convicted of nonviolent drug offenses.

It was the largest single-day commutation in American history, coming less than a month after another historic act of clemency, sparing the lives of 37 people sentenced to death in federal courts.

Together, these commutations have cemented President Biden's legacy as a champion of justice, civil rights, and racial reconciliation.

The commutations of drug sentences address a shortcoming in the First Step Act which the National Urban League has advocated for years to repair. Too many people have been incarcerated for too long based on outdated and racist sentencing laws. Black men especially have suffered under our current sentencing regime that still charges crack cocaine offenses 18 times more harshly than powder cocaine at the federal level.

The National Urban League and our partners in the civil rights community have worked tirelessly to close the gaps in our drug sentencing laws. In November, the leaders of the eight legacy civil rights organizations wrote a letter to President Biden asking to remedy the extensive harm done to Black and Brown communities caused by the War on Drugs through commutations, and he delivered.

Further, the death penalty has ensnared hundreds of innocent defendants. The National Urban League has long opposed the death penalty in all cases. The death penalty has proven to be wildly discriminatory in every aspect. This is true in the federal system, just as in the states.

In his commutation order, President Biden acknowledged the racially disparate impact of the death penalty and committed to ending it on the federal level. His Department of Justice paused

executions, a welcome reprieve after the first Trump administration's gruesome execution spree.

The cases of the 37 men whose lives were spared manifest all the profound flaws that inevitably mar the death penalty, including significant racial disparities. Black Americans are seven times more likely to be falsely convicted of serious crimes compared to white Americans. Among the 37 were those prosecuted by almost exclusively white attorneys and convicted by all-white juries, the intellectually disabled, seriously mentally ill or brain damaged, those who faced execution though they did not personally kill anyone, and those whose convictions or death sentences were secured through the use of misleading or unreliable scientific evidence.

President Biden is a man of faith, courage, and principle. His historic acts of grace and mercy manifest all of those qualities.

"President Biden has demonstrated one of the strongest commitments to racial justice in American history," Morial said. "Today's historic decision will allow people to come home to their families sooner and give communities the opportunity to reunite and rebuild."

"We commend President Biden for his commitment to justice and equality even in his last days in office. As we prepare to enter a new era, today's actions are a reminder of what real leadership looks like."

—January 24, 2025

M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Department to Host Community Design Charette for the Suitland Cultural Arts Implementation Strategy

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

LARGO, Md. (Jan. 27, 2025)—The Prince George's County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), together with consultant firm Designing Local and the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County, invite residents and stakeholders to par-

ticipate in a community design charette to identify ways to shape the future of cultural arts in Suitland. The three-day charette for the Suitland Cultural Arts Implementation Strategy will be held on Thursday, February 6 from 6–8 p.m., Friday, February 7 from 3–5 p.m., and Saturday, February 8, 2025, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Suitland Community Center, 5600 Regency Lane, District Heights, MD 20747. Through fast-

paced, collaborative sessions, charette participants will provide input on new and existing spaces where creative arts and placemaking projects can enhance the community.

The Suitland Cultural Arts Implementation Strategy builds upon the Prince George's County Cultural Arts Study and seeks to harness the power of arts and culture for the benefit of all residents and visitors in Prince George's County. This strategy aims to identify ideal locations for creative placemaking

and will also craft conceptual designs tailored to each location's unique characteristics and community needs.

For more details on the strategy visit: <https://pgplan.org/suitland-cultural-arts>.

WHAT:
Suitland Cultural Arts Implementation Strategy Community Design Charette

WHEN:
Thursday, February 6, 2025 | 6–6:30 p.m. Open House | 6:30–8 p.m.

Community Input

Friday, February 7, 2025 | 3–5 p.m. | Community Input

Saturday, February 8, 2025 | 10 a.m.–noon | Open House & Concept Unveiling

Advance registration is available online.

WHERE:
Suitland Community Center, 5600 Regency Lane, District Heights, MD 20747

Prince George's County Executive Election Information

By PRESS OFFICER
Prince George's County League of Women Voters

Information on candidates in the special elections for Prince George's County Executive and County Council District 5 is now available at www.vote411.org. VOTE411 is the most comprehensive guide to candidates and enables voters to see the candidates who will appear on the ballot in their election district by entering their address. The League of Women Voters posed questions to all candidates also invited them to list their websites and social media pages.

VOTE411 also includes links to the official Board of Elections website to request an absentee

ballot or update their voter registration information, for example, to change party affiliation or provide a new address.

LWVPGC President Joyce Duckett said "We are very proud of the service to the voters that is provided by League volunteers. Especially in a special election where turnout is low, it is essential that voters be well-informed about all of the candidates." LWVPGC Secretary Fai Nelson added "VOTE411 is a vital part of the League's commitment to make democracy work in Prince George's County. We thank all of the candidates who are participating."

Inaugural Super Bowl SoberRide® Campaign Launched to Prevent DUI in Greater Washington

Nearly 40% of U.S. traffic deaths during Super Bowl involve drunk drivers

By PRESS OFFICER
WRAP

TYSONS, Va. (Jan. 27, 2025)—Preparing to combat that time of year when, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration figures, more than one-third (39%) of U.S. traffic deaths involve drunk drivers,* a local nonprofit organization announced today that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during next month's Super Bowl LIX.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the inaugural 2025 Super Bowl SoberRide® program will be in operation beginning at 8 p.m. on Sunday, February 9 and operate until 4 a.m. on Monday, February 10 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk period.

During this eight-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones then enter the SoberRide® code in the app's 'Payment' tab (under the 'Add Lyft Pass' option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's 2025 Super Bowl SoberRide® promo code will be posted at 6 p.m. on Sunday, February 9 on www.SoberRide.com.

WRAP's 2025 Super Bowl campaign effort is the charity's first new SoberRide® offering in a decade. WRAP also offers its SoberRide® program on St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Halloween and the winter holidays through and including New Year's.

SoberRide® is offered throughout Lyft's Washington D.C. coverage area which includes all or parts of: the District of Columbia; the Maryland counties of Montgomery and Prince George's and towns

therein plus the cities of Bowie, College Park, District Heights, Gaithersburg, Glenarden, Greenbelt, Hyattsville, Laurel, Mount Ranier, New Carrollton, Rockville, Seat Pleasant and Takoma Park; and the Northern Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William and towns therein plus the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park.

Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide® program has provided 93,706 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

More information about WRAP's SoberRide® initiative can be found at www.SoberRide.com.

*Super Bowl Sunday 2022 (6 a.m. on Sunday, February 13, 2022, through 5:59 a.m. on Monday, February 14, 2022; source: NHTSA's Fatality and Injury Reporting System Tool [FIRST])

Investment from A3

Founder of William Julius Wilson Institute at HCZ Geoff Canada. "Maryland's ENOUGH Act is a powerful step towards addressing systemic and historic challenges, providing the tools needed for young people to thrive. Through philanthropic support of this initiative, we are investing in a generation of families and children who will transform their futures and provide boundless opportunity for those too often left behind."

Members of the ENOUGH Alliance commit either to providing aligned funding to nonprofit organizations in ENOUGH-eligible jurisdictions or to contributing to the ENOUGH Community Support Fund. The Governor's Office for Children provides information to potential funders about where their contribution may be most impactful and works to help align investment with the State's existing efforts to uplift ENOUGH-eligible jurisdictions.

Through the ENOUGH Alliance, Blue Meridian Partners has committed significant investments to scale nonprofit organizations in Maryland, provide technical assistance to ENOUGH communities, and support the Moore-Miller Administration's whole-of-government approach to tackling child poverty. Organizations including the Bainum

Family Foundation and the Sherman Family Foundation are supporting the launch of the ENOUGH Community Support Fund.

"Blue Meridian Partners is proud to invest in Governor Moore's vision of ending child poverty by building family wealth, championing education equity, and creating pathways to opportunity," said Blue Meridian Partners President and Chief Investment and Impact Officer Jim Shelton.

"The ENOUGH Act recognizes that solving systemic challenges requires investing in people—families, children, and the dedicated professionals who support them," said Bainum Family Foundation Chief Executive Officer and President David Daniels. "At the Bainum Family Foundation, we know that when we invest in young children, their families, and educators, we invest in the future success of our communities. We're proud to stand with Governor Moore and our fellow philanthropic partners in creating the ENOUGH Community Support Fund to drive real, lasting change for Maryland's children and families."

"We are delighted to support Governor Moore's vision of ending childhood poverty, along with the Maryland legislature through the ENOUGH Act and philanthropy through the ENOUGH Alliance," said Sherman Family Foundation Founder and Chair Betsy

Sherman. "Today, with inspiring leadership, community-based solutions, and children-centered professionals and caring adults, the Sherman Family Foundation is honored to be part of the solution to recognize the promise of each child by investing in their future, from gestation through young adulthood. We are proud to join local funders in responding to Governor Moore's call to lift Maryland children out of poverty."

The alliance will build on previous philanthropic commitments including investments from the Maryland Partnership for Proven Programs with Arnold Ventures and Bloomberg Philanthropies' investment in the first-ever state Innovation Team, to continue the groundbreaking work that started with the ENOUGH Act.

The ENOUGH Act uses place-based interventions in communities with disproportionately high numbers of children living in poverty—rural, suburban, and urban. The ENOUGH Initiative program provided \$20 million in grants and technical assistance in 2024 for ENOUGH communities and Local Management Boards, to provide place-based efforts to reduce child poverty and promote economic mobility in Maryland.

Please visit the ENOUGH Alliance's website enoughalliance.org to learn more.

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Clarification of Medicare IRMAA and MAGI

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 confused by an article in my local newspaper which said that “MAGI” (modified adjusted gross income), on which my Medicare Part B premium is based, is my Adjusted Gross Income, plus any non-taxable interest, plus 50% of the social security I received. The part that is confusing is the 50% part. When I look at my tax return my Adjusted Gross Income includes the taxable portion of my Social Security benefit which, in my case, is 85% of my total benefits. Why must 50% of benefits be added to my AGI if it is already included in my total AGI? **Signed: Confused Dear Confused:** The article you refer to was misleading for stating that the Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) used to determine your Medicare premiums includes your normal Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) from your income tax return, plus any non-taxable interest you may have had, plus 50% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year. What the article should have said was that the MAGI which determines your Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA) to your Medicare premiums consists of your normal AGI from your tax return (which includes the taxable portion of your Social Security benefits), plus any non-taxable interest you may have had.

For additional clarity, the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA) is a supplemental amount added to the standard Medicare premium for those with higher incomes. The thresholds at which the IRMAA supplements apply depend on your IRS filing status, and your MAGI determines the amount of supplement which will be added to the standard Medicare premium. Single filers with MAGI over \$103,000, or married filers with MAGI over \$206,000 will see an IRMAA supplement added to their Medicare premium. Those whose MAGI is under the first IRMAA threshold pay the standard Medicare premium, but those whose MAGI exceeds the first IRMAA threshold above will pay more. How much more depends on how much their MAGI exceeds the first IRMAA threshold by. The IRMAA supplement (the additional premium amount) could be anywhere from \$69.90 to \$419.30 per month for Medicare Part B (coverage for outpatient services), or an additional \$12.90 to \$81.00 per month to the Medicare Part D (prescription drug plan) premium—again dependent on how much over the initial MAGI threshold the person is for their IRS filing status. You can see the MAGI levels and corresponding IRMAA supplements at this Medicare website: www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/2024-medicare-parts-b-premiums-and-deductibles

IRMAA and MAGI can be confusing. If you have questions about your Medicare premiums, help is available at SSAdvisor@amacfoundation.org, or at 1.888.750.2622.

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) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

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.

Imagine Andrews Public Charter School Excels in National and State Standardized Tests, Attributing its Success to Effective Team & Family Curriculum Focus Assessment: Rise UP.

By PRESS OFFICER
Imagine Schools

Academically, Imagine Andrews Public Charter School, as part of the four Mid-Atlantic Imagine Schools, proves to be one of the best amongst all Charter Schools in Prince George's County and arguably public schools in the county. Imagine Andrews emerged as number 15 amongst the top 20 best charter schools in Maryland; adjudged by U.S. News & World Report and additionally, rated as a four-star school during school year 2024/2025 by Maryland State Department of Education.

Imagine Andrews (headed by Principal Howard Rice) as a school possesses great qualities and offers exceptional tools for both team & family and scholars to reach their higher potential—stemming from the Imagine shared values of Justice, Integrity & Fun. Furthermore, Imagine Schools thrives on its measures of excellence urging all our schools to ensure tangible academic growth, significant character and school development. That is permeated through the distinctive academic and character culture at Imagine Andrews. In so doing, we ensure rigorous academic programs and evaluation like Rise UP. Rise UP is an initiative in developing effective evaluation tools, which stresses a culture of trust, high academic expectations, led by a visionary national instructional team and directed by teachers, staff and regional team leaders.

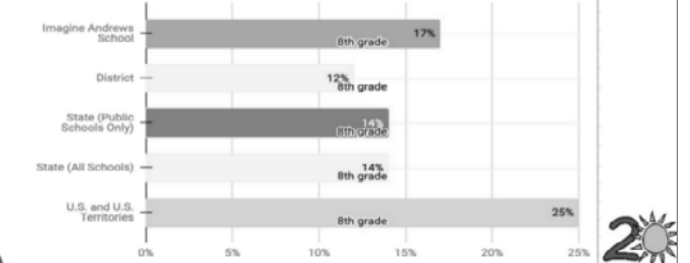
In the SY2024/2025 Fall academic testing year, Imagine Andrews exceeded expectations by excelling in all three major standardized testing that highlights the academic prowess of our scholars. In the PSAT given to 8th graders, scholars were in the second highest percentile surpassing the district, the state (*public & private schools*) and the United States as a whole; likewise, the MCAP (Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program Test) given by the State. Furthermore, Imagine Andrews had a higher proficiency rate in the Math & Reading on the Star Assessment Test administered among Imagine Andrews and all Imagine scholars nationwide.

Speaking to Imagine Schools Mid-Atlantic Region Academic Director, he stated that “Principal Rice and the Imagine Andrews leadership team work very closely with the Imagine Regional Team to ensure that all scholars receive high-quality instruction and educational experience. The data shows that the work being done with the Rise UP team and the school leadership team is trending in a positive direction. Although there is still work to be done, we know that we are on the right track to improve great outcomes for all scholars.

PSAT 8/9

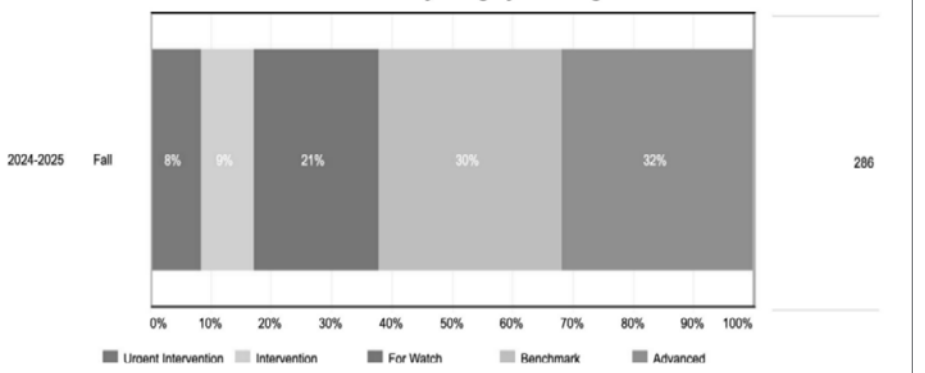
Scholars in Grade 8 took the PSAT 8/9 on October 23. PSAT 8/9 is one measure for scholars to be considered for PGCPSS Specialty Schools.

PSAT Fall 2024 Met Both EWR/Math



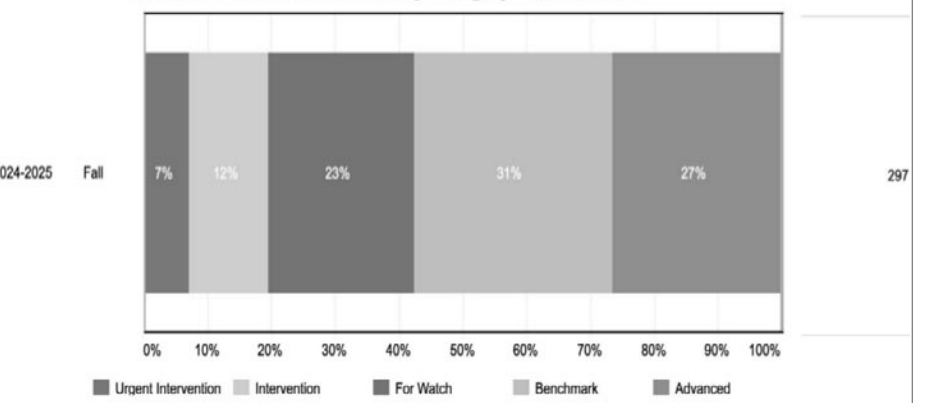
Academic Achievement- Reading

Distribution of Student Scores by Category - Reading

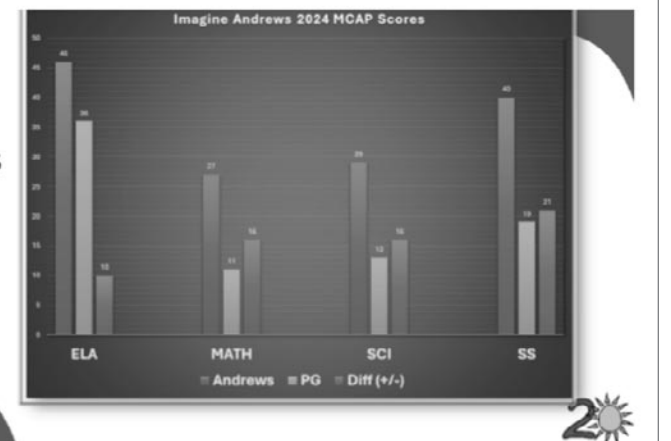


Academic Achievement- Math

Distribution of Student Scores by Category - Mathematics



Andrews MCAP



GRAPHS COURTESY IMAGINE SCHOOLS

Maryland Leaders Announce Groundbreaking Legislation to Raise the Minimum Wage and End Subminimum Wages

As first reported by The Washington Post, proposal Includes Phasing in a \$20 Minimum Wage, Ending Subminimum Wages for Tipped Workers, Exempting Tips from Taxation, Offering Tax Breaks for Small Businesses, and Requiring Transparency on Service Fees
New Polling Shows Overwhelming Support Among Maryland Voters for Wage Reforms

By PRESS OFFICER
One Fair Wage - MD

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Jan. 23, 2025)— Today, Delegate Adrian Bofo and Senator Cory McCray were joined by tipped workers, labor leaders, and fair wage advocates to announce a major legislative effort to raise Maryland's statewide minimum wage to \$20 per hour by 2030, eliminate subminimum wages for tipped workers, and exempt tips from state income taxation. The proposal, as first reported by The Washington Post, would also provide tax credits for small businesses and require transparency on service fees.

New Polling Highlights Strong Public Mandate for Wage Reform

At the press conference, Bofo and McCray unveiled new polling conducted by Fred Yang of Hart Research Associates, which underscores widespread support for the proposed reforms

and their urgency amidst Maryland's ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Key Findings from the Poll:

- Widespread Support:** 72% of likely voters and 81% of oversampled unlikely voters support raising the minimum wage to \$20/hour and eliminating the subminimum wage for tipped workers.
- Economic Resonance:** 78% of voters cite the rising cost of living as a primary reason for supporting the measure.
- Turnout Driver:** 34% of likely voters and 45% of oversampled unlikely voters report the ballot measure would make them more excited to vote in the 2026 election.
- Broad Appeal:** Support spans key demographics, including women, people of color, and young voters, demonstrating a strong coalition backing the proposal.

“This polling demonstrates a clear

mandate from Maryland voters to tackle wage inequity and deliver real solutions for working families,” said Delegate Bofo. “This legislation is not just about raising wages; it’s about addressing economic dignity and ensuring that all Marylanders can thrive.”

Senator McCray stated, “This legislation offers the right mix of pro-worker policies and small business protections to ensure that no one is left behind. Marylanders deserve leadership that delivers real solutions to address wage inequity and affordability challenges.”

Key Provisions of the Legislation:

- Raising the Minimum Wage:** Gradually increase Maryland's minimum wage from \$15 to \$20 an hour by 2030.
- Ending Subminimum Wages:** Phase out two-tier wage structures to ensure tipped workers earn the full minimum wage with tips on top.
- Exempting Tips from Taxation:** Re-

move tips from state income tax calculations, modeled after Congressman Steven Horsford's federal TIPS Act.

- Supporting Small Businesses:** Provide tax credits to restaurants and small businesses to assist with the transition to higher wages.

- Promoting Transparency:** Require businesses to disclose how service fees are distributed, ensuring fairness for workers and customers alike.

Saru Jayaraman, President of One Fair Wage, added “This isn’t just about taxes on tips. It’s about ensuring that tipped workers—disproportionately women and people of color—can earn a fair wage with tips on top. The National Restaurant Association’s fear-mongering and misinformation can’t obscure the truth: when workers earn fairly, businesses thrive, and communities prosper.”

Background

Maryland's current minimum wage

of \$15 an hour and tipped wage of \$3.63 per hour no longer meet the needs of workers facing rising costs of living. Women and people of color, who are disproportionately represented in tipped professions, face significant financial insecurity under the current system.

This legislation seeks to address these challenges through a Constitutional Amendment and accompanying policy reforms that phase in a \$20 minimum wage, eliminate subminimum wages, and provide financial relief to small businesses. If approved by the legislature, the amendment will appear on the November 2026 ballot, giving Maryland voters the opportunity to secure wage equity in the state's Constitution.

Delegate Bofo and Senator McCray, joined by advocates, workers, and community leaders, will emphasize how this effort addresses wage stagnation, economic inequities, and Maryland's ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

COUNTY CHURCH DIRECTORY

UNITED METHODIST

WESTPHALIA Christian Community Church

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Fax: (301) 735-1844

Rev. Dr. Timothy West, Pastor

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Web Site: www.westphaliaum.org

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Wednesday Prayer Service 8p.m.

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Church School: - 9:15 a.m.
Morning Worship Celebration - 10:30 a.m.
Wed. Night Bible Study - 7:45 p.m.
Elder Willie W. Duvall, Pastor

Have a Safe Weekend

Union United Methodist Church

14418 Old Marlboro Pike,
Upper Marlboro, MD

Church (301) 627-7389

Sunday School (Children/Adults) - 8:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Reverend Twanda E. King, Pastor
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EarthTalk® Q&A How NYC's Congestion Pricing Helps the Planet

By Shashwat Mishra | January 16, 2025

Dear EarthTalk: What exactly is congestion pricing as just implemented in New York City and how will it help the environment? Should other cities also adopt this policy?

—H.M., San Diego, CA

New York City recently became the first U.S. city to implement congestion pricing, a strategy aimed to reduce traffic in extreme congested areas by charging drivers a fee during peak hours. This approach not only helps alleviate traffic but also provides notable environmental benefits.

Congestion pricing seeks to manage demand for road space in busy areas. Drivers pay a fee to enter these zones with electronic tolling systems that track vehicles and collect payments. The revenue generated is usually invested into improving public transportation and infrastructure. For example, New York plans to issue these funds toward improving its subway system, which millions of residents depend on daily.

Reducing the number of vehicles on the road improves air quality. Fewer cars mean lower greenhouse gas emissions and less air pollution, major contrib-

utors to climate change and public health problems. Cleaner air also means fewer respiratory issues for residents mainly in the areas near major traffic hubs.

Beyond environmental gains, congestion pricing makes cities more tolerable. If traffic congestion decreases, it leads to faster commute times and less stress for drivers. Streets become quieter and more friendly for pedestrians. Walking and biking are encouraged more if streets are convivial. Cities like London have seen a 30 percent reduction in traffic volumes after executing congestion pricing; there have also been crucial improvements in public transit reliability.

Critics of congestion pricing usually point to worries about fairness. This is generally noticable for low-income drivers who may struggle to afford the fees. Small businesses that rely on vehicle deliveries also worry about added costs. However, advocates of congestion pricing argue that the advantages outweigh these challenges. Investments in public transit can make commuting more attainable and affordable for everybody; programs offering discounts or exemptions can help mitigate the impact on vulnerable groups.

Individuals can play a key role in helping congestion pricing succeed. Reduce your own driving by using public transit, biking or walking when possible. Participate in community discussions or campaigns that support congestion pricing. Volunteer or donate to groups advocating for sustainable urban planning. Moreover, you can educate others about the benefits of congestion pricing and how it improves urban life. Support local policies that fund clean energy solutions or improve bike and pedestrian infrastructure. Together, we can create cleaner and less congested urban environments for everyone.

CONTACTS: Better Cities Project: <https://better-cities.org>; U.S. Department of Transportation Congestion Pricing Resources: <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/congestionpricing>.

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