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General Assembly Prepares For Legislative Session

Taxes, Death Penalty, Gun Control and Budget are Some of the Current Issues to be Discussed

By JULIE BAUGHMAN
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS - An increase in gas taxes, a repeal of the death penalty and a renewed discussion of liability for pit bull owners are some of the issues currently on the table for Maryland's 2013 legislative session.

In addition, the recent shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., have prompted Gov. Martin O'Malley and others to promise gun control legislation in the upcoming session.

However, with the ongoing fiscal

cliff discussions in Washington threatening to dramatically affect taxes and the economy, plans for the 2013 session in Maryland may be severely altered depending on the outcome.

Maryland has a huge public sector workforce, and is home to a multitude of government agencies and military operations. Any cutbacks in government spending or closure of government agencies would dramatically hurt the state.

Delegate Kathleen Dumais, D-Montgomery, the vice chair of the House Judiciary Committee, said that should the fiscal cliff be avoided, one of

the most important issues in 2013 would be the proposed increase in gas taxes to generate funding for transportation projects.

"We have to somehow address transportation funding," Dumais said.

Dumais said that she, along with the rest of the Montgomery County delegation, has supported raising taxes on gas, even if just by one penny, in order to generate desperately needed revenue. However, she thinks a bill proposing a statewide raise would face challenges because of the disparity between rural and urban areas.

The "Montgomery County delega-

tion has been, generally speaking, willing to do that and vote for that. But it's more controversial in other areas of the state," Dumais said. "But I understand when you're in a rural area and you have to drive farther just for groceries ... it is sort of a different equation for a rural community than for a community like Rockville."

Delegate Kathy Afzali, R-Frederick, represents a county with many rural communities like those Dumais described, and is adamantly against any

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Casino Revenue Often Short of Promises

Pro-Gambling Groups Advertisements Pushed Allowing Slot Machines

By AISHA AZHAR
Capital News Service

COLLEGE PARK -- When Florida's pro-gambling groups launched a series of advertisements pushing voters to allow slot machines in 2004, they claimed gambling would rake in \$500 million for state schools annually.

In reality, those slot machines have generated roughly \$600 million in total for the state over six years -- only 20 percent of what was promised.

Casinos have expanded across the country over the last two decades, as cash-strapped states have looked for new sources of revenue to plug their budget holes. Before 1989, only two states allowed casinos in the modern era -- New Jersey and Nevada.

Since then, lawmakers in 20 other states have approved casinos, betting on the promise of high returns to fund public programs like education or to cut taxes. But in many of those states, the actual payoff has been lower than what supporters initially promised, a Capital News Service review of nationwide casino expansion found.

"The fact is that revenue projections and benefits to the state are widely exaggerated as a PR mechanism," said Prof. John Kindt, a researcher at University of Illinois.

Maryland voters approved Question 7 in November, which allowed casinos to stay open for 24 hours and added table games. It also authorized the construction of Maryland's sixth casino in Prince George's county.

Supporters of casino expansion in Maryland billed it as a much-needed boost for the state's education sector. Some advertisements claimed it would add around \$200 million annually to the education fund.

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Table Games Bring More Jobs Than Slots

By KELSI LOOS
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON - The implementation of table games and 24-hour gaming in Maryland will create employment opportunities, but competition from Horseshoe Casino in Baltimore and the proposed casino at the National Harbor will likely affect the labor market geographically, according to experts.

Maryland voters approved a referendum last November expanding gaming in Maryland. It allowed for a new casino in Prince George's County, the operation of table games in Maryland, and 24-hour gambling.

"Tables create jobs, they create a whole heck of a lot more jobs than slot machines," said Frank Fantini of Fantini Research, a gaming industry e-daily.

Each 24-hour table will employ about five dealers and additional staff such as supervisors and money handlers, Fantini said.

Gov. Martin O'Malley released a statement estimating that an additional 2,300 jobs would result from the gaming expansion.

Pennsylvania introduced 624 table games in July 2010 which led to 3,649 new hires the first year. By June 2012, 5,480 people had been hired to administer the games, said Richard McGarvey spokesman for the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board.

Maryland Live!, the state's largest casino, employs 1,500 and plans to hire 1,200 more people with the implementation of table games and 24-hour gaming, according to a company press release.

The casino will add 150 table games including blackjack, craps and roulette and plans to be open 24-hours starting on Dec. 26.

Fantini confirmed that 1,200 new jobs would be a reasonable estimate for a casino installing 150 table games.

Hollywood Casino in Perryville is also implementing 15

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CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY DANA AMIHERE

Morales, 39, and Costello, 30, aren't unique. About 29,000 same-sex couples in the U.S. include a foreign partner, according to UCLA researchers Gary Gates and Craig Konnoth's 2011 analysis of census data.

Binational Same-Sex Couples Still Seek Immigration Equality

By DANA AMIHERE
Capital News Service

POTOMAC - Maryland's same-sex couples may have won the right to marry on Election Day, but binational couples like Kelly Costello and Fabiola Morales continue to fight to have their unions recognized.

Immigration law permits one's parent, spouse or child to petition for a move to the United States.

However, a sponsor has to be a permanent U.S. resident to make the peti-

tion. Morales' mother is in the naturalization process herself, her brother can't sponsor her by law, she doesn't have any children and there's a backlog for nurses in immigration.

"As thrilled as we are and see it in a positive light that we're moving on the right path," Costello said, "I think it's important for people to realize that the state can't give us that critical benefit of being able to sponsor a spouse (for naturalization as a U.S. citizen). DOMA blocks that."

The Defense of Marriage Act, which

only recognizes heterosexual marriages, bars same-sex couples for all federal purposes, including filing a joint tax return, Social Security survivors' benefits and obtaining a green card.

Morales, 39, and Costello, 30, aren't unique. About 29,000 same-sex couples in the U.S. include a foreign partner, according to UCLA researchers Gary Gates and Craig Konnoth's 2011 analy-

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DC, Virginia Continue to Spurn Gaming, As Casino Numbers Explode

By CHRIS LEYDEN
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON - With casino approvals expanding down the East Coast into the Mid-Atlantic, two jurisdictions remain resistant to their financial allure - D.C. and Virginia - and that's not likely to change anytime soon.

Maryland's sixth casino, expected to be built in National Harbor, would only be about a mile from the borders of both Virginia and the District of Columbia. It's expected to draw many customers

from the nation's capital and the Old Dominion state.

While both Virginia and D.C. have legalized some forms of gambling in the past (both have lotteries and the District recently legalized online gaming before repealing the law) neither has, nor is expected to have, an actual casino.

"There's always been an attitude that the nation's capital should not have a bricks-and-mortar casino," said D.C. Councilman Michael A. Brown. Brown, who visits casinos himself and introduced the online gaming legislation,

considers himself one of the more pro-gaming members of the council.

D.C. Councilman Jack Evans agreed with Brown, and noted that not only would the City Council have to pass legislation, but it would need approval from the U.S. Congress.

"Generally there is a lot of opposition in Congress to gambling in the nation's capital, and among the residents, as well, in the District," said Evans.

Evans, along with D.C. Councilman Marion Barry, introduced a bill in September that was meant to study how

gaming in Maryland, West Virginia and Delaware affect the District. Although Evans said the bill will likely expire at the end of the year and not be reintroduced, he could see a benefit to a casino across the Potomac River in National Harbor.

"I think actually a National Harbor casino would be helpful to the city. You know it brings people to the region that might not come otherwise," said Evans.

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INSIDE

Super Storm Recovery Help
Senators Barbara A. Mikulski and Ben Cardin announced Senate passage of the Super-Storm Sandy Supplemental Appropriations Bill, which includes provisions that would provide additional support to states that continue struggle in recovering from the devastating storm. The Senate passed the bill. (died in House)
Community, Page A3

The National Urban League
As 2012 closes, reflect on some of the major triumphs and tragedies of the past year. The National Urban League's number one priority was our "Occupy the Vote" campaign, devoted to defeating the onslaught of voter ID laws and other tactics designed to suppress voter turnout. By all indications, our effort was successful.
Opinion, Page A4

Climate Change Construction
Gov. O'Malley signed an initiative to increase the State's long term resiliency to storm related flooding and sea level rise. He signed the Climate Change and Coast Smart Construction Executive Order, directing that all new and reconstructed state structures, be planned and constructed to avoid or minimize future flood damage.
Business, Page A5

Movie Review "Les Misérables"
When it became his privilege to direct the movie version of the Les Misérables stage musical that has enthralled the world for more than a quarter-century, Tom Hooper made one crucial decision. Instead of recording the songs in advance and having the actors lip-sync, Hooper had them sing live.
Out on the Town, Page A6

Earth Talk
Dear EarthTalk:
Is it true that asthma cases in children often correlate to living close to roads and all the associated pollution-spewing traffic?
-- Jake Locklear, San Diego, CA
Features, Page A7

Towns and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

Garner family celebrates Christmas baby

On Christmas Day, shortly after 1 a.m., a baby girl was born into the Garner family, a grandchild Harry Garner Jr. had been looking forward to with great anticipation. Sadly, he died Nov. 21 in Little River, S.C.

Harry was the son of Harry Sr., and Ruth Garner, founding residents of Morningside, and part of a large contingent of relatives who made their home in Morningside. He married Nancy Justice and they lived in Waldorf before moving to South Carolina.

They became parents of three sons and daughter Kelly, the only daughter born in their family—until December 25 when Baby Emma arrived, weighing just over eight pounds.

Emma is the daughter of Tom and Kelly Eno and the 12th grandchild of Harry and Nancy Garner. She is a wonderful Christmas gift for the entire Garner family.

Apologies and corrections
I'm writing this column on December 30, and feel obliged—before the New Year arrives—to correct some of what I've written over the past few weeks. I want to start 2013 with a clean slate.

The most egregious item I ran was a note about the death of my neighbor Lucy Brewer. Well, she didn't die. One person called to say she'd called Lucy's home and Lucy answered the phone. Another reported that Lucy had sent her a Christmas card. I don't know where I got the bad information, and I apologize. Glad you're still with us, Lucy!

I ran an obit for Emma

Witczak, longtime Morningsider, who died Oct. 23. I listed two surviving daughters, but there were three: Mary Lou Entwisle, Helen Kay Emanuel and Martha Ann Mencer. I also listed Jeff D. Needham as her son; he is actually a grandson who was mostly raised by Emma. Sorry, Emma.

In last week's column I misspelled the name of Serena Holmes (I had "Selena"), the Suitland High student who won first place by inventing Stanley, a life-size octopus, for a contest using recycled materials to create artistic sculptures.

Thank you to those who call or email when I make a mistake. I hope you will continue to try and keep me honest.

Morningside memories

On January 23, 1945, a group of Morningsiders met to organize the Ladies Auxiliary to the Morningside Volunteer Fire Department. The Auxiliary started with 18 charter members, but by 1963—50 years ago—the membership numbered 50 and Edythe Neale was president. Other officers were Audrey Holmes, vice president; Helen Ditmars, treasurer; Jeanne West, recording secretary; Beverley Phillips, corresponding secretary; Joyce Alley, membership chairman; and Jean Davis, canteen chairman.

May they rest in peace

Mary Ryan Gaither, 90, known for her great wedding and dozen-roses cakes, died Dec. 18. She was a longtime resident of Auth Village and a founding member of St. Philip's Parish where she had served on the Parish Hall Committee. She was the widow of the late Robert F. Gaither Sr.,

mother of Sheila Vaughan, Robert Gaither Jr., Mary Ellen Bayne and the late Edward M. Gaither; sister of Catherine Rourke, Robert Connor, the late Edward Ryan, Paul Ryan and Albert Connor; grandmother of five and great-grandmother of four. Mass of Christian Burial was at St. Philip's with burial at Resurrection Cemetery.

Anna R. Coley, 80, a Suitland activist for 30 years before moving to Florida in 1998, died Dec. 22 in Washington. Her husband of 58 years, Walter Coley, died exactly two months ago, on Oct. 22. The couple was active in community recreation activities and is pictured in a large montage above the gymnasium door at the Suitland Community Center. Survivors include daughters Pamela Coley of Suitland and Sandra Keaton of Ellicott City, and son Walter jr. of Clinton, three grandchildren, a brother and five sisters. Services were at Pope Funeral Home in Forestville.

Phillip K. Buler, a member of the Fort Myer and Silver Hill fire departments, died in his sleep early the morning of Nov. 22 while on an annual hunting trip with friends in West Virginia.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Jennifer Jung, proprietor of GI Liquors, J.B. Thomas and Christa Neale, Jan. 4; Ariel Thomas, Sarah Vilky and Terry Foster, Jan. 6; Stephen Sarandos, Jan. 7; Eva Hugings and Charles Boxley, Jan. 8.

Happy anniversaries to my son John and Michelle McHale, their 13th on Jan. 4; Diane and Steve Zirkle, Jan. 9; and David and Lori Williams, Jan. 9.

The Tax Agreement: A Victory for Middle-Class Families & the Economy

At this make or break moment for the middle class, the President achieved a bipartisan solution that keeps income taxes low for the middle class and grows the economy. For the first time in 20 years, Congress will have acted on a bipartisan basis to vote for significant new revenue. This means millionaires and billionaires will pay their fair share to reduce the deficit through a combination of permanent tax rate increases and reduced tax benefits. And this agreement ensures that we can continue to make investments in education, clean energy, and manufacturing that create jobs and strengthen the middle class.

In 2011, the President cut spending. In 2012, he kept his promise of asking the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans to pay more while protecting 98 percent of families and 97 percent of small businesses from any income tax increase—raising \$620 billion in revenue. As we move forward to address our ongoing fiscal challenges, both spending cuts and continuing to ask the wealthy to do a little more will be part of a balanced approach.

It is critical for our economy and future generations that we reduce the deficit. We cannot keep racking up this debt on our kids. And the President looks forward to working with Republicans to reduce the deficit in a balanced and bipartisan way. Permanently extends the middle-class tax cuts and also extends credits for working families, with additional measures to protect families and promote economic growth.

Permanent extension of the middle class tax cuts: This will provide certainty for 114 million households including lower tax rates, an expanded Child Tax Credit, and marriage penalty relief—steps that together will prevent the typical family of four from seeing a \$2,200 tax increase next year. In addition, it includes a permanent Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) fix.

Most progressive income tax code in decades: By raising income tax rates on the wealthiest and keeping taxes low for the middle class, the agreement will ensure we have the most progressive income tax code in decades.

Extension of Emergency Unemployment Insurance benefits for 2 million people: The agreement will prevent 2 million people from losing UI benefits in January by extending emergency unemployment insurance benefits for one year.

Extension of tax cuts for 25 million working families and students: The deal extends President Obama's expansions of the Child Tax Credit, Earned Income Tax Credit, and the President's new American Opportunity Tax Credit, which helps families pay for college. The President fought hard to extend these credits, overcoming Republican insistence that income taxes go up by an average of \$1,000 for 25 million working families and students. The agreement would extend them for five years.

Extension of renewable energy incentives, the R&E tax credit and other busi-

ness incentives: The agreement extends tax relief for businesses through the end of next year. This means extending the Production Tax Credit, a key incentive for renewable energy that many Republicans had been trying to end, as well as the Research & Experimentation tax credit. In addition, the agreement extends 50 percent bonus depreciation, a cost-effective temporary measure to support investment and growth. All of these would be extended through the end of 2013.

Fixes the SGR ("doc fix") with no cuts to the Affordable Care Act or to beneficiaries: The agreement avoids a 27 percent cut to reimbursements for doctors seeing Medicare patients for 2013 by fixing the sustainable growth rate formula through the end of next year (the "doc fix"). The President stood firm against Republican proposals to pay for this fix with cuts to the Affordable Care Act or the beneficiaries.

Postpones the sequester for two months, paid for with \$1 of revenue for every \$1 of spending, with the spending balanced between defense and domestic: The agreement saves \$24 billion, half in revenue and half from spending cuts which are divided equally between defense and non-defense, in order to delay the sequester for two months. This will give Congress time to work on a balanced plan to end the sequester permanently through a combination of additional

See AGREEMENT, Page A6

Neighborhood Events

Groups Petition Van Hollen, Hoyer-Cut Pentagon, Not Soc. Sec., Medicare...



Progressive Maryland, community allies end the year, deliver petitions to Reps. Hoyer, Van Hollen urging, "Stand up for the middle class - cut Pentagon waste, not Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid"

As two of the highest ranking members of Congress, each is key in the budget negotiations

A dozen members of Progressive Maryland, and other Maryland veterans, labor and peace groups marked the change to the new year by delivering petitions to Maryland's two highest-ranking members of the US House with 500 signatures from concerned Marylanders. The petitions demand that Congress make real cuts to Pentagon waste, end tax cuts on the wealthiest, and fully protect Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other programs vital to the middle class.

Petitions were delivered New Year's Eve to Rep. Chris Van Hollen, Ranking Member of the House Budget Committee at his Rockville office, and to Rep. Steny Hoyer, House Democratic/Minority Whip in Greenbelt Friday. Both are key participants in Congress's budget negotiations. The petitions urged each to ensure any deal "Cut the waste at the Pentagon, and strengthen, not cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. In addressing this fiscal crisis, you must fight for the needs of Maryland's middle class families, not defense contractors getting rich off of the bloated Pentagon budget." "Key to resolving the fiscal crisis, Congress must cut wasteful Pentagon spending," Progressive Maryland's director, Kate Planco Waybright, spoke for participants at Van Hollen's office. "It is out of control and defense contractor CEOs couldn't be happier. Even though the Iraq War is over, and the draw down in Afghanistan continues, contractor CEOs making up to 26,000,000 million a year are lobbying their friends on Capitol Hill to protect their exorbitant corporate salaries and profits, all at the expense of middle class and military families. Enough is enough. CUT THE PENTAGON WASTE and strengthen, not cut Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other real and pressing needs!" Bethesda Army veteran and former federal staffer Charles Casper urged "evaluate every program on its merits and guarantee both our national security and vital domestic programs that returning vets and working families must rely on. But we don't benefit from an open-ended commitment to

wasteful Pentagon spending, excessive CEO pay, and programs even the military hasn't asked for. Increasingly experts and even the heads of many military contractors agree Pentagon spending can and must be reduced significantly." Find links to the petitions, background and photos, which Progressive Maryland grants blanket permission to publish and print, at:

<http://ProgressiveMaryland.org> http://signon.org/sign/tell-rep-van-hollen-cut?source=c.url&r_by=6648980 http://signon.org/sign/tell-rep-hoyer-cut-pentagon?source=c.url&r_by=6648980

Fifteen Student-Athletes Earn Degrees in December Commencement

(BOWIE, Md.) Fifteen current and former student-athletes were among Bowie State University graduates who received degrees in the 2012 Fall Commencement - Friday, December 21st in BSU's A.C. Jordan Arena. "It is always a proud moment to see our student-athletes cross the stage and receive their diplomas. We understand all of the hard work, dedication, and sacrifice that goes into reaching this pinnacle in their lives. We wish them nothing but the best and I know they leave us understanding that once a Bulldog, always a Bulldog", said Athletic Director Anton Goff.

Current Student-Athletes
Ramono Flowers - B.S. Business Administration - Football
Shayla Davis - B.S. Sociology - Women's Track

Former Student-Athletes
Joffrey Alcidor - B.S. Sociology - Men's Track
Ashley Bordonaro - B.S. Early Childhood/Special Education - Women's Bowling
Darren Clark - B.S. Communications - Men's Basketball
Joel Ellerbe - B.S. Communications - Football
Andrew Engel - B.S. Sports Management - Men's Basketball

Troy Gibson - B.S. Child and Adolescent Studies - Football
Alyce Harrell - B.A. Fine Arts - Women's Track
Kyle Moore - B.S. Business Administration - Football
Clifford Pigford - B.S. Communications - Football
Devin Richards - B.S. Business Administration - Men's Track
Teunsha Robinson - B.S. Business Administration - Women's Basketball

Kenneth Turner - B.A. Fine Arts - Football

Former Student-Athletes Receiving Masters
John Corey Stevens - M.A. Organizational Communication - Men's Basketball

Mikulski, Cornyn Announce Passage of Bill to Rename Provision That Leveled Retirement Savings Playing Field

Senators Championed Hutchison Legislation in 1996 to Allow Stay-at-Home Spouses to Make Equal, Fully Deductible Contributions to Retirement IRAs

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senators Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.) and John Cornyn (R-Texas) announced Senate passage of their bill to rename legislation championed by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas) to allow working spouses and homemakers to contribute the same amount to their IRA savings as the 'Kay Bailey Hutchison Spousal IRA.' Senator Hutchison spearheaded the effort after she was sworn-in to the Senate in 1993 with the support of Senator Mikulski, and saw the legislation signed into law as part of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996.

"It's fitting that we recognize Senator Hutchison for her long-standing and steadfast advocacy for women," Senator Mikulski said. "Her commitment to this legislation and to the women of America reflects the values of our nation. It rewards good parenting and families and recognizes that not all work is done in the marketplace. Moms and dads who are struggling to do the right thing for their family shouldn't be penalized for staying at home. By amending this provision in our tax code, women and families across America will know that they're benefitting from the Kay Bailey Hutchison Spousal IRA."

"I'm pleased to support this legislation to honor Senator Hutchison for her important efforts to help moms and dads who work full-time caring for their children at home plan for their future," Senator Cornyn said. "As she retires from the Senate, Sen. Hutchison will be remembered for this and countless other contributions that have improved the lives of working Texans and Americans across the country."

COMMUNITY

Practical Money Skills

By Jason Alderman

Helping the 'Unbanked' Get Affordable Financial Services

According to a recent survey by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. and the U.S. Census Bureau, 17 million American adults now live in "unbanked" households, while another 51 million are considered "underbanked." In other words, over 28 percent of households either have no traditional checking or savings accounts (unbanked); or their basic financial needs aren't being met by their bank or credit union so they also rely on alternative lenders like check-cashing services or payday loans (underbanked).



There have always been millions of Americans who are either unable to – or choose not to – conduct their financial transactions through a bank. Common reasons cited include:

- Don't have enough money to need an account.
- Don't write enough checks to justify monthly fees and minimum balance requirements – just buy money orders when needed.
- Lack of proper identification.
- Denied accounts due to bad banking track record.
- Language barriers.
- Bad previous banking experience or lack of trust in banking institutions.

Big retailers and other alternative financial services providers have rushed to fill the void for customers who can't – or won't – use banks or credit card issuers. For example, Bankrate.com lists dozens of prepaid cards that offer many of the same functionalities as regular credit or debit cards, including direct deposit, online purchases and bill pay, ATM access, etc. Other businesses provide such varied services as check-cashing, money orders, wire transfers, and payday, pawn shop or car-title loans.

However, charges for these services can quickly add up. After you've paid a fee to cash your paycheck and bought money orders to pay your monthly bills, you probably will have spent far more than the \$5 to \$15 a month a regular checking account typically costs.

Although monthly checking and savings account fees at large banks have risen, you still may be able to find free or low-cost accounts at banks and credit unions. To find competitive bank account rates, visit www.bankrate.com/checking.aspx. To find a credit union for which you might be eligible, use the Credit Union Locator at www.ncua.gov.

High fees aside, there's also a safety risk factor to being unbanked. Carrying or storing cash at home tempts robbers; also, money can easily be destroyed in a fire or other natural disaster. Plus, money deposited in FDIC-insured banks is insured up to \$250,000 per account (similar insurance is available to credit union accounts through NCUA). It's also more difficult for unbanked consumers to improve their credit scores due to lack of access to credit-building products like credit cards and loans.

To help bring unbanked and underbanked people into the system, an increasing number of public/private programs like Bank On (www.joinbankon.org) are being formed. These voluntary partnerships between local or state governments, financial institutions and community-based organizations provide low-income un- and underbanked people with free or low-cost starter or "second chance" bank accounts and access to financial education.

In addition, many financial education resources are available, including:

MyMoney.gov, the government's website dedicated to teaching Americans the basics about financial education (www.mymoney.gov).

FDIC's MoneySmart program of financial education workshops (www.fdic.gov/moneysmart).

Practical Money Skills for Life (www.practicalmoneyskills.com), a free personal financial management program run by Visa Inc.

There's no law that says everyone must have a traditional banking relationship. But if you choose to go unbanked, carefully investigate the financial consequences – you may not be saving money after all.

Jason Alderman directs Visa's financial education programs. To Follow Jason Alderman on Twitter: www.twitter.com/PracticalMoney.

Mikulski, Cardin Announce Passage of Bill that Includes Aid to Communities Recovering from Super-Storm Sandy

By PRESS OFFICER
Sen. Barbara Mikulski's Office

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Barbara A. Mikulski and Ben Cardin (both D-Md.) announced Senate passage of the Super-Storm Sandy Supplemental Appropriations Bill, which includes provisions that would provide additional support to states like Maryland that continue struggle in recovering from the devastating storm. The Senate passed the bill by a vote of 61 to 33.

"It's is long past time that communities in Maryland and across the nation get the resources and support from their government they need to get back on track," said Senator Mikulski, Chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee. "The clock is ticking. We've got businesses that need to restart. We have homes that need to be rebuilt. The TV cameras have left, but the compelling human need has not.

"This critical legislation provides resources to those who need it most. I fought hard to ensure this bill gives our federal agencies greater flexibility in providing aid to those hardest hit. It also ensures Maryland will be eligible to receive Community Development Block Grants to

help restore infrastructure and house and help restore lives. During this Season of Light, I will continue to fight to restore the light in some of our hardest hit communities," Senator Mikulski said.

"Marylanders who have been devastated by Hurricane Sandy need more help. After a natural disaster, the federal government has an obligation to step in and help local governments where they feel the damage is just too great to handle alone. Now is the time for the Federal Government to act as a true partner. We are all in this together," said Senator Cardin. "With greater flexibility for FEMA and HUD, and providing resources where they are needed most, this bill will provide Maryland and other affected states the tools our communities need to rebuild and get back to a state of normalcy. It also looks ahead to the next storm, helping to mitigate future damage with proven initiatives that will save lives and property."

The Super-Storm Sandy Supplemental Appropriations bill provides well-tailored resources to communities in Maryland and states across the nation in need. It provides immediate resources for FEMA Disaster Relief to support response and recovery; Community Disaster Loans to



PHOTO BY JAY BAKER
U.S. Senators Barbara A. Mikulski and Ben Cardin

help local municipalities with operating expenses; support for the Army Corps of Engineers to repair and rebuild coastal communities; and an expansion of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to help restore infrastructure and housing.

Senators Mikulski and Cardin fought to ensure Maryland is eligible to receive CDBG grants for storm-related recovery activities. The legislation provides HUD greater flexibility in determining what CDBG grants can pay for so families can get the help they need most.

The Supplemental bill also provides FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate with greater flexibility to weigh economic factors when determining eligibility for Individual Disaster Assistance. Somerset County, Maryland, for

example, has an unemployment rate of 9.4 percent. While residents suffered severe damage, 68 percent lack adequate insurance. This flexibility would allow FEMA to take into account the economic ability of communities to recover and provide those who need it most with individual assistance to rebuild their homes and their lives.

Team Maryland has been vigilant in seeking disaster assistance since Sandy hit the Atlantic coast in October.

With the full support and backing of Team Maryland, FEMA reversed its initial denial of Individual Disaster Assistance for Somerset County, approving this assistance, which provides critical housing assistance and disaster-related support for families and individuals coping with the immediate aftermath of the storm.

Jobs from A1

to 20 table games and plans to offer around-the-clock gambling on weekends. They expect to add up to 100 employees.

Ocean Downs is considering adding table games.

Fantini said that table games will not only increase the amount of available jobs, but will likely increase tips the employees earn.

"What it tends to do is that tends to bring in people who tip heavily... It's not uncommon to make \$90,000 or \$100,000 a year as a dealer or cocktail waitress at upscale properties in Las Vegas," he said.

Alan Woinski of Gaming USA Corp., a gaming industry

consultant, agreed that longer hours and table games would create more, better-paying jobs, but he warned that the new casino locations in Baltimore and National Harbor will cannibalize the business of the others, leading to lower tax revenues for the state.

"This is what happens when the state does not think logically when it gives out licenses," he said, adding that the National Harbor casino is more likely to pull business from Maryland Live! than it is to pull business from out of state.

"The logic of the state is that we're going to draw from Virginia and Washington. What they don't realize is that Maryland Live! is drawing

from Virginia and Washington," Woinski said.

He said that Hollywood Casino and Ocean Downs are likely to be the most affected by the increased competition because their revenues have been dropping.

The Baltimore Business Journal reported that Hollywood Casino Perryville profits dropped 40.5 percent from November 2011 and Casino at Ocean Downs dropped 5 percent from \$3.5 million in October. However, Casino at Ocean Downs' revenue increased 6.9 percent compared with November 2011.

If the new casinos siphon enough revenues from the older ones, the established casinos

may have to reduce staff to save costs. Woinski said that Horseshoe Casino and the National Harbor casino could hire dealers from other casinos should they be forced to cut staff. He said that it is likely to be a wash in terms of number employed directly by the casinos.

"When you add in construction jobs, it's a gain but we're talking years down the road," Woinski said.

Despite the uncertainties created by the new casinos, Woinski said that having table games will be a benefit in terms of employment.

"Table games are the best thing for employment, no doubt about it."

Assembly from A1

increase in gas taxes.

"For me, in Frederick County, it's particularly troublesome because I border three other states ... (it is) very easy for people to purchase their gas out of state," Afzali said.

The proposed increase in gas taxes is part of what Afzali calls "a war on rural Maryland," and she said it would hurt middle class families already struggling to make ends meet.

"It's extremely discouraging," Afzali said. "I will be on the front lines fighting that."

Donald C. Fry, president and CEO of the Greater Baltimore Committee, said that because of Maryland's bad, and worsening, traffic conditions, the legislature has to come up with more funding for transportation projects.

"We have a situation where if we don't start addressing the problems sooner rather than later, you're going to have tremendous gridlock and that's going to effectively impact economic growth," said Fry, a former member of both the Maryland House and Senate.

A "perennial hot-button issue," the death penalty, is also expected to make an appearance in 2013, said Sen. Brian Frosh, D-Montgomery.

"There will be another effort to repeal the death penalty," Frosh said. "The members of the Senate have changed since the last time there was a vote."

Frosh said this new composition of delegates and senators could potentially tip the historically balanced scale towards a successful repeal.

Frosh is one of the legislators who has said he will propose new gun laws in the wake of the killings in Connecticut.

He also said members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee "have some unfinished business," relating to another controversial issue: pit bulls.

A Maryland Court of Appeals ruling earlier this year that said purebred pit bulls are "inherently dangerous," and decided

property owners also are liable for pit-bull-related incidents, has left the legislature searching for ways to respond.

Dumais said that because the effort to nail down legislation regarding pit bull owner liability during a special session in August failed, it is bound to resurface in January.

"Obviously, during the special session, we tried to do something," Dumais said. "The House and the Senate have two very different ideas (of what) should be done."

The Maryland Dream Act, Question 6, which legalized same-sex marriage in Maryland, and Question 7 which approved casino expansion, were all passed as a result of the last two legislative sessions, but, Fry said social issues will not be as predominant in 2013.

"Most of the legislators are hoping that this is a much quieter year than last year," Fry said. "They've gone through a very tough legislative session last year as, well as a number of

special sessions ... they would hope that this is not going to have the same level of volatility."

Other issues to watch for include offshore wind, the budget, the implementation of federal healthcare reform, as well as potential legislation promoting transgender equality.

However, House Minority Leader Anthony O'Donnell said that regardless of what shows up on the 2013 legislative agenda, fiscal security is the most important issue.

"The reality is, that going into the seventh year of the O'Malley administration, we have failed to put our fiscal house in order in the state, and we have not prepared for the looming fiscal problems," O'Donnell said.

"Our focus should be solely on creating an environment of free enterprise and job creation," O'Donnell said. "That is more than enough to focus on. That should be our first, foremost and only focus in the upcoming session."

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COMMENTARY

The U.S. Air Force Band, Honor Guard

The United States Air Force Band and Honor Guard are stationed at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, Washington, D.C. Their presentations instill patriotism, deliver positive messages about the Air Force and America, and demonstrate Air Force excellence to billions of people worldwide.

Since its formation, The United States Air Force Band has marched in 15 inaugural parades. (There was no parade in 1945; the 1985 parade was cancelled due to weather.) The Band began in 1941 when the newly-formed U.S. Army Air Corps activated 59 bands into operation. It was initially called The Bolling Field "Band" and consisted of five men—a saxophone quartet and a bandleader. Over the next 71 years, the Band expanded its size and mission to include six primary performing ensembles and a global mission. The Band's uplifting programs instill patriotism, deliver positive messages about the Air Force and America, and demonstrate Air Force excellence to billions of listeners on television, radio, Internet, and at more than 1,600 live events each year. This inaugural parade will be the first for many of the group's members including the Band's commander, Col. Larry H. Lang.

The primary mission of the United States Air Force Honor Guard is to render military honors to members of the Air Force, past and present, and their families during funeral services at Arlington National Cemetery. In addition to this distinguished duty, the Honor Guard also conducts military ceremonies at the White House, Pentagon, and national memorials representing the Air Force in presidential, joint service, Air Force and public ceremonies. The beginnings of the Honor Guard's rich history date back to May 1948 when it was originally activated within Bolling Field's 1100th Security Squadron. It remained primarily a function of that squadron until Jan. 1, 1972 when it became a separate unit.

The members of these elite Air Force units are proud to represent all Airmen, whose selfless service and sacrifice ensure the freedoms we enjoy as American citizens.

The 99-piece band and 91-person Honor Guard flight will march along the 1.5-mile Inaugural Parade route that begins at 4th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue and goes past the White House.



Andrews Air Force Base
Home of Air Force One

President Obama's first trip: Col. Steven Shepro, 316th Wing commander, and 316th Wing protocol members render a salute as Air Force One departs.(US Air Force/Bobby Jones) Camp Springs, MD - Home to one of the nation's largest annual air shows. It is also home to "Air Force One." The Airlift Wing provides air transportation for the President, Vice President, cabinet members and other high-ranking US officials. For information contact the AAFB Public Affairs office at 301-981-4511.

Open to the Public

Vietnam Veterans Low Priority

By: John J. Bury,
US Navy, Retired, Vietnam War Veteran

The new 113th Congress are now seated. The 112th Congress failed to recognize Veterans of the Vietnam War. House Bill HR-3612 and Senate Bill S.1629, to restore The Agent Orange Equity Act did not make it out of committee. In all probability, these Bills are dead and must be re-introduced.

There are 439 members of Congress States and Territories, 100 members of Senate. The 112th assembly of both Houses only 126 Representatives co-sponsored the House Bill and 14 Senators co-sponsored the Senate Bill. What does this say about those Legislators who ignored the Bills?

Veterans of the Vietnam War are low priority. We have become a liability for budget dollars. Our quality of life means little to our Congress and Senate. What is a veterans life worth who honorably served Country and Flag? Freedom Is Not Free.

Every day another veteran falls ill to a disease

attributed to the deadly herbicide agent orange. Every week approximately 400 to 500 sick Vietnam veterans die. The legacy we leave behind is our government does not care.

We advocates for Vietnam veterans must start over to convince our legislators to do what is right. We are groups who volunteer our time to help sick veterans gather evidence required by the Veterans Affairs for submission of claims. We do the leg work, we meet with members of Congress and Senate in support of veterans. Our only reward is knowing we helped a veteran. What we do is not enough unless we have support from the Congress and Senate. We ask all Americans to urge our legislators to pass laws that will provide equitable VA health care and compensation for sick Vietnam veterans so they may realize better quality of life.

By: John J. Bury, US Navy, retired,
Vietnam War veteran
Media, Pa.

Child Watch

by Marion Wright Edelman



It Is Time to Act to Protect Children Against Gun Violence

Over the past few days we've all learned a bit more about twenty beautiful six- and seven-year-olds who each seem as if they could have been any of our children or grandchildren. Jessica asked Santa for new cowgirl boots for Christmas. Daniel's family said he "earned" all the ripped knees on his jeans. James liked to remind people that he was six and three-quarters. Grace loved playing dress-up and with her dog Puddin'.

As the stories kept coming about the children and teachers at Sandy Hook Elementary School and their families began saying goodbye, many of us have spent much of the last week in tears. But many parents, especially those with their own young children, have instead gone through each day desperately willing themselves not to cry—trying to do what little they could to protect their children from the overwhelming adult sadness all around them. After all, for most parents protecting their children is a primal and primary instinct. This is just one reason this tragedy, which happened in school—a place where tens of millions of parents send their children every single day and need to trust they will be safe, has instilled so much horror and despair.

When two serial snipers terrorized the Washington, D.C. area ten years ago, using a Bushmaster .223-caliber rifle very similar to the one used in the Newtown shootings, one of the most horrifying moments came after the shooters targeted a child on his way to school, later asserting in a note: "Your children are not safe anywhere at any time." After this latest tragedy, America's mothers, grandmothers, fathers, grandfathers, and all those with a mothering spirit must finally stand up and fight that truth and make our politicians act to fight that truth doing whatever it takes for as long as it takes. We must seize the moment and say no more.

Right now the pervasive culture of violence in America only reinforces the sense of threat both children and adults feel. This year's "Black Friday" shopping set a record for gun sales: the FBI reported 154,873

requests for background checks from shoppers wanting to buy guns on the day after Thanksgiving alone. Those numbers are not about what many people think of as the "criminal" gun culture involving guns bought and sold on the streets. These are the guns being sold to the millions of Americans who are willing and able to go through background checks and follow all existing laws and proper legal channels so that they can either buy guns for their own pleasure or their own theoretical protection. It appears the Newtown shooter's mother fell into this very large category of Americans. There were 16.8 million background checks in 2012, nearly double the number ten years ago. What is it about American culture that encourages tens of millions of Americans to either use guns as a form of entertainment or feel so fearful they believe they need guns in their homes, including semiautomatic weapons and high capacity ammunition clips designed specifically to kill large numbers of other people, to feel a sense of safety?

Why are we so terrified of one other, even during periods when actual crime rates go down? There is an obvious connection between that feeling of terror and the culture of vio-

lence that saturates Americans in violent language, violent imagery, and violent entertainment. Right now, instead of responding as parents and a nation by saying no to the culture of violence, we are apparently responding by defensively arming ourselves with more and bigger weapons. If that cycle of violence and fear is having such a deep psychological impact on adults, how do we expect our children to navigate or survive it?

The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence reports a gun in the home is more likely to be used in a homicide, suicide, or unintentional shooting than it is to be used in self-defense, and other studies have found guns in a home are more likely to kill or injure a family member or friend than a stranger. Guns lethargize anger and despair. Gun owners who know these facts seem to either discredit the research behind them or hold to the belief their own guns and families would certainly be the exception. If the Newtown shooter's mother knew those risks she likely felt the same way. In fact, if her son had only used her guns to kill her or kill himself, it would have been an outcome that

See WATCH, Page A8

To Be Equal

Marc Morial, President and CEO
National Urban League



Triumphs and Tragedies of 2012

"I miss you baby girl. Sweet caramel princess. African American, Puerto Rican Canadian with a wee bit of Irish... We will honor your classmates you loved so dearly too. As well as the teachers and staff. Love wins."

Nelba Marquez-Greene, the mother of
6-year-old Sandy Hook victim,
Ana Grace Marquez-Greene

As we come to the close of 2012, I want to take a moment to reflect on some of the major triumphs and tragedies of the past year.

First, as many of you know, the National Urban League's number one priority this year was our "Occupy the Vote" campaign, devoted to defeating the onslaught of voter ID laws and other tactics designed to suppress voter turnout among African Americans and other progressive voters. By all indications, our effort, in concert with many others across the country, was successful. On November 6th, President Obama was re-elected with overwhelming support from the very communities that were targets of the voter suppression crowd. In fact, according to a new Pew Research Center analysis, "Blacks voted at a higher rate this year than other minority groups and for the first time in history may also have voted at a higher rate than whites." Our thanks to everyone who helped us Occupy the Vote in 2012.

We also want to again extend our gratitude to all those who came to the aid of the victims of Superstorm Sandy which struck New York and the Mid-Atlantic region in October. The relief effort is progressing, but as the cold weather sets in, many remain homeless and jobless. We are pleased that on December 28th, the United States Senate approved President Obama's \$60.4 billion aid package. We urge the House of Representatives to quickly follow their lead. Sandy was a natural disaster that claimed more than 100 lives, but this year also saw one of

the most horrific man-made disasters in American history – the shooting deaths of 20 elementary school students and six others in a school in Newtown, Connecticut. While the nation is still mourning this tragedy, the National Urban League has called for a reinstatement of the assault weapons ban, along with a comprehensive review of all gun laws to close loopholes and strengthen enforcement. We must take action now to end the scourge of gun violence in America.

Finally, this year we saw the passing of a number of notable Americans. They include:

Whitney Houston – The incomparable musical prodigy whose amazing voice and songs brought joy to the world.

Dick Clark – The long-time host of "American Bandstand," who reigned as "America's oldest teenager" for 82 years and gave first-time national exposure to many African American musical artists.

Neil Armstrong – The NASA astronaut who in 1969 became the first human to walk on the moon.

Sally Ride – Another NASA astronaut, who in 1983 became the first woman to fly into space.

Russell Means – The Oglala Sioux Indian who became the iconic leader of the American Indian Movement and fought tirelessly for the rights of Native Americans.

Sherman Helmsley – The spirited actor whose TV roles as George Jefferson in "All in the Family" and "The Jeffersons" kept us laughing through the 70's and 80's.

Ana Grace Marquez-Greene and her 19 classmates at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

We pray that 2013 will be a prosperous and peaceful one for you and your family.

We pledge to continue standing with you in the struggle for economic, political and social justice for all.

Happy New Year!

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS

Small Business Spotlight

County Changes Minority Business Division Name

*Prince George's County Changes Minority Business Division Name to Supplier Development & Diversity Division
New Name Reflects County's Commitment to Local, Small and Minority Businesses*

LARGO, MD — Prince George's County is changing the name of its Minority Business Division to the Supplier Development & Diversity Division (SDDD). The change is an effort to rebrand the division and to better reflect its expanded commitment to serve the growing needs of businesses that are county-based, small, minority, disadvantaged and veteran & service disabled owned.

"Prince George's County is committed to increasing economic opportunities for companies that are often overlooked in the bid process," said Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III. "The name change signals to those businesses that we are serious about inclusion and we are committed to developing long-term relationships with local, small, minority and disadvantaged businesses."

The Prince George's County Supplier Development & Diversity Division exists to maximize the County government's use of certified local, small, minority and disadvantaged and veteran businesses for procurement opportunities. SDDD also encourages the private sector to utilize these businesses for major projects in the County. For 16 years, SDDD has worked diligently to build up Prince George's County's use of minority and disadvantaged businesses through procurement assistance, business development, certification, education and training and advocacy.

University of Maryland Extension Ask the Plant and Pest Professor

Question #1: My house is surrounded by large tulip poplar and oak trees. I am considering hiring someone to top the trees closest to my house to minimize potential damage if one or more should fall during a storm. When would be the proper time to do this and will I be causing damage to the trees?

Answer #1: Topping is a term used to describe the cutting back of large branches or the central leader of a mature tree with little regard to where the pruning cuts are made. This practice is not highly regarded by the tree care industry as research has shown that topping a tree can cause it to become more hazardous. Drastically reducing the tree canopy reduces photosynthesis and limits the tree's ability to produce the necessary carbohydrates to stay healthy. Exposed bark is more susceptible to sunscald causing bark damage. The large wounds that this type of pruning creates are difficult for trees to compartmentalize or wall-off allowing disease organisms or insects to enter the tree. The growth that is produced from the pruned areas, called water sprouts or epicormic growth is weakly attached to the tree and is subject to wind and ice damage. Plus the trees become unsightly. Our advice is to call a certified arborist to evaluate the health of the trees and if the trees are a candidate, perform crown reduction pruning.

To find a certified arborist go to the following website, www.treesaregood.org

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Wishing You and Yours A Very Happy Holiday Season, and a Safe and Prosperous New Year!

Council Member Obie Patterson and The District 8 Staff

Governor O'Malley Signs Executive Order Helping State Prepare for Climate Change and Extreme Weather

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, MD (December, 2012) — Governor Martin O'Malley has signed a landmark initiative to increase the State's long term resiliency to storm related flooding and sea level rise. He signed the Climate Change and Coast Smart Construction Executive Order, directing that all new and reconstructed state structures, as well as other infrastructure improvements, be planned and constructed to avoid or minimize future flood damage.

"As storms such as Hurricane Sandy have shown, it is vital that we commit our resources and expertise to create a ready and resilient Maryland, by taking the necessary steps to adapt to the rising sea and unpredictable weather," said Governor O'Malley. "In studying and planning for storms and climate change, we can ensure that our land, infrastructure, and most importantly our citizens are safe and prepared."

The Executive Order enacts a number of policy directives, including directing all State agencies to consider the risk of coastal flooding and sea level rise when they design capital budget projects and charging the Department of General Services with updating its architecture and engineering guidelines to require new and rebuilt State structures to be elevated two or more feet above the 100-year base flood level.

"Over the past three decades, Maryland's climate has become hotter and water levels within the Chesapeake Bay have continued

to rise," said Zoe Johnson, DNR's Program Manager for Climate Change Policy. "The region's recent extreme storms and weather have demonstrated just how vulnerable our natural resources and infrastructure can be to such events. The Executive Order will be instrumental in reshaping how we build along Maryland's coasts."

The Executive Order also charges the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to work with the Maryland Commission on Climate Change, local governments and other parties as appropriate, to develop additional Coast Smart guidelines within nine months, for the siting and construction of new and rebuilt State structures, as well as other infrastructure improvements such as roads, bridges, sewer and water systems, and other essential public utilities. Recommendations for applying the new construction guidelines to non-state infrastructure projects that are partially or fully funded in the State's capital budget will also be developed.

Additionally, the Executive Order tasks the Scientific and Technical Working Group of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change with providing updated sea level rise projections for Maryland. In 2008, the Scientific and Technical Working Group published sea level rise projections for Maryland, with a high end range of 3.4 feet by the year 2100. However, considerable new research on sea level rise has since been published requiring the updating of these projections, according to Dr. Donald Boesch,



PHOTO JAY BAKER

Governor Martin O'Malley has signed a landmark initiative to increase the State's long term resiliency to storm related flooding and sea level rise.

President of University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, and chair of the Working Group.

For example, a study by the U.S. Geological Survey published this summer in the journal Nature Climate Change demonstrated that the 1,000 kilometer stretch of coast running from Cape Hatteras to north of Boston is a "hot spot" of sea level rise. The study found that since 1990, sea levels along this stretch, which includes Maryland, are rising at an annual rate three to four times faster than the global average. Dr. Boesch pointed out "the State should be using the most up-to-date sea level rise projections in order to ensure that state infrastructure is sited and designed in a manner that will avoid or minimize future loss or damages." Revised sea level rise projections are to be issued by end of June 2013.

To assist local governments,

DNR's CoastSmart Communities Program will continue to provide on-the-ground sea level rise planning expertise, training, and technical mapping tools. Launched by Governor O'Malley in April 2009, Maryland's CoastSmart Communities program has awarded more than a half-million dollars to coastal communities to help prepare for the anticipated impacts of climate change. In partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the State provides grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$75,000 to coastal communities to support the planning and preparation. For more information on the CoastSmart Program or to submit a funding request, visit dnr.maryland.gov/CoastSmart

For more information on Maryland's climate change adaptation efforts, visit <http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/climatechange/>

Promises from A1

However, opponents called these claims misleading as they expected the state to cut other education funds, leaving schools with little to no gain.

"It's true that all of Maryland gaming revenue is going to education, but it's also true that states are free to subtract an equal number of tax dollars. So there's no guarantee that school funding would increase dollar for dollar due to casino expansion," said Neil Bergsman, a spokesman for the Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute.

As Maryland expands its casino industry, the experience of other states offers reasons to be skeptical of the promised boost for education, opponents said.

Gambling critics label casino-funded public programs, like education, as empty promises.

"Funding for education is just a PR move. The actual funding for education in real dollars has gone down in gambling states versus non-gambling states," Kindt said.

When state economists in Florida released casino revenue estimates in 2004, they said revenues could range anywhere between \$200 and \$500 million per year. But legislators and pro-gambling groups focused solely on the higher end of the estimates in their promotions. And even the low-end number offered by state economists proved too optimistic.

The single largest annual revenue figure from gambling was \$138 million in 2010 -- only a third of the projected \$500 million.

"Casino gambling never generates the jobs or revenues that they (legislators) promise," said

John Sowinski, president of the Florida division of NoCasinos.org.

By the end of the 1980s, only four states had some form of legalized gambling. But the 1990s saw 11 more states bringing casinos to their turf.

In Illinois, legislators promised to use casino revenues for education assistance and to help local governments when gambling was legalized in 1990. State officials said the first 10 casino licenses would be sold for \$5 million each, bringing state coffers nearly \$50 million in revenue.

Instead, the licenses went for \$25,000 a pop to "political insiders", Kindt said.

In the 2000s, another wave of casino expansion hit the country as seven more states made gambling legal.

Pennsylvania legalized gambling in 2004 with legislators promising that casino expansion would provide major statewide property tax relief. Former Gov. Ed Rendell said casinos would pay the state more than \$1 billion in slots revenue annually to offset property taxes.

The numbers tell a different story. Roughly \$700 million has been injected into property tax relief each year, even though casino revenues have increased drastically.

The benefits are also not as widespread as promised, said David Baldinger, president of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition. While a few residents have seen up to \$400 of tax relief, many have seen none or very little, because of a "complicated state formula" that makes taxes vary greatly from community to community, Baldinger said.

"No, it (gambling) hasn't brought the property tax relief

that was promised, not by a long shot. It's nothing but a smoke-screen to pay back gambling interests," Baldinger said.

Colorado extended casino hours and added table games through referendum in 2008 with the promise of using a majority of the revenue -- nearly 80 percent -- to help community colleges. However, the revenues have fallen significantly short of state estimates.

Economists projected casino expansion would bring colleges \$22 million in its first year and \$38 million this year. Actual revenues for community colleges have amounted to roughly \$6 million for the first year and \$7 million this year, according to Colorado Joint Budget Committee reports.

Some argue that despite worse-than-expected returns, casinos generate at least a minimal income for public programs.

"Even if they don't match the estimates, these are new dollars for education programs that would not have survived otherwise," said Chad Marturano, a spokesperson for the Colorado

Department of Higher Education.

Nearly 200 community leaders weighed in on the social impact of casinos in a study this year by consultancy firm VP Communications and pollster Peter D. Hart Research Associates. Most respondents said casinos had delivered on their promises of jobs, growth, and tax revenues, and these benefits have been felt throughout the communities.

More than half of the community leaders surveyed said casino revenues helped them avoid cutbacks in public programs and start new community projects.

"Results reveal that those who know the industry best say that the gaming industry has delivered on its promises to bring jobs, economic development, tax revenue, increased tourism and more to casino communities," American Gaming Association President Frank Fahrenkopf, Jr., said in their annual report on the casino industry.

Literary Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 17th Annual Poetry Extravaganza

A free event presented by Collective Voices in partnership with C.A.A.P.A., Inc.

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Guest Poet: Patrick Washington, Kavon Ward & Ross "Mosaic" Cooper
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OUT ON THE TOWN

ERIC D. SNIDER'S
IN THE DARK

Movie Review

“LES MISERABLES”

LES MISERABLES Delivers Most of the Emotion and Some of the Spectacle

Eric D. Snider, Featured Critic

When it became his privilege to direct the movie version of the Les Misérables stage musical that has enthralled the world for more than a quarter-century, Tom Hooper made one crucial, momentous decision. Instead of following the normal practice of recording the songs in advance and having the actors lip-sync during filming, Hooper had them sing live. (A pianist accompanied them on set; the full orchestra was added later.)

Freed from the duty of mimicking canned performances they'd given weeks earlier in a recording studio, the actors could now make choices in the moment, to adjust the emotion on this line or the delivery on that one according to how the scene was going. They could truly act.

And act they do! Not the big, stylized theatrical acting you see in most stage musicals and movie adaptations thereof, but intimate, realistic performances, grounded in real human emotion. To take full advantage of this, Hooper made another unusual decision and filmed most of the songs in close-up, often in long, unbroken takes. It's better than a front-row seat on Broadway. It's more like being on the stage, staring Jean Valjean in the face while he vocalizes his inner struggles.

There are trade-offs to this method, however, and while Hooper's version of Les Misérables is magnificent in many ways -- strengthened by all-in performances from Hugh Jackman, Anne Hathaway, Eddie Redmayne, and Samantha Barks -- it often feels curiously small in scale. That's what happens when so much of the story is told through close-ups and two-shots: you lose the sense that there is a bigger, grander tale unfolding. (That's

especially problematic when the bigger, grander tale that's supposed to be the backdrop -- the French students' revolution -- wasn't that compelling on stage to begin with.) Hooper, who previously directed The King's Speech, gives us a few moments of eye-popping spectacle, but overall doesn't take nearly as much advantage of the opportunity as he could have.

Hugh Jackman is a sturdy, sensitive Jean Valjean, the good man who is hardened and then re-humanized by poverty and injustice. His response to the Bishop's kindness early in the film has exactly the poignant impact that it's supposed to. He sings:

"He treated me like any other He gave me his trust He called me brother My life he claims for God above: Can such things be?"

-- and on the word "brother," his voice cracks with emotion. That one small detail, that one acting choice by Jackman, speaks volumes about why the Bishop's kindness has touched Valjean so deeply: "He called me brother." I get teary-eyed just recalling the tenderness of the scene.

Alas, Valjean's other chance to wreak emotional devastation on the audience, the soaring, plaintive "Bring Him Home," is neutered by several factors. It's too high for Jackman (and most people) to sing comfortably, and he's so focused on getting the notes right that there's no room left for acting. The scene is also hampered, as are many others in the second half of the film, by Hooper's poor sense of pacing, going steadily from one number to the next without pause or variation. We seldom get a chance to catch our breath, to contemplate what has happened. There's a lot of drama and tragedy to be squeezed in here, and while Hooper isn't rushing, exactly, he does tend to maintain the same fixed rate of speed. Sometimes it feels less like a story and more like a



PHOTO COURTESY ROTTENTOMATOES

Set against the backdrop of 19th-century France, *Les Misérables* tells an enthralling story of broken dreams and unrequited love, passion, sacrifice and redemption—a timeless testament to the survival of the human spirit. Jackman plays ex-prisoner Jean Valjean, hunted for decades by the ruthless policeman Javert (Crowe) after he breaks parole. When Valjean agrees to care for factory worker Fantine's (Hathaway) young daughter, Cosette, their lives change forever. In December 2012, the world's longest-running musical brings its power to the big screen in Tom Hooper's sweeping and spectacular interpretation of Victor Hugo's epic tale. -- (C) Universal

series of unrelated solos and duets.

It muddies some plot points, too. Why is it a secret that Valjean rescued Marius that night at the barricade? Why is Eponine shown disguising herself as a boy when neither she nor anyone else is ever going to reference it? Why does Valjean decide he must separate himself from Cosette and Marius? I know the answers to these questions as spelled out in Hugo's novel and in the stage show, but if the movie were all I had to go by, I'd be in the dark.

These problems are mostly in the second act, though. The first act has Valjean's aforementioned high point, as well as Anne Hathaway's grand-slam performance as the doomed Fantine. Her rendition of "I Dreamed a Dream," alive with heartbreaking emotion, is possibly the best combination of singing and acting ever captured on film. Others have sung better; others have acted better. But in terms of both at once, I can't think of a better performance.

As Marius, Eddie Redmayne's high, quivering

voice has imperfections, but it's full of character and conviction. Redmayne is committed to the emotions of his scenes, particularly in "Empty Chairs at Empty Tables," and his interactions with Cosette (a fine Amanda Seyfried, playing an underwritten character) and Eponine (the marvelous stage actress Samantha Barks) benefit from this. Barks' rendition of "On My Own" is a winner, too.

Russell Crowe's Javert will be a little more controversial. Crowe has experience as a singer, fronting the rock bands 30 Odd Foot of Grunts and The Ordinary Fear of God, and he can carry a tune well enough. What he does with Javert is interesting. While most of the other characters sometimes talking the more dialogue-ish parts of their lyrics, Javert always sings. Always. This is a subtle reinforcement of the character: a strict, traditional, unwavering man who does exactly what is expected of him.

If the entire film were as good as the first 30 minutes, it would easily be one of the year's best pictures.

AGREEMENT from A2

revenue and spending cuts in a balanced manner.

• Raises \$620 billion in revenue according to Congress' Joint Committee on Taxation by achieving the President's goal of asking the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans to pay more while protecting 98 percent of families and 97 percent of small businesses from any income tax increase.

• Restores the 39.6 percent rate for high-income households, as in the 1990s: The top rate would return to 39.6 percent for singles with incomes above \$400,000 and married couples with incomes above \$450,000.

• Capital gains rates for high-income households return to Clinton-era levels: The capital gains rate would return to what it was under President Clinton, 20 percent. Counting the 3.8 percent surcharge from the Affordable Care Act, dividends and capital gains would be taxed at a rate of 23.8 percent for high-income households. These tax rates would apply to singles above \$400,000 and couples above \$450,000.

• Reduced tax benefits for households making over

\$250,000 (for singles) and \$300,000 (for couples): The agreement reinstates the Clinton-era limits on high-income tax benefits, the phase-out of itemized deductions ("Pease") and the Personal Exemption Phaseout ("PEP"), for couples with incomes over \$300,000 and singles with incomes over \$250,000. These two provisions reduce tax benefits for high-income households. This sets the stage for future balanced approaches to deficit reduction, which could include additional revenue through tax reforms that reduce tax benefits for Americans making over \$250,000.

• Raises tax rates on the wealthiest estates: The agreement raises the tax rate on the wealthiest estates -- worth upwards of \$5 million per person -- from 35 percent to 40 percent, in contrast to Republican proposals to continue the current estate tax levels.

• The agreement's \$620 billion in revenue is 85 percent of the amount raised by the Senate-passed bill, if that bill had been enacted and made permanent: The agreement locks in \$620 billion in high-income revenue over the next ten years. In contrast, the bill passed by Democrats in the Senate achieved approximately \$70 billion through one-year provisions; these same provisions

could have raised a total of \$715 billion over ten years if Congress acted again to extend it permanently. However, the Senate bill itself locked in only one year's worth of savings so would have required additional extensions to achieve those savings.

• Part of a balanced process of deficit reduction and stronger growth.

• Strengthens our recovery next year by cutting taxes for the middle-class: The independent, non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated that allowing the full effect of the "fiscal cliff" would cause our economy to enter a recession and actually shrink next year primarily as a result of higher taxes on the middle class and across-the-board spending cuts. The final agreement prevents taxes from rising on the middle class and delays the across-the-board "sequester."

• Temporary measures to support consumer spending and business investment: Extending unemployment insurance is one of the more effective ways to encourage consumer spending. And bonus depreciation will give companies incentives to invest.

• Provides greater economic certainty for families and

businesses: The agreement will make it easier for families and businesses to plan and will help our economy grow.

• Cuts the deficit and reduces the debt as a share of the economy over the next five years: Since April last year, the President has signed into law 1.7 trillion in deficit reduction, including \$700 billion in spending cuts from enacted appropriations bills in 2011 and 2012, and \$1 trillion in the Budget Control Act. This tax agreement not only further reduces the deficit, but raises \$620 in new revenue from high-income households. Together with a strengthening economy these steps will bring down the deficit as a share of the economy over the next five years.

• Establishes a foundation for additional balanced, pro-growth deficit reduction through tax and entitlement reform: The agreement leaves substantial scope for reducing tax expenditures for high-income households, reforming corporate taxes to broaden the base and cut the rate to make America more competitive, and to take further steps to reform entitlements.

• Extends the farm bill through the end of the fiscal year, averting a sharp rise in milk prices at the beginning of 2013.

Sports

by STAFF

Roger Goodell: The Wayne LaPierre of the Sports World



One flicker of hope in the aftermath of the Newtown, Connecticut massacre has been the mainstream media's willingness to speak a self-evident truth: Wayne LaPierre, CEO of the National Rifle Association is not only out of touch. He's part of the problem. From the New York Post to the Huffington Post, the verdict

has been near-unanimous on LaPierre's reaction to the tragedy. Calling for a national mental health registry, the turning of every school into a federal security zone, and the arming of school administrators is not only tin-eared. It's simply disturbed. Yes, as many have pointed out, he may just be crazy as a fox, ramping up the fear factor, helping spur new gun sales and doing his true number one job: catching flack for the CEOs of "big ammo." If everyone in the media is busy calling out LaPierre, they're unintentionally covering for the executives exploiting the jagged fears of a rattled populace. But it still has been refreshing to see much of the press abandon the pretense of false equivalence and call the LaPierre/NRA agenda out as the profit-driven, despotic dystopia that it is.

I do wish, however, this spasm of honesty would infect every working reporter especially my brethren who toil in the world of sports. Sports writers have become so conditioned to swallow whatever craven, logic-defying line oozes from the league offices, it is rare to hear a writer point out that our sports commissioners have no clothes. This ethical nudity applies to Major League Baseball's feckless Bud Selig, NBA czar David Stern, and the man seemingly driven to destroy the NHL, Gary Bettman.

But it's NFL chief Roger Goodell who has spent the last year doing his best impression of Wayne LaPierre. A recent cover story for Time Magazine, titled "The Enforcer: How Far Will Roger Goodell Go to Protect the Game He Loves," is a case in point more of how far the media will go to tell us that "up" is in fact "down" if it's in the interest of institutional power. The article is a "bizarro world" profile that paints Goodell as someone working overtime to make the game as safe as possible. It quotes Goodell stating that his altogether violent sport can be made far safer if only certain reforms were implemented like the elimination of kickoff. This is akin to saying that falling out of an airplane could be without risk if planes never traveled higher than 1,000 feet. Forget the article. We know "how far Roger Goodell will go" to protect the interests of football just by surveying the events of the past year.

- The NFL saw the number of former players suing the league swell to more than 4,000 in 2012, in what has become the largest class-action lawsuit in sports history. The players/plaintiffs claim that the NFL hid research that demonstrated a connection between football and the post-concussive syndromes connected to head injuries. The NFL continues to deny this, saying they have only been aware of the science since 2009, despite the fact we now know that the NFL retirement board, which has one member of the commissioner's office in its ranks, has over the last 14 years been secretly paying players believed to have been suffering from such injuries.

- Goodell made headlines over the league's crackdown on financial "bounties" aimed at inspiring the New Orleans Saints defense to "take out" opposing players. Now a humiliating subsequent investigation led by Goodell's predecessor Paul Tagliabue found little-to-no basis for the commissioner's McCarthyesque accusations which cost the Saints their season and did irreparable harm to the reputations of several player including outspoken union leader Scott Fujita. In an echo of McCarthy, Goodell even launched his public condemnation of the Saints by saying he had a list of "22-27 players" who took part in the bounty program before suspending a grand total of four. As Saints quarterback Drew Brees said to Time, "I feel like, in large part, this bounty scandal, so to speak, is a big facade and a way to cover up the shortcomings of the league with regard to player health and safety over the last three years."

- These shortcomings are legion. They include the use of dangerously incompetent replacement, scab officials for ¼ of the current season, the institutionalizing of Thursday Night Football which gives players less time to heal, and the continual push for an 18 game season. It has also included a continual effort by the NFL to promote youth football as a safe, wholesome activity for children as young as seven. The league has done this despite a study released in February "showing that head impacts among second-grade football players are sometimes as severe as those seen at the college level." Renowned concussion expert Dr. Robert Cantu, co-director of the Sports Legacy Institute has stated that the sport should be banned for children younger than 14. The NFL has not embraced Dr. Cantu's suggestion.

Time is correct that Goodell is an enforcer, but not for the greater good. Like LaPierre, Goodell enforces a disciplined message that presents his harmful industry as American as apple pie in the name of profit. Unlike LaPierre, he gets a

Calendar of Events

January 10 - January 16, 2013

Mentor + Mentee II: Maryland Edition

Date & Time: Saturday, January 26, Mondays-Fridays: 10 am-7 pm; Saturdays: 10 am-4 pm; Closed Sundays
Description: The Brentwood Arts Exchange presents "Mentor + Mentee II: Maryland Edition" in the gallery. The exhibition is a partnership with Washington Printmakers Gallery (WPG), and features original prints by thirteen of WPG's members, as well as prints by their teachers and students. "Mentor + Mentee II: Maryland Edition" is the second iteration of the student-teacher show, first presented by WPG in the fall of 2009, this time focusing on the groups Maryland membership. An insightful look into the presenting artists creative foundations and influences, the exhibit is a striking and eclectic exhibition of bold prints that explores a wide range of traditional and contemporary approaches. Concurrent with the exhibition, the Brentwood Arts Exchange and WPG will present gift-priced original fine art prints in the front of the Craft Store, just in time for holiday shopping and collection building.
Cost: FREE **Ages:** All ages
Location: Brentwood Arts Exchange at Gateway Arts Center 3901 Rhode Island Avenue, Brentwood 20722
Contact: 301-277-2863; TTY 301-446-6802

Senior Game Time

Date & Time: Fridays, Thru-June 8, 9 am-12 noon
Description: Join us every Friday for our Senior Game Time. Play cards, board games, bingo and many more fun games. Coffee and light refreshments served.
Cost: \$2/person **Ages:** 60 & better
Location: Glenarden Community Center 8615 McLain Avenue, Glenarden 20706
Contact: 301-772-3151; TTY 301-218-6768

The 70s Disco Hand Dance Party

Date and Time: Saturday, January 12, 6-9 pm
Description: Come get down, boogie, hang loose and have a groove-shaking good time at this year's 70s Disco Hand Dance Party.
Cost: \$10/person **Ages:** 18 & up
Location: Largol/Kettering/Perrywood Community Center 431 Watkins Park Drive, Upper Marlboro 20774
Contact: 301-390-8390; TTY 301-218-6768

Black History Month Opening Exhibit

Date and Time: Wednesday, January 16-Tuesday, February 26
Opening reception: Sunday, February 3, 2-4 pm (reservations required)
Description: View this year's exhibition, Fighting on Two Fronts: Black Military Service in the United States, which highlights African American service and support of the U.S. Military from the Revolutionary War to the Vietnam War. During this 200-year period, African Americans have fought, worked and sacrificed in support of their country. Fighting on Two Fronts explores their efforts in the changing face of discrimination at home and abroad. At the opening reception, see the unveiling of the 2013 Black History Month Poster designed by art students from Forestville Military Academy, with assistance from teachers Carlton and Joshua Smith and resident artist Curtis Woody.
Cost: FREE **Ages:** All ages
Location: Montpelier Arts Center 9652 Muirkirk Road, Laurel 20708
Contact: 301-699-2544; 240-264-3415

Twelfth Night Ball

Date & Time: Saturday, January 12, 2013, 7:30 pm
Description: Come in period attire or black tie to celebrate the traditional end of the holiday season at this Regency-style ball. Advance payment required by January 4; capacity is limited.
Cost: Resident: \$35; Non-Resident: \$42
Location: Riversdale House Museum 4811 Riverdale Road, Riverdale Park 20737
Contact: 301-864-0420; TTY 301-699-2544

The 70s Disco Hand Dance Party

Date and Time: Saturday, January 12, 6-9 pm
Description: Come get down, boogie, hang loose and have a groove-shaking good time at this year's 70s Disco Hand Dance Party.
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Cost: FREE **Ages:** All ages
Location: Montpelier Arts Center 9652 Muirkirk Road, Laurel 20708
Contact: 301-699-2544; 240-264-3415

Puppet Show

Date & Time: Thursday, January 17, 2-3 pm
Description: Participants will enjoy a seasonal themed puppet show and meet a live animal. Reservations are required.
Cost: Resident \$2; Non-Resident \$3
Ages: 2-10
Location: Watkins Nature Center 301 Watkins Park Drive, Upper Marlboro 20774
Contact: 301-218-6702; TTY 301-699-2544

EARTH TALK ... Traffic Pollution and Asthma

Dear EarthTalk:

Is it true that asthma cases in children often correlate to living close to roads and all the associated pollution-spewing traffic?

-- Jake Locklear, San Diego, CA

Living near a roadway certainly does exacerbate asthma, especially for kids. To wit, a recent study by the University of Southern California (USC)—the most comprehensive by far to date on this topic—found that at least eight percent of the more than 300,000 cases of childhood asthma in Los Angeles County can be attributed to traffic-related pollution at homes within 250 feet of a busy roadway. The findings, released in the September 2012 online edition of the peer-reviewed journal, Environmental Health Perspectives, indicate that previous research underestimated the effects of roadway traffic on asthma.

"Our findings suggest that there are large and previously unappreciated public health consequences of air pollution in Los Angeles County and probably other metropolitan areas with large numbers of children living near major traffic corridors," says Rob McConnell, one of the lead researchers on the study and a professor of preventive medicine at USC's Keck School of Medicine. "These findings confirm our understanding that air pollution

not only makes things worse for people with asthma but can actually cause asthma to develop in healthy children," reports Diane Bailey of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), a leading environmental non-profit. "It is even more sobering when you consider that 45 million Americans live within 300 feet of a highway and many of them are children."

USC researchers note that new laws in California designed to reduce carbon output—improving fuel efficiency and reducing vehicle miles by increasing public transit options—will also help reduce asthma triggers. Some of the policies designed to reduce traffic congestion and car usage include offering housing developers incentives to locate projects closer to transit stops, thus encouraging use of public transit.

"Plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change offer an opportunity to develop 'win-win' strategies that will maximize the health benefits from reduction both of greenhouse gases and of air pollutants that directly harm children," McConnell says.

"There is also emerging evidence that other diseases may be caused or exacerbated by urban air pollution, including atherosclerosis, lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and neurological disorders," McConnell adds. "Thus, policies to combat climate change may have near-



CREDIT: HEMERA COLLECTION

A recent study by the University of Southern California found that at least eight percent of the more than 300,000 cases of childhood asthma in Los Angeles County can be attributed to traffic-related pollution at homes within 250 feet of a busy roadway.

term health benefits beyond reducing the burden of disease due to asthma."

According to NRDC's Bailey, prioritizing the land directly next to freeways and other busy roads for commercial rather than residential use is one way to keep people at a safer distance from asthma-triggering pollution. Those who already live near busy roadways can help mitigate pollution effects by planting trees—foliage of all kinds is good at absorbing pollutants—and by filtering their indoor air to minimize overall exposure. But given that traffic pollution increases asthma by some eight percent, says Bailey, "we better do everything we can do reduce

that pollution and minimize exposure to it."

CONTACTS: Environmental Health Perspectives, ehp.niehs.nih.gov; NRDC, www.nrdc.org.

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Couples from A1

sis of census data.

"Through my mom it would be 8-10 years (to become a citizen), and through my profession it's not possible," Morales said. "My only way is my spouse, but that's not possible."

Morales left her native Peru after earning her bachelor's and master's degrees in systems engineering. Despite a lucrative job working for a Miami bank's IT department, she said she found her passion volunteering for a hospital. When she met Costello in 2007, she decided to become a nurse.

Following her graduation from Georgetown University in 2010, Morales' student visa became a temporary work visa. But that expired one year later, Morales said.

"We had two options. I could either keep studying, or we had to leave the country," Morales said.

She quickly enrolled in the master of nursing program at Marymount University in Virginia.

"Leaving the country meant

that we had to leave our family and friends and our community, and her patients, and my students," said Costello, an English as a second language teacher. Staying, however, has come with its challenges.

Under a student visa, Morales can no longer work. With only one income, the couple was forced to move in with Costello's parents. They've also accumulated significant debt paying for Morales' education out-of-pocket.

Morales graduated cum laude from Georgetown, but isn't eligible for any scholarships or federal student aid because she's not a citizen. Attorney consultation fees have also added up.

"We thought that somebody has got to be able to have the answer (to our problem), but after five lawyers, everyone was telling us the same thing," Costello said. "There's nothing she can really do except continue going to school. If Fab keeps at it, she'll end up with a doctorate in neurosurgery," Costello joked.

Costello said she and her

wife "live day by day and semester by semester" in hopes the Defense of Marriage Act will be repealed. Another piece of federal legislation, however, may help them and couples like them sooner rather than later.

The Uniting American Families Act, currently before the Senate and House Judiciary committees, would allow gay and lesbian U.S. citizens and lawful residents to help their "permanent partners" obtain citizenship in the same way as heterosexual spouses. Maryland Senators Barbara Mikulski and Ben Cardin, and Rep. Chris Van Hollen, D-Kensington, are cosponsors of the bill.

"Our laws in the United States still contain discriminatory provisions that we need to correct. I think the more we can put a face on the issue so that this isn't an abstract problem—that this is a real problem facing real families—I think the better chance we have of getting it resolved," Cardin said, in an interview.

Cardin said he's hopeful for bipartisan support even though bills involving the rights of gay

couples do not often get a lot of Republican support.

"I think that we showed on marriage equality in Maryland that there is broad support that doesn't break down just because of party affiliation. The question is finding the way to get it done," he said.

With this year's session almost over, Cardin said the odds of moving the bill before 2013 are slim. But he thinks it has a chance to move as part of an immigration reform package or a civil rights act sometime next year.

If or until something is done, Morales and Costello will continue to wait, but refuse to stand idly by. Both are active within the Washington-based organization Immigration Equality, which advocates for and provides legal aid to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender immigrants.

"The immigration system is broken, but it can be repaired. I'm a US citizen and my family is here and my wife is my life. We work hard in our communities and are trying to make our country as a whole better as

Explode from A1

As for online gaming in the District, Brown said this is a good way to bring in tax revenue from the industry, without having a casino that "possibly would also bring what I think a lot of social activists are concerned about, a different kind of element to the city."

"Keep in mind that it's already going on in the District of Columbia. Thousands of our residents are playing right now, today, without any regulations and without the city reaping any of those revenue benefits," said Brown.

In Virginia, the story is different, but the conclusion is the same: no casinos.

Toni-Michelle Travis, an associate professor of government and politics at George Mason University, said this likely has to do with the Protestant tradition in the state.

"Many people would have reservations because of their religious beliefs," said Travis.

Don Blake, chairman and president of the Virginia Christian Alliance, said his orga-

nization opposes gambling in the state because it damages individuals, families and culture, and is "against the principles in the Bible."

"Gambling is a plague on people," said Blake, who said the reason people do gamble is because they "have desires that they can't control sometimes."

Even with a growing and more liberal population in the northern part of the state, Blake said the makeup of the Virginia House of Delegates and the Senate of Virginia make potential casinos decades away.

Travis also noted the population boom in the northern part of the state, and said "this won't be the only issue," between this region and the rest of the state.

"I think very shortly the priorities of Northern Virginia will dominate the state versus the priorities of our more rural legislature," said Travis.

The economic strength of the state, Travis said, is also something that should keep Virginia from needing to look to casinos for added revenue.

"We have a very balanced budget," said Travis. "I think that

would be a very last resort for legislatures to consider as a way to raise money."

Despite this, Virginia State Sen. L. Louise Lucas has pre-filed a bill for the 2013 General Assembly session that would at least look at casinos in the state, albeit in a limited nature.

"It's been so long since the question has come up," said Robert Whitacre, who consults for Lucas on casinos.

Whitacre disagreed with the religious argument, saying that while that may have been true 10 or 15 years ago, it is not the case today. The best-case situation, Whitacre said, would be to authorize casino gaming in certain jurisdictions based on community support.

If casinos were to be legalized in either Virginia or D.C., casino companies would almost certainly jump at the opportunity to build, but they're not trying to push the door open.

Karen Bailey, director of public affairs for Penn National Gaming, said the company has not to her knowledge made an effort to push for casinos in the District or Virginia, and that it is

a "matter of local appetite."

"We're a company that's always focused on expansion and new opportunities, so we never say no to examining new opportunities, but it's too early for us to speculate of, you know, what we would do," said Bailey.

Gordon Absher, vice president of public affairs at MGM Resorts International, the company that will likely build a casino in National Harbor, said there are a lot of misperceptions about gaming.

From his personal experience, Absher found that in Maryland the definition of a casino was a slot operation, whereas MGM is in the "destination resort business". Absher said 60 percent of the revenue comes from non-gaming sources like hotel rooms, events and food, and this is, "one of the first things that we begin to communicate when a new market starts to consider bringing in gaming."

Absher and Bailey both mentioned that their companies will not try and push their industry onto an uninterested public.

"We don't create new markets," said Absher.

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Watch from A4

would never have been national news. Instead, the weapons she apparently chose to buy and bring into her home were used to kill her, her child, and twenty-six other people who were all somebody else's mother, child, or both.

All mothers who allow firearms in their homes should ask themselves what kinds of guns they are deliberately, inadvertently, or by example giving their own children access to—and why? All mothers who don't keep guns in their own homes but do allow their children to visit anyone else's homes should be aware that nearly half of Americans say they keep a gun in their home or on their property, that one-third of homes with children younger than age 18 have guns, and that more than 40 percent of guns in homes with children present are left unlocked. Before your child visits a friend or relative's home, do you ask? If not, it's time to start. Parents need to wake up and take care

to protect all children.

There are many more questions: Do you buy your child violent video games? Why? Do you allow your child to see violent movies or listen to music with violent lyrics? Why? Do you keep those things from your children but continue to do them for your own entertainment? Why? Why? Why?

An advertising campaign for bestselling Bushmaster rifles uses the tag line "Consider Your Man Card Reissued." When the Newtown shooter used that Bushmaster .223 semiautomatic rifle to kill seven women and twenty first-graders, did he earn his "man card"? Is this the best definition of American manhood we have to give our children?

On April 4, 1967, exactly a year to the day before he would be killed by a gun, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave the speech "Beyond Vietnam" at New York City's Riverside Church. He said: "We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent coannihilation. We must move past

indecision to action . . . If we do not act, we shall surely be dragged down the long, dark, and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight."

For mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, neighbors, teachers, faith leaders and everyone else in America who is saying enough, this is our moment. Which one will we choose?

Marian Wright Edelman is President of the Children's Defense Fund whose Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. For more information go to www.childrensdefense.org.

Mrs. Edelman's Child Watch Column also appears each week on The Huffington Post.

Zirin from A6

benefit of the doubt a mile wide. As Time Magazine quoted him saying, "I don't do things for public relations. I do things because they're the right thing to do, because I love the game . . . If you want to do the popular thing, be a cheerleader." It is fitting that our chief enforcer of the redeeming values inherent in toxic masculinity would take pains to make clear that he is a manly man and nobody's "cheer-

leader." It's even more fitting that Time would paint the criticism he's provoked among players and their union as a Truman-esque virtue.

It's a step in the right direction that the press is finally calling out the willing ignorance of Wayne LaPierre as the dangerous spectacle that it is. Let's turn that critical eye toward Goodell and his commissioner brethren. They are running sports into the ground and - after four league lockouts in the last year - it's high time

writers, fans, and players stop genuflecting and start speaking truth. Maybe they should remember Goodell's own advice. He said to Time, "A lot of times, you know the right thing to do. But you have to have the courage to do it. And I think that's harder than it seems." Courage isn't easy. But the courage to call out Roger Goodell should be the litmus test to know the difference between an honest journalist and a stenographer for power acting against the greater good.

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