

# The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY *SINCE 1932*

Vol. 93, No. 37    September 11 — September 17, 2025    Prince George's County, Maryland    Newspaper of Record    Phone: 301-627-0900    25 cents

## Mr. Prather Hosts Inaugural Move With Mr. Prather Live! in Bowie

By PRESS OFFICER  
**Move With Mr. Prather Live!**

BOWIE, Md. (Aug. 30, 2025)—It was a morning of fun, laughter, and joy all in the name of learning thanks to Azel Prather, affectionately known as Mr. Prather. The Prince George's County native hosted his inaugural Move With Mr. Prather Live! at the Bowie Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday, August 30, drawing more than 500 children, parents, and families for a morning of music, movement, and community celebration.

Though this marks the first-ever Move With Mr. Prather Live, Mr. Prather is no stranger to the spotlight as a philanthropist, educator, and community leader in the DMV. For more than 10 years, he has served children locally, nationally, and abroad through his nonprofit, The Prather Foundation, from childhood programming and family support in Ghana, to programming in states such as Georgia and West Virginia. His commitment to children's edu-

cation and joy has even earned him a feature on The Ellen DeGeneres Show.

Launching the live experience in Bowie held special significance, as it pays homage to the community that raised and continually supports his efforts. To ensure that families across the county could attend, Mr. Prather partnered with local organizations such as Ms. Frazier's Day Care, Zion Church, First Baptist Church of Glenarden, and the D.C. Chapter of the Daddy Stroller Club, which brings awareness to postpartum depression in fathers. Together, they helped make the event accessible to families throughout the region. The production itself reflected one of Mr. Prather's deepest commitments: empowering young people. The event was staged in collaboration with Do The Work DC, a youth-led creative production company founded by Maryland native Aja Sophia and powered by teens and young adults ages 14–21.

See **MOVE** Page A3



PHOTO CREDIT TREVON HENDERSON

**Azel Prather, affectionately known as Mr. Prather, hosted his inaugural Move With Mr. Prather Live! at the Bowie Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday, August 30.**

## DC Metro Area Space, AI, and Cybersecurity Conference Coming This October

By PRESS OFFICER  
**Capitol Technology University**

LAUREL, Md. (Sept. 5, 2025)—Capitol Technology University is helping define the boundaries of space and AI as the only local university that is sponsoring a conference dedicated to exploring the intersection of artificial intelligence and cybersecurity in space.

The GreyCon conference, **Friday, October 10**, at their campus in Laurel, Maryland, will offer tech leaders and innovators a full day of presentations, panels, and networking opportunities focused on how technological innovations in artificial intelligence and cybersecurity are converging to transform the future in space.

Capitol Tech's Dr. William Butler, USMC (Ret.) and VP of Cyber Science Outreach and Partnerships, is the event host and organizer. "GreyCon 2025 is about what comes next, shap-

ing our future in space, AI, and cybersecurity," said Dr. Butler. "At Capitol Tech, we're leading the next wave—designing resilient systems, pioneering breakthrough solutions, and ensuring a smarter, safer, and more connected world. The pace of innovation is accelerating."

GreyCon's keynote speaker is The Honorable Charles F. Bolden Jr., Major General, USMC (Ret.), 12th NASA Administrator, U.S. Astronaut, and Founder and CEO Emeritus of The Charles F. Bolden Group, the operational center of Inter Astra™—the Global Community for the Business of Space.

Other featured speakers include Che' Bolden, CEO of The Charles F. Bolden Group, Renee Wynn, CEO of RP Wynn Consulting LLC and former NASA CIO, Dr. Diane M. Janosek, CEO of Janos LLC and former

See **SPACE** Page A5

## FedChoice Charitable Foundation and Blacks In Government Announce 2025 Guy Fleming Scholarship Recipients

By PRESS OFFICER  
**FedChoice Charitable Foundation**

LANHAM, Md. (Sept. 2, 2025)—The FedChoice Charitable Foundation and Blacks In Government (BIG) are proud to announce the ten outstanding high school seniors selected for the 2025 Guy Fleming Scholarship program.

Initiated by Ms. Sarah Fleming to honor her late husband's legacy, this collaborative scholarship program supports deserving students from Title I schools nationwide. Each recipient will receive a \$1,000 scholarship to support their higher education journey.

The 2025 Guy Fleming Scholarship recipients are:

- **Muhammad Bilal, Charles Herbert Flowers High School, Springdale, MD**
- **Tamyra Britton, Bowie High School, Bowie, MD**
- **Zain Elcock, Carter G. Woodson High School, Fairfax, VA**
- **Zaria Jacobs, Tampa Bay Technical High School, Tampa Bay, FL**
- **Josiah Jackson, TF North High School, Calumet City, IL**
- **Alysha Murrell, RCEC, Vicksburg, MS**
- **Jakiyah Perkins, Warren Central High School, Vicksburg, MS**
- **Madison Reynolds, Fultondale High School, Fultondale, AL**
- **Alexa Sneed, Thomas Dale High School, Chester, VA**
- **Sabrina Williams, Oakton High School, Alexandria, VA**

"As the 16th National President of Blacks In Government, I am honored to support the second annual Guy Fleming Educational Scholarship in partnership with the FedChoice Charitable Foundation," said David Groves. "This collaboration underscores our shared commitment to education as a catalyst for opportunity and advancement. Together, we're providing resources and encouragement for students from underserved communities to pursue higher education and achieve their aspirations."

As FedChoice Federal Credit Union celebrates its 90th anniversary alongside BIG's 50th year, this partnership represents a powerful



COLLAGE COURTESY FEDCHOICE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

### 2025 Guy Fleming Scholarship Awardees

investment in future leaders from economically disadvantaged communities.

"We are honored to deepen our longstanding partnership with Blacks In Government during this milestone year for both our organizations," said Brett Noll, President and CEO of FedChoice Federal Credit Union. "Together, we are proud to invest in the future by providing college scholarships to deserving students—empowering the next generation of leaders and leveling the playing field for those in need."

The Guy Fleming Educational Scholarship celebrates the legacy of Mr. Guy Fleming, a loyal FedChoice FCU member and dedicated public servant who worked in the US Department of Treasury and IRS. Ms. Fleming established this scholarship program based on

her belief in the transformative power of education and her desire to create more opportunities for deserving students from underserved communities.

*The FedChoice Charitable Foundation improves the financial well-being of those in need, makes a positive difference in local communities, and serves as a resource, advocate, and champion for members of the Federal Community.*

Blacks In Government (BIG) was established in 1975 and incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1976. BIG has been a national response to the need for African Americans in public service to organize around issues of mutual concern and use their collective strength to address workplace and community concerns.

## M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Board Announces the Retirements of Vice Chair Dorothy F. Bailey and Commissioner A. Shuanise Washington

By PRESS OFFICER  
**M-NCPPC**

LARGO, Md. (Sept. 4, 2025)—The Prince George's County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) announced today during its meeting the retirements of Vice Chair Dorothy F. Bailey, effective August 30, 2025, and

Commissioner A. Shuanise Washington, effective October 1, 2025.

In Prince George's County, all members of the M-NCPPC Planning Board are appointed by the County Executive, subject to approval of the County Council. Vice Chair Bailey was first appointed to the Planning Board in July 2011 and reappointed in October 2015 and October 2019. Commissioner

Washington was first appointed to the Planning Board in July 2011 and reappointed in October 2012 and November 2016. The County Executive will appoint the next Planning Board members to fill the vacant positions, which are set to expire June 15, 2027, and June 15, 2028.

"Vice Chair Dorothy Bailey and Commissioner Shuanise Washington

have been tremendous assets to M-NCPPC and our work in Prince George's County over the past 14 years," says Chairman Darryl Barnes. "During their terms, Bailey and Washington contributed significantly to the weekly review of development applications, were instrumental to the adoption of several master and sector plans as well as Plan Prince George's 2035 –

the Approved General Plan for Prince George's County, and participated in many planning, parks, and recreational initiatives."

"Serving as vice chair of the Prince George's County Planning Board has been a wonderful way to complete five

See **RETIREMENTS** Page A2

### INSIDE

**Governor Moore Statement on Da'Cara Thompson Investigation**

**FedChoice Federal Credit Union Selected for the Credit Union Times 2025 Luminaries Awards**

**City of Bowie International Festival Around the County, Page A2**

**PGCDPC Announces 2025 Scholarships Recipients: Congratulations to Simone Forrest, Webster Jackson, and Adrian Sison**

**College Park Tennis Group Plays at the US Open**

**Community, Page A3**

**To Be Equal: Louisiana's Attack on the Voting Rights Act Deepens America's Civil Rights State of Emergency**

The State of Black America report outlines that 27 states have passed legislation in the past five years that directly restricts access to the ballot ...

**Commentary, Page A4**

**City of District Heights Announces Transition in City Manager Role**

**Prince George's County Educators Win New Contract That Supports, Strengthens Classroom Learning**

**Business and Finance, Page A5**



# TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

## Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

### SEPTEMBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to Franklin and Joyce Isaac, Jose and Daphne Rojas, Norville and Deserae Hughes, Ted and Rebecca Mosley, Shelton and Melania (Pastor) Trice, Owen and Audrey Johnson who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating Wedding Anniversaries in September. Wishing you many more years to celebrate.

### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to Ayden Bell, Osayi Omoregbe, Chidinma Mbakwe, Mariama Davies, Ronald Jones, Pam Stahl, Donna Cain, Norman Noel, Alexis Proctor, Elijah P. Knight, Kirk Samuel, Beonie Pearson, Idena Thomas, Karen Taylor, Curt Falby, Annie Cokes, James Dorsett, IV, Kizzy Savoy, Umaru Davies, Rebecca Mosley, Vincent Cooke who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating birthdays in September.

### CLINTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH.

Clinton United Methodist Church Art as Therapy (Mental Health) Beauty for Ashes Retreat Friday, September 19, 2025, via Zoom at 7 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. (Prayer Garden & Multipurpose Room) cost is \$25 per person (lunch included in registration fee). The church address is 10700 Brandywine Road, Cinton, Maryland 20735. Church Office: 301-868-1281. Email: cumcmd@verizon.net.

### 149TH ANNIVERSARY HOMECOMING

St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, Baden Parish will be celebrating their 149th Anniversary Homecoming on Sunday, September 21, 2025, at 10 a.m. Guest Speaker, Minister Faye A. Johnson from Genesis Covenant Church in Clinton, Maryland. Message for the day is “We are Trusting and Seeing What God Can Do.” St. Philip’s Church, Baden Parish is located at 13801 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. There will be a lite lunch after the service. Come out and bring a friend.

### 67TH ANNUAL WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL HORSE SHOW

The 67th Annual Washington International Horse Show in the Washington, D.C. area October 20–26, 2025 with the magic, the memories, and the absolute best of indoor show jumping. With nearly \$1 million in prize money, a star-studded lineup of Olympic-caliber athletes, family-friendly fun, and an elevated experience for all, this year’s WIHS is set to be best-in-class on every level. Join WIHS at The Show Place Arena at Prince George’s Equestrian Center. Buy tickets at <https://wihs.org/>

### FOODEES FOOD AND CULTURE FESTIVAL, NATIONAL HARBOR

Come on out and enjoy the number one touring food truck festival in the US! October 17, 1 p.m.–October 19, 7 p.m. Tanger Outlets National Harbor, 6800 Oxon Hill Road, National Harbor, Maryland 20745. Admission is free. Tickets and information: Visit Eventbrite, the Destination Magazine, ALL Events.

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

### Eastover Auto Merges With Parts Authority

Eastover Auto Supply recently underwent a big change. As of September 2, Eastover has merged with Parts Authority and moved in with their Earl’s Discount Auto Parts branch.

In spring of 1982, Eastover Auto was ailing—on the verge of closing—when Will Foreman decided to take a chance on it.

A year earlier, Will had left his position as events manager at the Towson Center, Towson University, to take a job at Southeast Auto Supply. He couldn’t resist the opportunity to strike out on his own in Eastover.

In his first month running Eastover Auto, Will decided he needed help. He called on his friend, Towson Center building manager John McHale (incidentally, my son) who agreed to give Eastover Auto a whirl.

It would prove to be a big adjustment for John. “He couldn’t tell a spark plug from a brake shoe,” Will said. John agreed, “I knew nothing.”

He learned quickly, however. In an era of print catalogues and paper price sheets, he had to memorize as much as possible just to keep up.

Soon, the store built a loyal base of auto-repair shops, government facilities, and regular walk-in customers, drawn to Eastover’s signature mix of deep knowledge and good-natured banter.

### Retirements from A1

decades of service to the residents of Prince George’s County,” says Bailey. “It has been a joy and delight to experience the exciting M-NCPPC programs and wonderful places as well as work with people who love the County and are conscientious about services we provide to the residents.”

“Serving the residents of Prince George’s County over the past 14 years has been an extraordinary honor,” said Washington. “I’m deeply grateful for the opportunity, and for the trust placed in me to help the County’s growth and development through such a piv-

Long-time supporters included Morningside Councilman John Anthony and former Morningsider Wayne McKeown.

Across the years, the catalogues were replaced by computers.

The staff changed. Though some people—like Wayne Brown—have stayed around for decades and become family.

Some staff, literally, were family. My daughter Elaine and grandson Conor have both worked there across the years, and Will’s children all pitched in when they were in high school.

One by one, the other independent auto parts stores have gone out of business or been bought by national chains. Through it all, Will and John, “joined at the hip,” as Will says, have kept Eastover Auto going. In 2014, lease changes forced Eastover Auto to leave its original home in Eastover Shopping Center and relocate to a space behind the Forestville Fire Department and across the street from the old Murray’s Steaks.

Eastover Auto adjusted to the new location, aggressively building online sales through eBay and Amazon, and the customer base grew significantly by reaching new customers across the U.S. and all over the globe.

In the wake of COVID, however, their main supplier went bankrupt, forcing Eastover Auto to find a new path forward.

### Visit them in Marlow Heights

The Eastover staff—led by Will and

otal Commission. I hold great respect for the dedicated staff—whose tireless work in planning and implementing programs continues to benefit our community. I will miss them dearly.”

The Prince George’s County Planning Board meets weekly to review subdivisions, site plans, and other development applications and develop and make recommendations to the County Council on land use policies to guide the growth and development of the County. In addition, the Planning Board provides managerial oversight of the M-NCPPC Prince George’s County Planning Department and the De-

### ST. PHILIP’S CRAB FEAST

We will have a Crab Feast on Sunday, October 12, 2025, from 2–5 p.m. ALL YOU CAN EAT: ALL YOU CAN LOVE! At St. Philip’s Church Hall, 13801 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. All tickets in advance are \$60 Adults, \$25-12 & under. Land Lovers Food and Drinks included. Tickets: Vivian 804-301-9530, Shirley 302-690-4260, Michele 240-882-3369. Peter A. Gross, Sr. Scholarship/Memorial Fund “Proceeds Go to Future Scholarships.”

### PAINT & SIP NIGHTS

Wind Down. Wine Up. Join us for Paint & Sip at Piano Keys Restaurant Lounge for a smooth and soulful after-work vibe you do not want to miss. Location: Piano Keys Restaurant & Lounge 7651 Matapeake Business Dr. Suite 104, Brandywine, Maryland. Date: Every 2nd & 4th Wednesday. Paint & Sip Time: 6–8 p.m. and Afro Caribbean 11 p.m. Enjoy good music, good food, and great company. Coming solo or with the crew, just show up and vibe out. Painting materials included. Chill. Connect. Unwind. RSVP [WWW.SADEPAINTANDSIP.COM](http://WWW.SADEPAINTANDSIP.COM). More information 240-342-9192.

### BADEN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Baden VFD is at the southern edge of Prince George’s County, MD. The address is 16608 Brandywine Road, Brandywine, Maryland. We have a very nice banquet hall available for rent. We are in need of Firefighter EMS, EMS, and administrative members. Telephone: 301-888-1888. [info@badenvfd.com](mailto:info@badenvfd.com).

### TRIBUTE TO BILLIE HOLIDAY

Join us for an unforgettable afternoon as we pay tribute to the legendary Billie Holiday. Experience the magic of her timeless music, brought to life by talented performers who will capture the essence of Lady Day’s soulful music and emotional depth. From her iconic hits like “Strange Fruit” and “God Bless A Child” to lesser-known gems, this tribute promises to be a heartfelt celebration of the greatest voices. Do not miss this chance to honor Billie Holiday’s enduring legacy and immerse yourself in the beauty of her music Saturday, September 20, 2025, from 1–2:30 p.m. Ticket Price \$25 Age: All. Event Category: Arts Performances. Event Programs & Series This event is at Harmony Hall Arts Center, 10701 Livingston Road, Fort Washington, Maryland. Telephone 301-203-6070 [harmonyhall@pgparks.com](mailto:harmonyhall@pgparks.com).

### BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Bowie State University recently welcomed Babson College President Stephen Spinelli Jr. and his staff to campus for discussions around our shared commitment to fostering innovation and entrepreneurial education and leadership. We thank them for visiting and engaging in meaningful dialogue about bold future for students. At Bowie State, entrepreneurial education is embedded in our university. Learn more about our entrepreneurship resources: <https://bit.ly/45i00rW>. BowieBOLD, Entrepreneurship, Innovation.

John—is joining Parts Authority as they open their new location at 4500A St. Barnabas Rd in Marlow Heights. Come in for your new wipers. And welcome them.

### Gospel Concert at Ebenezer A.M.E. Church

Chair Edward P. Burroughs III invites you to “a very special evening of worship, fellowship, and inspiration” at the District 8 Gospel Concert, Friday, Sept. 19, 7 p.m. at Ebenezer A.M.E. Church, 7707 Allentown Road, in Fort Washington. Doors will open early for those who RSVP.

As Chair Burroughs says, “This concert is a celebration of our community’s resilience, faith and unity.”

### Milestones

Happy Birthday to Mike Dawes, Sept. 9; Charlie Deegan, Robert Andrew Woods, John Dexter Woods and Nan Brown, Sept. 10; Carol Lee, my late husband Jack McHale, Sept. 11; my cousin Mary Ann Bass, Anthony Thomas and Hank Busky, Sept. 12; Patricia Epperly, Sept. 13; Kenny Clark, Sept. 14; Elnora McCall, Sept. 15; Dolores McDonald, Steven Warren and Yolanda Dooley, Sept. 16; Kimberly Brewer, Everett Mason, Jr. and Joan Stakem, Sept. 17; and Shirley Smith, Sept. 18.

Happy Anniversary to Les and Kathy Hedrick, Sept. 13; and to Sal and Kathy (Blankenship) Biberaj, Sept. 14.

partment of Parks and Recreation. Together, with fellow colleagues from the Montgomery County Planning Board, they guide M-NCPPC’s bi-county mission to manage physical growth and plan communities; protect and steward natural, cultural, and historic resources; and provide leisure and recreational experiences.

*The Prince George’s County Planning Board, together with the Montgomery County Planning Board, make up The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Visit [www.pgplanningboard.org](http://www.pgplanningboard.org).*

## Around the County

### Governor Moore Statement on Da’Cara Thompson Investigation

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Sept. 5, 2025)—Governor Wes Moore today released the following statement on the investigation into the death of Da’Cara Thompson:

“Our entire state mourns the horrible loss of Da’Cara Thompson, who was taken from us by an act of senseless violence. Dawn and I join all Marylanders in praying for Da’Cara and her family in the wake of this tragedy.

“We are grateful for the dedicated men and women of law enforcement, including Maryland State Police and the Prince George’s County Police Department, who have collaborated closely throughout this investigation. I have been, and will continue to be, in constant contact with our public safety partners as they carry out their work to ensure that justice is served.

“Da’Cara raised her hand right out of high school to join our most recent cohort of Maryland Service Year Option members—patriotic Marylanders committed to public service. She yearned to be part of our mission to solve big problems with bold solutions through her passion for the arts.

“She was a bright light in our state. We will use every tool at our disposal to ensure those responsible for this crime are held accountable and honor Da’Cara’s legacy of service through our unwavering commitment to the safety and well-being of all Marylanders.”

### FedChoice Federal Credit Union Selected for the Credit Union Times 2025 Luminaries Awards

LANHAM, Md. (Sept. 4, 2025)—FedChoice Federal Credit Union has been named to Credit Union Times’ Luminaries Awards, Class of 2025.

This award celebrates top industry professionals, credit unions and world-class service organizations that are changing the cooperative financial services industry for the better. Shining a spotlight on the individuals and organizations that have significantly enhanced the not-for-profit financial cooperative landscape, the award recognizes those that have raised the bar within the credit union sphere, by driving positive change and inspiring others to follow suit.

The 2025 Luminaries were selected by a panel of esteemed judges based on how well they stated and achieved goals with regard to the nomination category; how impactful their work has been; how dedicated the nominee has been to furthering modernization and humanization in the credit union business; and how committed the nominee has been to high ethical standards, service and excellence.

“The CU Times newsroom believes in the credit union industry and the people and organizations that support the financial cooperative spirit, and that’s just one reason we do these awards,” says CU Times Editor-in-Chief, Michael Ogden. “We adore the creative ways these individuals and credit union-serving groups approach solving the financial issues for the members, and in turn, create a better world in communities across our country. It’s always an honor to recognize so many people doing so many wonderful and inclusive things to help push our industry higher.”

FedChoice Federal Credit Union has been recognized as a finalist in the Community Impact – Credit Union (\$1B & Below) category. The nomination highlights the credit union’s exemplary work through the FedChoice Charitable Foundation, especially its dedicated support of Title I schools in the DMV area, which directly empowers students as well as teachers. “We’re committed to embracing, educating, and elevating students, educators, and more by providing meaningful support where it’s needed most,” says Brett Noll, President/CEO of FedChoice. “This recognition reinforces our mission to level the playing field and strengthen the communities we proudly serve. It’s an honor have our efforts recognized by being named a finalist for this prestigious award.”

*FedChoice Federal Credit Union was originally chartered in 1935 when a group of Bureau of Internal Revenue (aka IRS) employees decided to establish a credit union to meet their financial needs. Since then, FedChoice has grown stronger each year by serving all federal employees, retirees, and their immediate family and household members in the Washington DC, Baltimore and Philadelphia metro areas. With access to over 60,000 surcharge-free ATMs, over 5,000 CO-OP Shared Branches, plus online and mobile banking, members may access their accounts 24/7/365. FedChoice serves over 25,000 members and has \$448 million in assets.*

### City of Bowie International Festival

Celebrate world cultures at the Bowie International Festival on **September 13** at Allen Pond Park! Each year, world cultures and nations are celebrated throughout the Bowie International Festival in a variety of ways, including dance and musical performances from around the world.

There are also multicultural activities for the kids and vendors selling unique goods and a wide variety of food choices from different cultures.

For more information visit [www.cityofbowie.org/international-fest](http://www.cityofbowie.org/international-fest). For questions, reach out to Linda Tucker at [ltucker@cityofbowie.org](mailto:ltucker@cityofbowie.org) or call 240-544-5639.

### Council Member Adams-Stafford Pays Off \$60,000 in School Lunch Debt

District 5 Council Member Shayla Adams-Stafford has paid off more than \$60,000 in school lunch debt for families of Prince George’s County Public School students in her district. Students benefiting from the donation attend Charles H. Flowers High School, Thomas G. Pullen K-8 Creative and Performing Arts,



# COMMUNITY

## PGCDPC Announces 2025 Scholarships Recipients: Congratulations to Simone Forrest, Webster Jackson, and Adrian Sison

By PRESS OFFICER  
Prince George’s County Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.

OXON HILL, Md. (Aug. 31, 2025) (Hey Papi Promotions Media)—The Prince George’s County Drug Policy Coalition, Inc. (PGCDPC) is pleased to announce the recipients of its 2025 scholarship program. This year’s honored scholars are Simone Forrest, Webster Jackson, and Adrian Sison. Each recipient has demonstrated exceptional commitment to academic excellence, community engagement, and thoughtful reflection on current drug policy issues.

### Meet the Scholars

Simone Forrest—2025 graduate, Christ Church Boarding School. Simone’s leadership and academic achievements exemplify the Coalition’s mission to support young people who are poised to become thoughtful, data-informed voices in public health and policy.

Webster Jackson—Student at Salisbury University. Webster brings a critical perspective on policy and safety, underscoring the Coalition’s emphasis on evidence-based discussion around substance use and public health.

Adrian Sison—Graduate student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. Adrian contributes important insight into the real-world implications of policy decisions and the importance of informed dialogue.

### What the Scholarship Entails

Each recipient provided the standard scholarship documentation, including a resume, transcripts (high school or college), references, and proof of residence in County Council District 8. The application process reinforces PGCDPC’s commitment to supporting academically talented students who are rooted in the community they serve.

### Thoughtful Reflections on Maryland’s Edibles Law

As part of the scholarship experience, recipients contributed essays addressing current Maryland law regarding adults 21 and over for personal use of edible products. Key takeaways from the essays illustrate the nuanced perspectives that young scholars bring to the table:

Simone Forrest emphasized that risk does not vanish with age; instead, it can become more complex, underscoring the need for ongoing education and thoughtful policy.

Webster Jackson offered a concern about home production, noting safety risks and challenges in dosage accuracy without professional oversight, and the implications for regulation and enforcement.

Adrian Sison reflected on experiential learning from his school community, suggesting that if individuals could control edible content more reliably, it might mitigate hospital visits and enhance safety.

### A Commitment to Public Health and Humane Policy

PGCDPC continues to champion drug policies that reflect the public health nature of substance use and strive for humane, evidence-based approaches. The scholarship program is part of a broader effort to empower the next generation with critical thinking about today’s drug climate. Since its inception in 2012, the Coalition has awarded over \$213,000 in scholarships, investing in students who will influence policy, health, and community well-being.

*The Prince George’s County Drug Policy Coalition, Inc. is dedicated to advancing policies and laws that prioritize public health, reduce harm, and promote equitable outcomes for all residents. Through education, advocacy, and support for youth leadership, PGCDPC works to create healthier communities across Prince George’s County and Maryland. Learn more at [www.pgcdpc.com](http://www.pgcdpc.com)*

## College Park Tennis Group Plays at the US Open



PHOTO CREDIT GARRETT ELLWOOD/USTA

Players from College Park’s JTCC Wheelchair & Adaptive Tennis organization appeared on the world-famous USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center court in New York City on Wednesday, September 3, 2025 and played in front of gathered crowds, where they were able to create once in a lifetime memories playing on the court of their favorite tennis heroes. For more information about JTCC, visit <https://jtcc.org/>.

The selection of these groups by the USTA to play on the court is decided based on the organization’s commitment to making tennis accessible and helping to grow the game at the junior level. The US Open will also be championing inclusion by uniting fans and players through the power of tennis through their Be Open campaign ([https://www.usopen.org/en\\_US/content/be\\_open.html](https://www.usopen.org/en_US/content/be_open.html)), which will include a series of events throughout the tournament.

### Move from A1

The morning opened with remarks from Councilmember Wanika Fisher (District 2), who underscored the importance of community-centered programming. “I had an amazing time at the Live with Mr. Prather event on Saturday. It was great to see so many parents invested in the development of their children, and it was amazing to see so many children engaged and excited about learning. I am a firm believer that education is the gateway to unlimited possibilities for our youth, which is why role models like Mr. Prather are so important. I am amazed by his devotion and creativity and I look forward to seeing how he will continue to use his influence to take education to new heights in the DMV.”

To ensure the event was inclusive to all families, there was also a designated sensory station. From there, the stage came alive with high-energy performances, interactive skits, and surprise appearances. Mr. Prather was joined by friends and collaborators including Jump DC, DMV award-winning comedian Jay Cole, and former NFL player, Soul Cole, turning the event into a full family celebration.

Community leaders and supporters such as Broccoli City co-founder Jermon



PHOTO CREDIT TREVON HENDERSON

Williams, 4DMV Kids founder Sara Acors, AAU Coach Ralph Jennings of Toddler Ball, Eunique Gibson of Happy Hues Co and Culture Brands, Chef “JR” Robinson, owner of Kitchen Cray, and Kevin Ford, Candidate for Maryland State Senate (District 24), were also in attendance, highlighting the wide-reaching impact of Mr. Prather’s work and the shared commitment to creating spaces where children and families can thrive.

Since expanding into music in 2020, Mr. Prather has released two acclaimed albums, Move With Mr. Prather, Vol. 1

and Vol. 2, which have garnered over 1.5 million streams. Saturday’s live show marked the first time that families in the DMV were able to experience his music and movement programming in a large-scale, interactive format.

While families eagerly await future dates for Move With Mr. Prather Live, his music remains available on all major streaming platforms and YouTube.

For more information and updates, follow @movewithmrprather across social media or visit [www.thepratherfoundation.org](http://www.thepratherfoundation.org).

## Rams Head, BMI, and Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County Present the Annapolis Songwriters’ Festival September 11–14, 2025

By PRESS OFFICER  
Rams Head

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Sept. 2, 2025)—The 4th Annual Annapolis Songwriters Festival will take place September 11–14, 2025, bringing together nationally renowned and local songwriters for performances across multiple venues in Annapolis. Notable events will be hosted at Rams Head On Stage, the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum, and the 0 block of Calvert Street. This four-day celebration of songwriting and storytelling is inspired by the long-standing sister event, the Key West Songwriters Festival, and will feature both ticketed performances and free showcases.

### Ticketed Performances Include:

Steep Canyon Rangers  
Thursday, September 11 at 8 p.m.  
Maryland Hall

Dirty Heads with BALLYHOO! and Wheeland Brothers  
Friday, September 12 at 6 p.m.  
44 Calvert Street

Songwriters-in-the-Round featuring Jeff Middleton, Dylan Altman, Chris Canterbury, Ronnie Bowman, Anthony Smith, Nick Norman, Jeffrey Steele

Friday, September 12 at 7 p.m.  
Rams Head On Stage

10,000 Maniacs  
Saturday, September 13 at 8:30 p.m. and Sunday, September 14 at 7:30 p.m.

Al Jardine and The Pet Sounds Band  
Saturday, September 13 at 8 p.m.  
Maryland Hall

Songwriters on the Severn featuring the Rum Strummers (Jacob Rice, Jeff Middleton, Justin Klump) and the Garrett Boys  
Saturday, September 13 at 7 p.m.  
Watermark Cruises

Songwriters-in-the-Round featuring Rebecca Lynn Howard, Elisha Hoffman, Tia Sillers, Arlis Albritton, Emily West, Adam Hood, Tommy Sims, Kat Luna, Ruby Amanfu, Sam Ashworth, Mel Washington  
Saturday, September 13 at 11 a.m.  
Rams Head On Stage

Songwriters-in-the-Round featuring Jesse Moody, Madisun Bailey, Kane Comfort, Word-smith, Ruby Amanfu, Sam Ashworth, Tommy Sims  
Sunday, September 14 at 12 p.m.  
Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum

Presented by Rams Head in partnership with BMI, Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County, Maryland Sports Commission, and the City of Annapolis, the festival spans four days of perform-

ances by national headliners, award-winning songwriters, and emerging artists.

Free showcases will take place throughout downtown Annapolis along a walkable “songwriters trail” and will highlight both local favorites and premier venues, including Rams Head On Stage, Rams Head Tavern, Metropolitan, Red Red Wine Bar, Maryland Hall, Galway Bay, Boatyard Bar and Grill, Blackwall Hitch, Graduate Hotel, The Garden on Market Space, Dinner Under the Stars (first block of West Street), Stan & Joe’s, 49 West, Watermark, King of France Tavern, and the Bose Listening Lounge at the Annapolis Visitors Center.

The festival kicks off Thursday, September 11 at 5 p.m. with five hours of free live music on the patio at Rams Head Tavern. Due to construction at Annapolis City Dock, the Main Stage will be located on Calvert Street with an expected attendance of over 3,000 for the Dirty Heads, BALLYHOO!, and the Wheeland Brothers.

New this year, the festival expands to Eastport with programming at Boatyard Bar and Grill and Blackwall Hitch.

“We’re excited to expand this year to include Eastport while still keeping the festival walkable. We’re thrilled to offer festivalgoers a true Annapolis memory while experiencing the faces, names, and stories behind the industry’s biggest hits,” said Kyle Muehlhauser, festival owner.

Returning for another unparalleled experience is a featured lineup at the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum including Jesse Moody, Madisun

Bailey, Kane Comfort, Wordsmith, Ruby Amanfu, Sam Ashworth, and Tommy Sims. Kane Comfort is a Nashville-based emerging musician, songwriter, and rapper known for emotionally rich, autobiographical lyrics and recent national attention after opening for artists such as Jon Bellion. Word-smith is a songwriter, poet, actor, and philanthropist from Baltimore whose work has been featured on Netflix, WWE, and ESPN. Tommy Sims is a Grammy-winning songwriter, producer, and multi-instrumentalist whose credits include Eric Clapton’s “Change the World” and collaborations with Amy Grant, Garth Brooks, Blackstreet, Toni Braxton, and Kelly Clarkson. Ticket holders may tour the museum before or after the performance.

In addition to BMI-affiliated artists, the festival will feature over 40 Annapolis-based songwriters.

Returning this year is Water Taxi Karaoke, presented by Bose in partnership with Watermark Cruises, with performances streamed live on Facebook.

Also returning are free youth and adult songwriting workshops at Maryland Hall and the highly popular Bose Listening Lounge at the Annapolis Visitors Center featuring intimate showcases and product demonstrations.

Tickets are available at [AnnapolisSongwritersFestival.com](http://AnnapolisSongwritersFestival.com). The official Annapolis Songwriters Festival mobile app will be available for download in late August and will



# COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

## Louisiana’s Attack on the Voting Rights Act Deepens America’s Civil Rights State of Emergency

“The vote is precious. It is almost sacred. It is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have in a democratic society, and we must use it.”  
—Congressman John Lewis

American democracy is under siege. As the nation approaches landmark civil rights anniversaries, efforts are underway in several states to dismantle long-standing protections, most alarmingly, Louisiana’s recent petition to gut the Voting Rights Act (VRA). Louisiana has taken the extraordinary step of refusing to defend its own congressional map,

which includes two majority-Black districts, and instead urged the U.S. Supreme Court to strike down race-conscious redistricting frameworks established by *Thornburg v. Gingles* in 1986. That precedent ensures minority populations have a fair chance to elect representatives of their choosing. The state’s attorney general argues that such redistricting is unconstitutional under the Equal Protection Clause, effectively challenging the applicability of Section 2 of the VRA. The case is scheduled to return to the Supreme Court on October 15, 2025, as reported by Politico and MSNBC.

This move is more than a legal maneuver. It is a direct assault on Black political power. Legal scholars warn that if successful, it would pave the way for fewer majority-minority districts not only in Louisiana but across the nation, decimating representation in Congress, statehouses, and local governments. The stakes are stark. As the 2025 State of Black America® report reveals, America’s civil rights and democratic systems are in a state of emergency. The report outlines escalating efforts, from legislative rollback to coordinated disinformation, aimed at erasing decades of hard-won protections. This year’s theme is clear: democracy cannot withstand silence or delay. Louisiana’s maneuver arrives at a critical moment. Black Louisianans make up nearly one-third of the state’s population. Only after extensive legal pressure did the state adopt a second majority-Black district for the 2024 elections. That change came following a federal court ruling in favor of Black voters under Section 2 of the VRA, which the U.S. Supreme Court allowed to stand in 2024. Now, the very legal framework that enabled that progress is under attack. This is not an isolated incident. It is part of a national pattern of voter suppression by design. The State of Black America report outlines that 27 states have passed legislation in the past five years that directly restricts access to the ballot through voter roll purges, reduced polling loca-

tions, gerrymandering, and ID laws that disproportionately harm communities of color. But dismantling the Voting Rights Act is not only a legal loss. It is a political and moral crisis. Black elected officials, advocates, and all who believe in representative democracy must respond with urgency. What must be done:

- **Hold national leadership accountable.** Congress must act immediately to reauthorize and strengthen the Voting Rights Act by passing legislation such as the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.
- **Mobilize civic resistance.** Civil rights organizations, faith-based coalitions, and local community leaders must engage in robust organizing, voter education, and legal defense efforts to effectively address the challenges facing their communities.
- **Invest in political equity.** Foundations, public institutions, and allies must direct resources toward safeguarding Black electoral participation and representation.

The crisis is clear. The solutions are within reach. The legacy of John Lewis, Fannie Lou Hamer, and so many others reminds us that the right to vote must never be taken for granted. To be equal, we must protect the most powerful tool we have, the vote, and resist every attempt to take it away.

—September 6, 2025

## Maryland Protects Access to Vaccines for All Marylanders

By PRESS OFFICER  
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Sept. 5, 2025)—This respiratory virus season, Maryland is protecting vaccine access for Marylanders of all ages. As federal government uncertainty around vaccine policy has raised questions for many, Maryland public health officials will continue to use science-based guidance to be a trusted resource for people to keep themselves and their families safe and healthy. Marylanders can continue to access vaccines at provider offices and pharmacies across the state as vaccine supply is available. Marylanders should talk to their health care provider about what vaccines are best for themselves and their families. “The federal government’s rapid changes and unnecessary swirl around vaccine policy is harmful for Marylanders and all Americans, and could result in disastrous public health outcomes,” said Gov. Moore. “The health, safety and well-being of Marylanders and their loved ones are our North Star, and we will do everything in our power to ensure they have access to life-saving medicines like vaccines.”

Maryland is well-equipped to weather the federal-level complexities and challenges creating hurdles to access. To protect Marylanders’ access to vaccines, Governor Moore signed legislation to ensure that insurance providers—including Medicaid and private insurers—continue to cover the cost of all vaccines recommended by the ACIP as of December 31, 2024. Effective June 1, 2025, this protects against the withdrawal of vaccine coverage for a range of illnesses, not just COVID-19. In addition, in 2024, Governor Moore signed into law legislation to expand vaccination authority for pharmacists, allowing them to administer flu and COVID vaccines without a prescription to anyone 3 years and older. For decades, vaccine recommendations have been made through deliberative, multi-factorial processes guided by science. While the standards and sources for federal vaccine guidance are now uncertain, Maryland maintains its commitment to careful and evidence-based decision-making for patient safety and disease prevention. Immunization policy is guided by multiple entities in Maryland, including the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Insurance Administration, and the Board of Pharmacy.

“Vaccines continue to be one of the most powerful public health tools for safeguarding our people and communities against disease,” said Maryland Department of Health Secretary Dr. Meena Seshamani. “As potential changes to federal vaccine guidance loom, Maryland is working to ensure minimal interruptions to vaccine access. We continue to work closely with our partners and are actively exploring all options to protect our communities.” Immunizations are available from most providers statewide, including pharmacists, who are authorized in Maryland to give vaccines without a prescription, in accordance with Maryland law. For COVID vaccines specifically, vaccines are available at healthcare providers and pharmacies across the state, although the specific assessment processes may vary based on location. For children, school immunization requirements have not changed. COVID-19 vaccines are not currently required for students under this schedule, but schools may implement their own recommendations and requirements for attendance. Families should talk to their pediatrician about ensuring their children are up to date on all vaccines recommended for their child.

## M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation Honors and Celebrates the Diverse Hispanic Community With Vibrant Events for the Community

By PRESS OFFICER  
M-NCPPC

RIVERDALE, Md. (Sept. 8, 2025)—M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County announces the official lineup of events and programs for Hispanic Heritage Month 2025. From **September 14 through October 15**, the Department will host events celebrating the vibrant traditions and cultural contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans through interactive activities, live music, traditional dance performances, art exhibitions, and a variety of family-friendly events. “Hispanic Heritage Month is a time to honor the diverse voices, stories, and contributions that strengthen the fabric of Prince George’s County,” said Darius A. Stanton, Director of M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George’s County. “We are proud to provide spaces where our community can come together, celebrate shared values, and learn from one another through culture, art, and connection.”

The Hispanic community continues to grow in Prince George’s County, now representing 21.2% of the county’s population, according to a recent report by M-NCPPC, Prince George’s County Planning Department. Over the past two decades, this population has increased by 260.1%, a pace far outpacing the county’s overall growth. Most of the Hispanic population (65.3%) came from Central

America, with Salvadorans making 44% of the total Hispanic population in the county. The following events are just a glimpse of what’s in store at the Department of Parks and Recreation. For a complete list of Hispanic Heritage Month offerings, please visit [pgparks.com](http://pgparks.com).

**Hispanic Heritage Month Kick-off Celebration**  
*Sunday, September 14, 2–5 p.m.*  
Prince George’s Publick Playhouse  
5445 Landover Road  
Hyattsville, MD 20784  
Join us for a FREE, family-friendly event celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month! The celebration will include an art exhibition and public reception displaying the works of artist Francisco Loza, the unveiling of the 2025 Hispanic Heritage Month poster by a local high school student artist, live music, dancing, arts and crafts activities for children, and light refreshments.

**Hispanic Heritage Month Community Day at Riversdale**  
*Sunday, September 14, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.*  
Riversdale House Museum  
4811 Riverdale Road  
Riverdale Park, MD 20737  
Join Riversdale House Museum for a day full of fun for the com-

munity! Enjoy interactive, hands-on, and educational activities, and learn about resources in your community.

**Latinas in Aviation Global Festival**  
*Saturday, September 27, 11 a.m.–2 p.m.*  
College Park Aviation Museum  
1985 Corporal Frank Scott Drive  
College Park, MD 20740

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, the College Park Aviation Museum and Airport are honoring Latina pioneers in aviation and celebrating Hispanic culture. This one-of-a-kind festival allows you to meet and hear from inspiring Latinas and learn about the magic of aviation. Enjoy demos & children’s activities, food, community art, bilingual story time, author meet & greets, and giveaways while supplies last.

**Fiesta de la Familia**  
*Sunday, October 12, 1–4 p.m.*  
Prince George’s Sports and Learning Complex  
8001 Sheriff Road  
Landover, MD 20785  
Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month by bringing family together. Enjoy live performances, children’s activities, food, music, exhibitors, and vendors for everyone to enjoy.

### The Prince George’s Post

The Prince George’s Post  
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Contents © 2025, 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.

### Around the County from A2

Legends Public Charter, Judith P. Hoyer Montessori, and Glenarden Woods Elementary. “If you can imagine getting a letter saying you owe \$700, \$800, \$900, or more in lunch debt, that can be very scary for families,” said Council Member Adams-Stafford, a former member of the PGCPs Board of Education. “I believe no child should have to choose between going hungry or racking up a school lunch debt. Our students deserve to be able to focus on their classes and schoolwork.” PGPCS parents, cumulatively, owe more than \$1 million in debt for school lunches. Around 70% of PGCPs students qualify for free or reduced lunches. Many of the remaining 30% are just above the qualification point, forcing their parents to strain to be able to afford school lunches.

With the donation, Council Member Adams-Stafford hopes to inspire other businesses, organizations, and community members to donate to the Excellence in Education Foundation for PGCPs, Inc. to help alleviate the strain these debts place on parents. “On behalf of our board of directors and school leadership, I want to express sincere gratitude to Council Member Adams-Stafford,” said Dr. Thea Wilson, Executive Director, Excellence in Education Foundation for PGCPs, Inc. “This gift goes well beyond just paying for meals. It helps ease the burden for parents, allowing them to be more present in their kids’ lives without worrying about a massing debt cloud hanging over them, and it allows kids to be kids, without having to worry about how their parents will pay for their school meals.”



# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## Space from AI

NSA Deputy Chief of Compliance, Dr. Scott Stornetta, Chairman of SureMark Digital and co-inventor of blockchain technology, Ambericent Cornett, Founder and CEO of ChameleCo® LLC, David Akinsanya, Founder of Inspium—and more.

“GreyCon 2025 is where the future of technology takes shape—bringing together leaders in space, AI, and cybersecurity to explore the innovations transforming our world.” Dr. Janosek explains. “Don’t miss this unique opportunity to connect, collaborate, and lead at the cutting edge. I value the learning and networking experience of GreyCon and am so excited to be a part of Capitol Tech’s inaugural conference! Join us!”

To learn more and register, visit [www.greycon.org](http://www.greycon.org).

Capitol Technology University is a leading STEM university located in Laurel, MD near the vibrant DC metropolitan area. Ranked #1 in Maryland for salary outcomes at all degree levels, the university’s mission is to educate individuals for successful professional careers in STEM research, engineering, management, and business by providing relevant learning experiences. Through industry-expert faculty, technical skills development, and innovative partnerships, Capitol Tech fosters career advancement opportunities for the evolving global community. Visit [www.capttechu.edu](http://www.capttechu.edu) to learn more.

## Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

### Can I Claim My Own SS Benefit Now and Get Half of My Husband’s Benefit Later?

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 would like to get an answer concerning taking my Social Security benefit soon and switching to my spouse’s benefit when he begins to take his. I am 64 years, 9 months old and my husband is 65 years, 7 months. My benefit is low due to the fact that I did not work for about 25 years while raising our children. My benefit would be \$573 at age 65. My husband’s benefit at age 67 will be \$3,326. My first question is: can I receive half of my husband’s benefit once he begins drawing his? Secondly, if I draw my benefit now will that reduce the amount I can draw from his benefit later? **Signed: Uncertain Spouse**

**Dear Uncertain:** As you may know, the full retirement age (FRA) for both you and your husband is 67. If either of you claim before your FRA your monthly SS retirement amount will be permanently reduced and, if you are currently working, you will be subject to Social Security’s Annual Earnings Test (AET) which limits how much you can earn while collecting early benefits. The earnings limit for early filers is \$23,400 for 2025 (changes yearly) and, if that is exceeded, SS will take away some of your benefits (\$1 for every \$2 over the limit). They “take away” by withholding future payments until the penalty is satisfied.

That said, if you claim your personal SS “soon” (e.g., at age 65), you will get about 87% of the amount you would get by waiting until your FRA to claim. You would, indeed, get a “spousal boost” when your husband claims, but you would not get 50% of his age 67 amount. That’s because of the way spouse benefits are calculated. When your husband claims, you will get a “spousal boost” added to your early benefit amount (\$573?). The amount of that spousal boost will be computed as ½ of your husband’s FRA amount (e.g., \$1663), minus your FRA entitlement (likely about \$661) for a spousal boost of about \$1002. But since you won’t have yet reached your FRA when your husband claims, the amount of the spousal boost will also be reduced (to about \$926), which will be added to your age 65 amount of \$573 for a total monthly spousal benefit of about \$1499.

So, the answers to your two questions are:

1. Because you claimed your Social Security retirement benefit early and won’t yet be your full retirement age when your husband claims, you will not get half of your husband’s benefit when he claims. You would likely get about 45% of his benefit.
2. If you take your own SS retirement benefit now, you will get a higher benefit when your husband claims, but the amount you get will be less than half of his FRA entitlement.

The only way you can get the full 50% of your husband’s FRA benefit entitlement is to wait until your own full retirement age to claim Social Security.

*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).*

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.AmacFoundation.org](http://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](http://www.amac.us/join-amac).

## City of District Heights Announces Transition in City Manager Role

By PRESS OFFICER  
City of District Heights

DISTRICT HEIGHTS, Md. (Sept. 5, 2025)—The City of District Heights announces a leadership transition in its administration. David Street is no longer with the City of District Heights.

During this transition period, Mr. Darren Swain will serve as Acting City Manager. Mr. Swain is a dedicated public servant, community advocate, and seasoned leader with extensive experience in government, higher education, business, and nonprofit management. A former Maryland State Delegate representing the 24th Legislative District, he has contributed to landmark projects in Prince George’s County, led nonprofit and advocacy or-

ganizations, and served in higher education as both an administrator and faculty member.

As Acting City Manager, Mr. Swain brings visionary leadership, a collaborative spirit, and a lifelong commitment to strengthening communities. His focus will be on advancing District Heights’ strategic priorities, ensuring operational excellence, reimagining the commercial corridor of Marlboro Pike, and fostering partnerships that enhance the quality of life for residents. He is excited to do his part in uplifting a community where they affectionately say, “This is Home”.

A proud native of Prince George’s County and product of Columbia Park in Landover, Maryland, Mr. Swain is a two-time graduate of Bowie State University,

holding a Master of Arts in Administrative Management (Public Policy) and a Bachelor of Science in Political Science. He is a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and resides in Bowie, Maryland with his son, Darrien.

Mayor Cynthia Miller expressed confidence in the City’s ongoing operations, stating: “District Heights remains strong, stable, and committed to our residents. I am confident that under Mr. Swain’s leadership, our City will continue to deliver excellent services and move forward with purpose and care.”

The City thanks Mr. Street for his service and contributions to District Heights. Residents or partners with questions are encouraged to email [citymanager@districtheights.org](mailto:citymanager@districtheights.org).

## Prince George’s County Educators Win New Contract That Supports, Strengthens Classroom Learning

*Ratified three-year contract meets PGCEA’s vision for the future by valuing and respecting teachers*

By PRESS OFFICER  
Prince George’s County Educators’ Association

PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY, Md. (Sept. 3, 2025)—An overwhelming majority of members of the Prince George’s County Educators’ Association (PGCEA) voted to ratify a new three-year contract with Prince George’s County Public Schools. Prince George’s County has outstanding educators who are deeply committed to helping every student thrive—in the classroom, and in life.

The agreement educators won focuses on ensuring that teachers have the tools, time, and support necessary to provide every student with the education they deserve. It also includes meaningful wage increases to recruit and retain talented educators, provides greater support to teachers to ensure safer classrooms, and streamlines grading reports to save teachers’ valuable time.

“This contract delivers on what our schools need: safer classrooms, fair workloads, and respect for educators. When we

support teachers, students thrive. This is a win for all of Prince George’s County,” said Dr. Donna Christy, PGCEA President.

Highlights of the contract include:

- **Fair wages to attract and retain talented educators:** The new contract improves starting salaries and includes 9% in cost-of-living pay over the life of the contract. With higher prices for food, gas, housing, and other essentials, this contract will help attract and retain experienced educators.
- **Less paperwork, more time for students:** Under this agreement, grades go into one system that streamlines the grading process, giving teachers more time to focus on helping students succeed.
- **Safer classrooms for students and educators:** Every parent wants their child in a safe classroom where learning can come first. Under this agreement, if a student shows repeated aggressive behavior, a safety plan is put in place right away. Both students and teachers get the support they need.
- **Support for special educators and**

**service providers managing heavy caseloads:** For service providers like special educators and counselors, heavy caseloads mean less individual attention for each child. This agreement provides oversight to ensure students don’t fall through the cracks.

“We’re so proud of PGCEA educators—they make a tremendous difference in the lives of students each and every day,” said Prince George’s County Executive Aisha Braveboy.

The significant contract between the educators and the second-largest school district in Maryland will cover PGCEA’s 10,000 members including licensed educators and specialized instructional support professionals. Once ratified and approved by the Board of Education of Prince George’s County School Board, all economic provisions of the contract will be retroactive to July 1.

*The Prince George’s County Educators’ Association amplifies educator voices to promote a brighter future for educators, students, and the community we serve.*

## Prince George’s County Animal Services Facility and Adoption Center to Hire First Full-Time In-House Veterinarian

By PRESS OFFICER  
ASFAC

LARGO, Md. (Aug. 29, 2025)—The Prince George’s County Animal Services Facility and Adoption Center (ASFAC) is proud to announce that—for the first time in the Center’s history—it will hire a full-time in-house veterinarian. The milestone was achieved through the community’s unwavering advocacy and with the support of County officials who approved the hire this fiscal year.

This veterinarian—a crucial part of the team—will serve Countywide and make a significant contribution to the agency’s mission of saving and rescuing animals. At nearly 85%, ASFAC has the best “save

rate” in the shelter’s history.

“The hiring of a full-time veterinarian is a significant step towards offering even greater care for shelter pets,” said David L. Fisher, Chief and Administrator of the Animal Services Division. “The benefits of this position will be monumental in preparing pets for adoption and fostering and ushering in a new era of improved animal welfare in Prince George’s County.”

Those interested in applying for the position can view it at: <https://www.governmentjobs.com/jobs/5061006-0/veterinarian>

The ASFAC also reminds potential pet owners of its participation in the “Maryland 3000” and the NBCUniversal/Telemundo “Clear the Shelters” adoption

events, which provide[d] free pet adoptions through the end of August. Residents are encouraged to visit the facility to view the many adoptable animals looking for a new place to call home.

In addition, virtual pet adoptions continue for the seventh consecutive year through WeRescue, which enables website and app users to browse adoptable pets by breed, gender, size, and other factors, submit applications, and ask shelters questions. Hill’s Pet Nutrition, a global leader in science-based pet nutrition, remains the campaign’s national sponsor for the eighth straight year.

To learn more about ASFAC, visit [www.princegeorgespets4us.com](http://www.princegeorgespets4us.com).

## Maryland Congressional Delegation Members Announce \$726,497 to Support Students at Prince George’s, Montgomery County Community Colleges

By PRESS OFFICER  
Press (Van Hollen)

WASHINGTON (Sept. 2, 2025)—Today, U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen and Angela Alsobrooks and U.S. Representatives Steny Hoyer, Jamie Raskin, Glenn Ivey and April McClain Delaney (all D-Md.) announced \$726,497 in federal funding for community colleges in Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties to support low-income students, first-generation students, and students with dis-

abilities as they pursue higher education.

“A quality education opens doors to good-paying jobs and meaningful opportunities, but many still face unnecessary and unfair barriers to academic achievement—especially when it comes to college. These federal investments will enable community colleges in Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties to provide students with the resources they need to overcome obstacles and succeed in college and beyond,” said the lawmakers.

The federal grants have been awarded as follows:

- **\$440,388 to Prince George’s Community College**
- **\$286,109 to Montgomery College**

The federal funding comes from the U.S. Department of Education’s TRIO Student Support Services grant program, which supports preparation and guidance for students as they pursue education beyond high school. This program was funded at \$1.91 billion through the FY25 government funding bill.



EarthTalk®  
Q&A

Cheating on Emissions:  
A Problem for All Automakers?

By Shashwat Mishra | August 27, 2025

*Dear EarthTalk:*  
*I heard that VW and Toyota were fined for cheating on emissions tests for new vehicles. Why did they do this and are all of the car companies likely cheating?*  
—B.C., Boston, MA

Emissions testing plays an essential role in controlling vehicle pollution and conserving the environment. These evaluations confirm that vehicles comply with legal regulations for the release of harmful gases such as carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides. Nonetheless, certain car producers have been discovered to be cheating in these evaluations.

The main motive for this is monetary. Achieving emissions standards frequently necessitates costly technologies such as sophisticated catalytic converters or more environmentally friendly engine designs. For car manufacturers, these enhancements may reduce profits or increase vehicle prices for buyers, possibly leading to lower sales. By engaging in deceit, companies can evade these expenses while still seeming to adhere to regulations. Moreover, tougher emissions regulations in areas such as the European Union and the U.S.

exert notable pressure on manufacturers to innovate quickly. When deadlines appear unattainable, certain automakers resort to shortcuts by altering test outcomes.

Cheating also helps preserve a company’s reputation. For example, VW heavily marketed its “Clean Diesel” vehicles as Eco-friendly alternatives, but later investigations revealed the use of defeat devices—software designed to manipulate results during tests. These devices made cars appear cleaner while emitting up to 40 times the legal limit of pollutants in real-world driving. Toyota was recently fined for cheating, showing that even trusted industry leaders sometimes prioritize profits over compliance.

Other manufacturers have also faced accusations. Nissan falsified emissions data in Japan due to poorly managed testing systems. Opel was also found using defeat devices in Europe in 2015. And BMW was involved in an “emissions cartel” that sought to limit progress in AdBlue, a technology designed to decrease nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions. Even Mercedes-Benz faced allegations of using defeat devices, though the company refutes the claims. John Stoll explains, “The emissions information says what the test needs it to say so that it passes regulatory tests. And then in real-world conditions, it emits far more of the harmful

emissions such as NOx into the air than is legally allowed.”

While it’s unlikely that every car company cheats, the problem appears widespread enough to warrant concern. Weak enforcement and the potential for profit make cheating an attractive option for unethical companies. Nonetheless, many manufacturers do focus on compliance and put resources into cleaner technologies, demonstrating that innovation can occur without resorting to fraud.

To tackle emissions fraud, authorities need to enhance enforcement and apply stricter penalties. Third-party organizations should handle emissions tests to ensure impartiality, and carmakers should be incentivized to develop sustainable technologies. As consumers, we can help by choosing vehicles that have confirmed eco-friendly certifications, and insisting on increased transparency from carmakers.

**CONTACTS:** Toyota Whacked with Gigantic Fine for Diesel Emissions Cheating, <https://clean-technica.com/2025/01/22/toyota-whacked-with-gigantic-fine-for-diesel-emissions-cheating/>; Volkswagen: The scandal explained,: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-44763905>

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**Songwriters’ from A3**

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