

The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY Since 1952

Vol. 82, No. 10 March 6 — March 12, 2014

Prince George's County, Maryland

Newspaper of Record

Phone: 301-627-0900

25 cents

O'Malley Announces Return of Carnival Cruise Lines to Baltimore

Office of the Governor

Governor Martin O'Malley today announced the return of Carnival Cruise Lines to the Port of Baltimore. Following approval in September by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Coast Guard of Carnival's plan to reduce ship emissions, the popular cruise line will resume seven-day, year-round cruises on-board the Carnival Pride ship from the Port of Baltimore beginning in March 2015. The vessel will return to Maryland with new air emission reduction technologies and a host of new dining, bar, and entertainment options.

"We are pleased to welcome Carnival Cruise Lines back to Maryland and the Carnival Pride cruise ship back to the Port of Baltimore," said Governor O'Malley. "Our Administration, along with our Congressional Delegation, has a proven track record of advocating for a strong, healthy environment

and fighting for high-quality jobs for Maryland families. I'm pleased Carnival and the Environmental Protection Agency and Coast Guard have agreed on a plan that will keep family-supporting jobs in Maryland and allow a greener Carnival Pride to return to this thriving cruise market."

According to the Maryland Port Administration, 500 jobs are generated by cruise activity in Maryland, including 220 direct jobs at the Port of Baltimore. Additionally, Maryland benefits from \$90 million in economic activity generated by cruise activities. The economic value to Maryland takes into consideration such factors as local spending, hotels, dining and entertainment.

Upon its return to Baltimore, the Carnival Pride will be equipped with exhaust gas-cleaning technology, known as scrubbers. Scrub-

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Technical Glitches Plague UMD after Data Breach

By Nicholas Munson
Capital News Service

After seven days of waiting, victims of the University of Maryland's data breach were hoping to sign up Tuesday for the free credit monitoring provided by the school.

Instead, students and university employees were met with sometimes conflicting information. In addition, for several hours a credit protection hotline recommended by the school was malfunctioning due to high call volumes.

Brett Hall, a junior at the university, made three separate calls to Experian, the credit bureau whose ProtectMyID alert membership was offered by the school to those affected by the cyberattack. On his first two calls, Hall said he was told his information had not been compromised and was therefore not eligible for the free protection.

On his third call, Hall said his name was found on a list and was informed that his information had

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Sen. Robert Zirkin, D-Baltimore County, who is the sponsor of a bill that would decriminalize small amounts of marijuana, listens to testimony during Tuesday's hearing in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

Marijuana Legalization Hotly Debated in Maryland Senate Committee Hearing

By Megan Brockett
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS — Dozens of people testifying before Maryland lawmakers on Tuesday called for an end to the state's battle against marijuana, one part of the decades-long national war on drugs that supporters of legalization and decriminalization say has done more harm than good.

In the session's first real wave of marijuana legislation hearings, members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee weighed measures proposing to make recreational use of the drug legal for people 21 and older. Another proposal would shift possession of small amounts of the drug to a civil, rather than criminal, offense.

In a heated debate, proponents of both bills pointed to what they said

are the negative consequences of prohibiting marijuana, including the barriers to employment and education created by marijuana-related arrests and the racial disparities that often surface in arrests.

In 2010, Maryland had the fourth-highest arrest rate for marijuana possession, with African Americans being arrested for possession at higher rates than whites in every county in the state, according to a report released by the ACLU in October.

"We've really turned [the war on marijuana] into a war against our own people," said Sen. Jamie Raskin, D-Montgomery, sponsor of the legalization bill. "We have criminalized and demonized tens of thousands of our fellow Marylanders, we have ruined many of their prospects for success in the labor market and

the job force, we have been spending more than \$100 million a year on criminal arrest prosecution and supervision of people for marijuana related offenses, and yet we didn't put a dent into the demand for the drug, and so indirectly we have been supporting the drug gangs and the international drug cartel."

Many advocates of the legalization legislation also urged lawmakers to consider the "wasted" time and resources of law enforcement officials to deal with marijuana-related crimes, taking attention away from violent crimes.

While testimonial support for the two separate pieces of legislation merged at times, Sen. Robert Zirkin, D-

See *Marijuana Page A3*

Lawmakers Urge Action on Slaughter of sick calves

By Ilana Shulevitz
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers are calling on the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ban the slaughter of sick, injured or weak calves for sale as meat, an issue that raises questions about both humane animal practices and food safety.

"Diseased cattle and baby cattle are going through the slaughter plants every day," said Carolyn Ratliff, director of Carroll County's Humane Society. "If they can't get up, imagine how they're being moved around. Those animals can be handled very badly."

The slaughter of "downer" cattle, animals that cannot stand on their own due to disease, stress, or exhaustion, has been addressed before. In fact, it's been banned by the USDA.

"The (USDA) has prohibited the slaughter of down cattle for human consumption, for both severe food safety and the humane handling reasons," said Michael Markarian, chief program and policy officer at the Humane Society of the United States. "However, we discovered a loophole in that federal regulation that allowed the continued slaughter of down calves."



PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Past regulations were largely meant to target carriers of mad cow disease, which typically affects heavier cattle past a certain age. Calves over 400 lbs. that cannot stand on their own are required to be euthanized.

But the regulations don't apply to cows under 400 lbs.

A bipartisan group of 72 members of Congress addressed the issue in a letter to the USDA re-

See *Sick Calves, Page A7*

Lawmakers Weigh Restrictions on Tracking Retail Shoppers Via Wi-Fi

By Patrick Farell
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS — A bill proposed to the House Economics Committee on Friday would prohibit Maryland retailers from using consumer cellphone Wi-Fi signals to track their shopping habits, unless merchants post notices at store entrances.

Using a customer's Wi-Fi signal, retailers are able to track individual shopping habits — from venue to venue — and then use this data to provide businesses with detailed audience reports.

"You would be surprised how much information stores know about you as soon as you walk in the door," said Marceline White, Executive Director of the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition.

Two companies — Turnstyle Solutions and RetailNext — are currently paving the way for this new form of customer analytics, White said.

These tracking technologies allow retailers to identify repeat customers and observe consumers walk through stores, according to a legislative analysis of the proposal.

While the proposed bill would do nothing to end these practices, it would require stores to display notices at every entrance to alert customers that their shopping habits are being tracked.

"We certainly know [retailers] have loyalty cards... but that's something you opt into," White said.

With posted notices, customers would essentially be able to opt-out by turning off their cellphone Wi-Fi.

Patrick Bonoho, President of the Maryland Retail Association, argued against the bill, warning of the possibility of "unintended consequences" to posting notices.

Bonoho cited high-levels of retail theft in Baltimore, though lawmakers questions and comments indicated they were skeptical as to how posting notices would introduce a threat to security in retail establishments.

The proposal highlights what seems to be a growing trend in Annapolis: as technology rapidly advances, lawmakers must take notice — and keep up. The legislature is weighing other privacy matters this year, including how long law enforcement agencies can retain license plate tracking records.

INSIDE

Lawmakers Consider Measure That Would Mandate Paid Sick Leave

The proposal, which has so far received backing from 66 delegates and 19 senators, would make Maryland just the second state in the nation to mandate that private sector businesses provide paid sick days to workers

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Give America a Raise; Boost America's Economy for All

There will always be some jobs that pay more than others, based on job function, skills required, experience, education and training required, among other factors, but no one who works a 40-hour week should be living in poverty and struggling to support their family.

Commentary, Page A4

O'Malley Takes Effort to Raise Maryland's Minimum Wage To The White House

Governor O'Malley has made raising the wage a top priority for the 2014 state legislative session. In the proposal, Maryland's minimum wage of \$7.25 would increase incrementally to \$10.10 in July 2016.

Business, Page A5

Movie Review: "Grand Piano"

Tom Selznick, the most talented pianist of his generation, stopped performing in public because of his stage fright. Years after a catastrophic performance, he reappears in public in a long-awaited concert in Chicago. In a packed theater, in front of the expectant audience, Tom finds a message written on the score: "Play one wrong note and you die."

Out on the Town, Page A6

Earth Talk

Dear EarthTalk:

What are "dirty fuels" and why are they so called?

— Bill Green,
Seattle, WA

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Towns and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

Doris Bowers, 1983 Auxiliary Lady of the Year, dies at 89

Doris Eileen Bowers, longtime member of the Ladies Auxiliary of VFW Post 9619, in Morningside, who was named Auxiliary Lady of the Year back in 1983-84, died Feb. 19 at Calvert Memorial Hospital. She was 89.

She lived for many years on Deming Drive in Suitland and was a substitute teacher in the County schools. At the VFW, she coordinated dinners, dances and Bingo. She was also a member of the Alpha Zeta Beta Sorority, Gamma Epsilon Chapter.

Doris's husband of more than 50 years, Robert C. Bowers Jr., died in 1999. She was the mother of Barbara Campbell, Sharon and Sandra Bowers, grandmother of three and great-grandmother of four.

Services will be held for her on Sunday, March 16, at Lee Funeral Home, 8200 Jennifer Lane in Owings. Visitation will be at 10 a.m. with a memorial service at noon.

Neighbors

Morningside Town elections are coming up May 5 with two Council seats to be filled. Names of candidates had to be turned in by March 3.

Skyline had interesting speakers at their February general meeting—Sheriff Melvin High and Deputy Sheriff Darin Palmer. And from the County Police, Maj. Douglas Garrett, commander of District IV, Cpl. Miller and our COPS Officer Gonzales,

Sheriff High presented us with a framed photo, signed, "To Skyline Civic Association, Your contribution to our community is valued."

Deputy Sheriff Palmer is married to former Skyline resident, Melissa Burgess, who used to teach at Skyline School. She asked her husband, since he would be at the school, to take a picture of her classroom.

The Morningside Recreational Council hosted a

Christmas house-judging contest. The Wade Family of Morgan Road placed 1st; Williams Family of Woodland Road, 2nd; and Canenguez Family, also of Woodland Road, 3rd. Gift baskets and Giant Food gift-cards were awarded.

News from Andrews

Two from Joint Base Andrews are winners of the 2013 Air Force Medical Service Annual Award competition, announced Jan. 31: Maj. John Brewster was awarded Dental Educator of the Year and Master Sgt. Jeannie Washington named Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Operational Medicine Excellence Award.

Construction of a new parking garage at Malcolm Grow Medical Clinics and Surgery Center began Dec. 15. Residents and patients can expect vibrations throughout the day as pier supports are installed. Completion of the garage slated for May 2015.

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day

The Sióg-Og Irish Band will play Irish tunes, songs, dances and verse while you enjoy tea at Harmony Hall on Wed., March 12 at 2 p.m. he repertoire also includes American Civil War music and songs. he band's name ("forever young" in Irish Gaelic) reflects music played in Ireland for 150 years. Admission is \$15. Harmony Hall is at 10701 Livingston Road in Fort Washington. Information: 301-203-6070.

Lent

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which this year was March 5. On Wednesday evenings during Lent, the doors of Catholic churches across the Archdiocese of Washington will be open for quiet prayer and the Sacrament of Reconciliation (which I always call Confession). The Archdiocese includes Washington, Prince George's, Montgomery, Charles, Calvert and St. Mary's counties.

Changing landscape

Sears in Landover is closing and "everything must be sold" (except Electrolux). The Auto center is not participating in this sales event.

The roadwork going on near the intersection of Suitland Road and Suitland Parkway is a National Park Service project. No further information available.

Savan Nails & Spa is celebrating its Grand Opening at 4703 Old Soper Road, across from the Branch Avenue Metro Station. Manicure, \$14.

May they rest in peace

Dolores Janet Reid Dyess, longtime member of Bethany Lutheran Church in Suitland, died Feb. 25 at The Village at Rockville. For more than 40 years she sold Avon in the Forestville-Suitland area. Her husband James and son Jimmy preceded her in death. Survivors include four children, eleven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Father An Ngoc Vu, 55, a native of Vietnam and former pastor of Holy Family Parish in Hillcrest Heights, died Feb. 5. He had also served as parochial vicar at St. Mary's in Upper Marlboro and St. Bernard's in Riverdale and as chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, Council 9302.

Milestones

A special Happy birthday to Anna Buck, who turns 100 on March 9.

And a Happy Day also to Jon McKlveen, Shirley Dodgson and my grandson Richard Shearer, March 9; Ange Meoli, John F. Latimer, Karl Kaufman Jr., Alberta M. Smith and my son-in-law John Mudd, March 10; Karen Cordero, Blake James Shipman and Father Scott Hahn, March 11; Harold Wilson, Rebecca Turner and Marcy Richardson, March 12; Pamela Woodall, Kathy Elborne, Cordelia Bland, Shirley Caruth and Gregory Ritter, March 13.

Happy Golden Anniversary to Ken and Gretchen Muir on Dec. 21.

Neighborhood Events

Insects Help Scientists Design and Build Better Drones

COLLEGE PARK — The paper on one of the drone laboratory's doors has scrawled on it: "Bug Laboratory (Enter at Your Own Risk)."

Inside the University of Maryland's Autonomous Vehicle Laboratory is an unusual combination of insects, drones, and drones that look like insects.

Scientists across the country are turning to insects to create smaller robotics. The research could shape the way government responds to natural disasters, and even how we receive packages.

Using elements such as sensors inspired by an insect's vision and a flapping-wing flight system, the vehicles are combining nature and mechanics.

"Typically, what we see in biology is the exact opposite of what we see in engineering systems," said Sean Humbert, a professor of aerospace engineering and the director of the program.

The Harvard Microrobotics Lab is also looking to insects for inspiration. It's best known for its microbee, a flying robot about the size of a penny.

"The key reason is that biology solves problems in a different way, specifically through evolution," said Yigit Menguc, a post-doctoral candidate at the Harvard lab.

Through time, evolution has found solutions to problems scientists still struggle with when building small robotics.

"It's hard to make robotics at the same scale as insects, so one of the problems is how do you build them? But also at that level the physics change," Menguc said.

Stabilization and control are two of the challenges the Maryland laboratory is working on.

"We're trying to understand why nature has found and is using that solution, and we're trying to understand the benefits of that and whether or not we can scale that down to systems of that size," Humbert said.

Insects are robust when reacting to turbulence and environmental disturbances, and trying to mimic the way they respond to things such as gusts of wind could help robots with their stabilization and control problems.

Although vehicles on the ground have fewer of these problems, the lab is still looking to improve their efficiency to do things such as perch on walls and ceilings.

"Not just things that fly, but things that crawl, as well as things that swim. So we're interested in all aspects of the sensory feedback systems and the processing capabilities of animals," Humbert said.

The project is receiving funding from the Air Force, Army, Navy, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency and NASA.

Minuscule drones that are able to navigate by themselves can be used in disaster site exploration, military operations and cluttered urban environments.

"Effectively, you could let one of these tiny vehicles go, something like the size of a hummingbird or less, in a cluttered building environment and it could navigate its way through the building without running into things and potentially collect information from the environment," said Greg Gremillion, one of the doctoral students working on the project at Maryland.

The lab's prototypes include a flapping wing vehicle the size of a hummingbird and a larger vehicle developed primarily by

Gremillion and doctoral student Hector Escobar that uses a sensor ring modeled on an insect's vision.

An example of how future prototypes of these vehicles could be used is after a natural disaster, to navigate around areas that are too small or unsafe for humans to gather information and video.

Another drone being developed by Escobar uses a combination of sonar and infrared technology to help navigate in dark areas.

This type of drone would make a firefighter's job safer. Instead of sending firefighters into a burning building to ensure it's been evacuated, a drone would be sent into the building.

The drone would be able to navigate the building as well as send information back to the firefighters about what's in the building.

Outside of government and disaster-site exploration, the technology being developed at the drone lab could have commercial implications as well.

Although the research and projects are futuristic, scientists still remember that it was nature that brought them here.

Advocates Call For Athletic Trainers in Maryland High Schools

COLLEGE PARK -- As many students prepare to head home on the bus at 2 p.m. each weekday, Jasmine Hemmings' job as an athletic trainer at Centennial High School in Ellicott City is just getting started.

Hemmings spends the next hour or so evaluating students who may have suffered an injury the day before, taping or bracing students with lingering injuries and rehabbing students who have injuries that can be worked on through exercise.

Such is the scene on weekday afternoons in high schools across Howard County. The county has a part-time athletic trainer like Hemmings in every school.

Several other counties in Maryland, including Anne Arundel, Charles and Carroll counties also have athletic trainers at every high school.

"It's very important to have a qualified, health care provider that is directly available if there's any emergency," Hemmings said. "Coaches know signs and symptoms, but they don't know how to do a full evaluation."

However, several Maryland counties, like Prince George's County, do not provide trainers at any high school. Others, like Montgomery County, only have trainers in some of their high schools.

Beginning with the current 2013-14 school year, Montgomery contracted with local medical vendors to conduct baseline concussion testing of all of the district's student-athletes. The vendors also began a pilot program that put part-time athletic trainers in 13 of Montgomery's 25 public high schools.

The medical vendors are currently funding these trainers. In Howard and other counties, the trainers are funded by the school system's budget.

But it is unclear if trainers will return to Montgomery County high schools next year.

The county's recommended budget for the 2015 fiscal year did not include any funding for athletic trainers. If the medical vendors are not willing to donate for another school year, those 13 high



PHOTO: CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE
Example of insect drone.

schools could go back to not having any trainers.

William Beattie, Montgomery County's director of athletics, said that they are working on "alternative strategies" to try to maintain or expand the program, and will sit down and speak with the vendors about it.

"We're going to see how they believe the program is going this year, and invite ideas that they might have about continuing the program going forward," Beattie said.

Tom Hearn, whose son suffered a concussion two years ago playing JV football at Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda without a trainer on the sideline, said he was shocked that the 2014-15 budget did not include funds for trainers.

"I was really expecting to see the funding in the budget this year," said Hearn, who has pushed for an athletic trainer at each of the county's high schools. "I'm hopeful but I also have become more realistic and sober that it's not going to happen overnight and not going to happen unless there's a vigilance about bringing awareness."

The county is putting itself in a dangerous position if they end up without athletic trainers, said Greg Penczek, president of the Maryland Athletic Trainers' Association and the associate athletic trainer at Towson University.

"Montgomery County says 'We're ok' because nothing has happened yet," Penczek said. "Once that hits the legal books and something comes up, you don't want to get to where a kid dies and everyone says 'Where was the athletic trainer?'"

The pilot program has been "very, very successful," Beattie said.

"The trainers have been very responsive, and proven to be very valuable," he said. "We appreciate that the vendors have stepped forward and volunteered trainers in this capacity."

In Howard County, Hemmings says their program has had great success and that the county was "integral" to making that happen.

"They realized that there was a need for student athletes to have someone there for them in case they get hurt, so they really pushed at the board to get us good budgets so we can have high quality materials and a good place to work," she said. "They've been 100 percent supportive."

All 12 of Howard County's high schools were recently honored with the Safe Sports School Award, a national award given out by the National Athletic Trainers' Association to schools that meet a set of stringent criteria proving they have "taken crucial steps to keep their athletes free from injuries."

They are the first school system in Maryland to have every high school receive the award.

"I do think within the next three to six years you'll start to see more not just part time, but full time personnel," he said. "I think it's important for that county to get recognized."

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Ruth Turner 301 888 2153

MARCH BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Happy Birthday to Charlie Canada, William Farmer, Ray Anthony Johnson, Myrtle Jones, Gloria Lanier, Charles Lewis, Jr., Vanessa Pinkney, Gill Michelle Pinkney, Gregory Pinkney, Tasha Thompson and Kristen Wilkerson members of New Hope Fellowship in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

SAVE THE DATE

Clinton United Methodist Church will sponsor a Spaghetti Dinner and Themed Basket Auction on Thursday March 27, 2014. There will be further details coming soon.

COMMUNITY DANCE

Attention all Dancers and Non-Dancers. St. Philip's Church will be having Fun Night with Line and Hand Dancing. The Community Dance will be Friday March 7, 2014 and Friday March 21, 2014 from 7:00-9:00 PM at St. Philip's Church, Baden Parish Fellowship. The address is 13801 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland, 20613-8426. Admission is \$2.00. Come out and get in the groove with the latest dances and have some fun.

PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Elementary Solo and Ensemble Festival (Instrumental) is being held at Kenmoor Middle School Saturday April 5, 2014 from 8:00 AM-4PM. The address is 2500 Kenmoor Drive, Landover, Maryland 20785. Grades 4 through 6 will be participating. For more information, please call 301-333-0963.

JOHN ISABELLE ACRES FARM, INC

John Isabelle Acres Farm, Inc. in Brandywine, Maryland has hay for sale. Contact Frank Deville, Manager for reasonable priced quality hay for horses, cows and goats at 301-466-8360.

COLONIAL TAVERN DINNER

Create the atmosphere and flavor of a mid-18th century tavern dinner at Darnall's Chance House Museum located at 14800 Governor Oden Bowie Drive Upper Marlboro, Maryland. You will listen to Ship's Company sing sea chanteys and tavern songs of the period. Advance reservations and payment required because capacity is limited. Cost is resident \$40; non-resident

\$48. Contact: 301-952-8010; TTY 301-699-2544.

CLINTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Life Line Screening is coming to Clinton United Methodist Church (CUMC) on March 19, 2014. Register for a Wellness Package which includes four vascular tests and osteoporosis screening from \$149 (\$139 with our member discount). All five screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. Register for this event and receive a \$10 discount off any package priced above \$129, please call 1-888-653-6441 or visit www.lifelinescreening.com/community-partners. The church is located at 10700 Brandywine Road Clinton, Maryland.

CLEARWATER NATURE CENTER

Attractions at Clearwater Nature Center include the Natural Treasures exhibit hall. You will be able to watch fish and turtles swim in the large indoor pool. Natural hiking trails allow visitors to explore the fauna and flora of Prince George's County. Call for more information 301-297-4575; TTY 301-699-2544.

COMMUNITY

Practical Money Skills

By Jason Alderman

Self-Employed? Don't Forget These Tax-Filing Tips

Calculating income taxes is a royal pain, even when your situation is uncomplicated enough that you can file a 1040EZ Form. And if you're self-employed, be prepared for extra layers of complexity. Not only must you file an annual return with numerous additional forms and schedules, you're also responsible for paying quarterly estimated taxes, which can mean having to write a pretty hefty check while waiting for your clients to pay their overdue bills.



Add in that you're also responsible for funding your own health insurance and retirement and you may start to miss having an employer manage a portion of your financial affairs. (Although many people go into business for themselves precisely to call their own shots.)

Here are a few things to remember when calculating your 2013 taxes:

First, some potentially good news for taxpayers who claim a home office deduction: You now may choose between the traditional method of calculating the business use of your home (which involves numerous calculations, filling out the onerous IRS Form 8829 and maintaining back-up records for years) and a new simplified option.

Under the new, so-called "safe harbor" method, you can simply claim a standard deduction of \$5 per square foot for the portion of your home used regularly and exclusively for business, up to a maximum of 300 square feet — a \$1,500 limit.

Contrast that with the traditional method where you must calculate actual expenses of your home office expressed as a percentage of the square footage your home office consumes. For example, if your office takes up 12 percent of your house, you can deduct 12 percent of your electricity bill.

A few additional details:

❑ You can choose either method from year to year; however, once you've elected a method for a given tax year it's irrevocable.

❑ Under the safe-harbor method you cannot depreciate the portion of your home used for business in that particular year.

❑ With the new method you can still claim allowable mortgage interest, real estate taxes and insurance losses as itemized deductions on Schedule A. These deductions don't have to be allocated between personal and business use, as under the traditional method.

❑ You'll need to weigh whether the recordkeeping hours you save justify the potentially smaller deduction — especially if you have a large home office or considerable deductions. Suggestion: Look at last year's deduction and compare what it would have been using the \$5 per square foot calculation, factoring in time spent doing the math.

A few other self-employment tax-filing considerations:

❑ In addition to the home office deduction, you generally can deduct many other business-related expenses, including: legal and accounting fees; professional dues and subscriptions; business insurance and licenses; professional training and education; professional equipment and software; maintenance/repairs; and business-related mileage, travel and entertainment.

❑ You can also deduct the full cost of medical, dental, vision and long-term care insurance premiums for you, your spouse and dependents, even if you don't itemize deductions.

❑ For more details on business expenses and deductions, see IRS Publication 535 (www.irs.gov). Also visit the IRS' Self-Employed Individuals Tax Center.

Bottom line: Income taxes are often more complicated for self-employed people and good recordkeeping is essential. Unless you're an accounting whiz, consider hiring a tax professional or financial planner who specializes in self-employment issues. The penalties and fees they can help you avoid — and hidden deductions they can uncover — will probably more than pay for their fees.

Lawmakers Consider Measure That Would Mandate Paid Sick Leave

By Megan Brockett
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS — Committees in both the House and the Senate heard legislation this week that would require many employers in Maryland to grant workers at least one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked. The proposal, which has so far received backing from 66 delegates and 19 senators, would make Maryland just the second state in the nation to mandate that private sector businesses provide paid sick days to workers.

Sen. Catherine Pugh, D-Baltimore, called on members of the Senate Finance Committee on Thursday to support the Maryland Earned Sick and Safe Leave Act. She cited research that showed the measure would benefit more than 700,000 Maryland workers who are currently without paid sick leave and can miss out on income and risk losing their job when they or a family member become ill.

"Without sick leave, people are forced into making impossible choices between going to work and taking care of themselves and their families," Pugh said, citing analysis by the Institute for Women's Policy Research. "The bill before us seeks to alleviate that problem."

Under the bill, businesses with more than nine employees would be required to let workers earn up to 56 hours of paid sick leave per year and use up to 10 days a year. Small businesses with fewer than 10 employees would have to provide unpaid sick leave under the same standards.

Employees could use the time to recover from an illness — physical or mental — or an injury, care for a sick or injured family member, attend doctor's appointments and obtain other preventative care services for themselves and their families. The "safe leave" portion of the bill also permits workers to use their sick time in cases of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.



Sen. Catherine Pugh, D-Baltimore, called on members of the Senate Finance Committee to support the Maryland Earned Sick and Safe Leave Act, which she is sponsoring.

Richard Turnage, who works as a cook at a sports bar in Charles County, was one of a handful of workers from the restaurant industry to testify in support of the bill, urging lawmakers to consider the health of both employees and customers.

Turnage, who does not have paid sick leave, said he was unable to take off work this winter when he and several colleagues became sick.

"Missing a day of work is a direct hit to my budget," Turnage said. "I am a father, and not going to work means I can't buy groceries or provide other essentials for my son."

Turnage said not one employee could "afford a day off to get well" after the virus had spread among the staff.

"I took measures to make sure I kept sanitary contact with food, but with ... ill [waiters] and kitchen staff, I am sure some customers were affected," he said.

In Maryland, 110 organizations have joined the Working Matters coalition, the force helping to drive the movement in the state.

Melissa Broome, senior policy advocate at Job Opportunities Task Force/Working Mat-

ters, said there is an "overwhelming amount of support in our state for this legislation."

The momentum that Broome said the movement has been gaining comes as support for paid sick leave legislation appears to be spreading across the nation. While only Connecticut has a statewide law mandating paid sick days, five major cities and Washington, D.C., have adopted similar measures, four of which passed within the last year.

But last session, similar Maryland bills failed to make it out of committee in either the Senate or the House. In hearings this week, both Pugh and Delegate John Olszewski, Jr., D-Baltimore, who is sponsoring the measure in the House, drew attention to the differences between last year's bill and this one.

In addition to the exemption that now exists for small businesses, who would be required to provide only unpaid sick days, businesses of all sizes would not have to provide paid sick leave for employees who work fewer than 8 hours a week.

Olszewski also said employees would be allowed to require

documentation from employees who use earned sick time for more than two consecutive shifts to confirm that leave was used appropriately, and that shift-swapping can be used as an alternative to paid sick days, with mutual consent from the worker and the employer.

But some opponents of the legislation argue that this year's version is still too broad and too vague in many places, including the area that defines a "family member," or a person an employee could use sick leave to care for. Many who testified against the bill also said that the measure would hurt businesses struggling to stay afloat in a still-sluggish economy.

"Employers do care about the well being of their employees and want them to be healthy and productive," said Deriece Pate Bennett, vice president for government affairs at the Maryland Chamber of Commerce. "But the reality is that a vast majority of businesses already provide some form of leave for their employees, whether it's flex leave, unpaid leave, annual leave or paid time off, and those [employers] who do not use it, cannot afford it."

Marijuana from A1

Baltimore County, sponsor of the decriminalization bill, repeatedly drew attention to the significant distinctions.

Zirkin's bill would make the possession of fewer than 10 grams of marijuana punishable by a \$100 fine. The legalization bill looks to create government regulation and taxation of the drug, making it legal for residents to possess, use and grow it.

Supporters said the legalization measure would bring the state an additional \$100 million of revenue while taking money away from drug dealers and weakening organized crime.

But opponents of both bills raised concerns about the "message" legalization or decriminalization would send. Law enforcement officials testifying in opposition pointed to unintended consequences of the legislation, such as a potential increase in "drug driving" and a hike in the number of people trying the drug for the first time.

Many testifying in opposition made the argument that neither measure would stop organized crime or gang violence.

"Whether we decriminalize marijuana or not there will always be drug traffickers ... bringing it into ... the United States ... destined for the streets of Maryland," said Wicomico County Sheriff Michael Lewis. "If, in fact, it's legalized ... it will certainly open the doors to these drug traffickers to bring in large shipments, much larger than are being brought in today."

Opposition testimony from law enforcement officials like Lewis and Riverdale Park Chief of Police David Morris spurred the most questions and challenges from lawmakers, especially from Zirkin and Raskin.

The sides sparred over whether a decriminalization bill would create added and problematic obstacles for police officers or prevent them from making searches on the basis of marijuana odor, which some law enforcement officials said often leads to the discovery of more serious drugs.

But a number of law enforcement officials testifying in support of the legalization and decriminalization efforts focused on the impact they believe such measures would have in reducing drug-related violent crime.

Neill Franklin, executive director of Law Enforcement

Against Prohibition (LEAP) and a retired major from the Maryland State Police, pointed to Baltimore, calling it one of the most crime-ridden cities in the country.

"It is definitely my opinion that is due mostly ... [to] the prohibition of drugs," he said.

Franklin said legalizing marijuana would dramatically cut down on violent crime in the city and in other areas of the state.

Last year, the Senate voted 30-16 to pass a similar decriminalization measure sponsored by Zirkin, but the bill eventually died in the House.

Zirkin is confident the Senate will vote to pass this year's version, which "does more to hold juveniles accountable," but he said he couldn't speak for the House.

"I'm hopeful that they will take a look at the evidence, take a look at the stats, take a look at the experience of the states [that have passed similar laws], and come to conclusion that most of us have ... that this is an issue [that] is really good for the citizens of Maryland, is an important thing to do, and not wait," Zirkin said in an interview Friday.

Gov. Martin O'Malley said in a radio interview at the start of the session that he was



PHOTO COURTESY WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
Mature Marijuana plant.

against the legalization of marijuana for recreational use, but public opinion on the issue appears to be shifting.

A poll released by Gallup in October showed that support for legalization among Americans grew by 10 percentage points in one year, with 58 percent saying they supported legalizing the drug. The poll, with a margin of error of 4 percentage points, marked the first time in history that a clear majority said they favored legalization, Gallup said.

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COMMENTARY

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator for Maryland



Give America a Raise; Boost America's Economy for All

America shouldn't need a minimum wage. Employers should recognize the value of their workers and pay a true living wage that allows the men and women who work for them to afford decent housing, put food on the table and afford other necessities for their families. There will always be some jobs that pay more than others, based on job function, skills required, experience, education and training required, among other factors, but no one who works a 40-hour week should be living in poverty and struggling to support their family.

Unfortunately, there are enough bad actors out there who churn through workers in such a way that require state and federal minimum wage levels to keep them in check.

I'm proud of our leaders in Annapolis for moving forward to raise the state minimum wage to \$10.10 by 2016, even as gridlock stalls federal action on a similar measure. More than 450,000 Marylanders and their families are depending on its passage. Let's be clear about who this impacts. Predominantly, we aren't talking about high schoolers. The minimum wage disproportionately affects women and minority workers. These are adults, predominantly in their 30s; many have children to support.

Maryland has one of the country's highest cost of living standards and raising the minimum wage allows more of our residents to get a little closer to making ends meet. If the legislature passes Governor O'Malley's legislation, Maryland would join the District of Columbia and 21 other States that would have a higher minimum wage than the federal minimum wage.

Nationwide, according to the Economic Policy Institute, nearly 16.4 million Americans would be directly affected by an increase in the federal minimum wage and another 8.5 million would be indirectly affected. That's over 19 percent of the workforce that would be receiving an additional \$34 billion in wages. Imagine the impact that extra purchasing power would have on businesses and communities across Maryland and America. The federal minimum wage of \$7.25 is simply too low. There isn't a state in our nation where someone

making minimum wage could afford decent housing without federal or other subsidies or support.

Some have parsed recent reports to argue that raising the minimum wage would harm our economy. The truth is that increasing the federal minimum wage will help stimulate local economies as more families close to the poverty line will be able to spend more on food, housing, and basic necessities. By raising the minimum wage we are giving more Marylanders the chance to raise themselves out of poverty, contribute to their local communities' economies, and provide more economic security for their later lives.

There is a strong contingent of businesses, including major national chains like Costco and Old Navy that understand that raising the minimum wage paid to their workers supports their bottom line and their employees. Small businesses see the benefits too. I recently visited British American Auto Care in Columbia, where President Brian England explained his support for raising the minimum wage:

"As a business owner, I've always believed that taking care of my employees is essential for delivering good quality service, and one of the ways to do that is to pay a fair wage. When employees feel like they are being treated fairly, they perform better. It's just makes good business sense. Plus, it's good for the local economy. At the current minimum wage level of \$7.25 an hour, people are making less than \$300 for a 40-hour work week. Their spending power is extremely limited. They aren't making enough to support local businesses. We have to raise the minimum wage. We should have done it a long time ago."

Brian came to this country decades ago seeking the American Dream for himself and his family. Today, the American Dream is on life-support for too many hard-working Americans who play by the rules but are still living on the edge of poverty. It's just not right. An increase in the minimum wage is long overdue. Maryland isn't waiting on the federal government to get this done, but Congress needs to do its job, so all Americans can reap the rewards.?

Marc Morial, President and CEO
National Urban League



National Urban League Endorses Common Core State Standards

"You can't allow 15,000 school boards to home bake their own little standards subject to their own political pressures and think we are going to have international competitiveness. We have to at least have some bare minimum core standards if our young people are going to compete." Congressional Black Caucus member, Rep. Bobby Scott

There is a quiet – yet increasingly disruptive – revolution underway in American education. Since 2010, 45 states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense have adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in their schools. This represents an historic opportunity to raise academic standards and better prepare students for college and good jobs. If implemented effectively, CCSS will help bridge the achievement gap by leveling the playing field so that all students, regardless of race, geography or income, have an equal shot at gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century global economy. The National Urban League and a broad cross-section of civil rights, public policy, business and education leaders are in full support. But while a majority of states are implementing these new and more rigorous standards in English Language Arts and Math, CCSS remains a mystery to many parents and students, giving its critics an open lane to spread misinformation and undermine progress. Today's column represents the first of three – and possibly more – that I am writing to help clear up the confusion and set the record straight.

First, let's clarify exactly what CCSS is and what it is not. The Common Core Standards were

developed by Governors and chief state school officers from both sides of the aisle who brought together teachers, parents, school administrators and education experts to write them. Despite what some of its critics claim, CCSS is not a top-down, "Big Brother," federal program. The states determined that these standards were necessary to improve outcomes for students, and 90% of the states within our union have decided that they are critical to better prepare our country's students for the challenges and opportunities of today and tomorrow.

Second, we are talking about academic standards, not a standardized curriculum. Common Core standards establish what students need to learn at each grade level, but they do not dictate how teachers should teach. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms, ideally utilizing the state standards to create even more engaging and educational approaches and content.

In order to move us forward, it was determined that the Common Core State Standards must be: Aligned with expectations for college and career success;

- Clear and consistent across all states
- Inclusive of content-based knowledge and high-order reasoning skills
- An improvement upon current state standards and standards of top-performing nations
- Reality-based for effective use in the classroom
- Evidence and research-based

See **COMMON CORE**, Page A5



Surratt House

Open to the Public

PHOTO COURTESY WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Surratt House

Surratt House, located at 9118 Brandywine Road Clinton, MD, is open to the public mid-January thru mid-December. Walk-in tours are available with costumed guide on Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays from 11 am-3 pm and on Saturdays and Sundays from 12 noon-4 pm. Weekday group tours for 10 or more are available by appointment by calling 301-868-1121. Surratt House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Admission is \$3 per adult, \$2 for Seniors, \$1 for children ages 5-18, and free to children 4 and under

Child Watch
 by Marion Wright Edelman



Killed by a Gun

The headlines in the case were sadly familiar. An angry adult armed with a gun used it to shoot and kill an unarmed Black teenager he thought seemed "bad"—this time, because the teenager and his friends were sitting in a car listening to music the grownup didn't like. In this outrageous Florida case a middle-aged White man, Michael Dunn, was convicted of three counts of attempted murder and one count of shooting a gun into an occupied car. Jurors agreed he faced no threat after he was annoyed by loud music—coming from a car he had deliberately chosen to park next to—and then started an argument, pulled a gun on the car's Black teens, and fired three shots at the young men inside the car as they tried to drive away from him.

But the jury could not agree on the most serious charge of first-degree murder for shooting the first seven bullets at the stationary car and hitting 17-year-old Jordan Davis in his lung, liver, and aorta. Florida's notorious "Stand Your Ground" law which gives gun owners a license to kill if they feel threatened was allegedly enough for three jurors to vote against conviction. At least one juror said she believed Michael Dunn did get away with murder: "There is no longer a Jordan Davis, and there is only one reason why that is. The boy was shot and killed for reasons that should not have happened."

In an interview with Good Morning America Jordan's mother, Lucia McBath, said she believed the jurors in her son's case did the best they could with the laws they had, but also made it clear she believes our nation's existing laws did not protect Jordan or millions of other victims of gun violence in America. When asked what justice for her son would look like she answered: "Justice for Jordan will be, ultimately, really when we change the laws. Because that will be not just justice for Jordan, and justice for Trayvon, and justice for all the children at Sandy Hook, and justice for Aurora, and justice for Virginia Tech, and the Navy Yard—it will be justice for everyone that has suffered because of these laws, and will continue to suffer. So once the

laws are changed, that's the ultimate justice for all."

Researchers at Texas A&M University studied the impact of Stand Your Ground laws, like the one enacted in Florida in 2005, across the country and concluded in a 2012 study that "the laws do not deter burglary, robbery, or aggravated assault" but do "lead to a statistically significant 8 percent net increase in the number of reported murders and non-negligent manslaughters." Evidence is also clear that these laws have a disparate racial impact. Researchers from the Urban Institute found that when White shooters kill Black victims, 34 percent of the homicides are deemed justifiable, while only 3.3 percent are ruled justifiable when the situation is reversed.

Now researchers from the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research have released the results of a new study on the effectiveness of another crucial segment of our nation's gun laws: those requiring background checks before purchasing a gun. For this study the scholars took a close look at the state of Missouri's 2007 repeal of its permit-to-purchase law. Before it was repealed this law required all handgun purchasers in Missouri to obtain a license verifying that they had passed a

background check. The researchers wanted to know what happened when this requirement was taken away—and they learned that repealing that law has led to a 16 percent increase in Missouri's murder rate. The study showed between 2008 and 2012 there were an additional 55 to 63 murders in Missouri each year associated with the law's repeal. During those same years, the national murder rate dropped by over 5 percent.

The research controlled for changes in policing, incarceration, burglaries, unemployment, poverty, and other laws adopted during the study period that could affect violent crime. The spike in murders only occurred for murders committed with a gun and happened statewide, while bordering states showed no increase. The number of handguns recovered from scenes of crimes or from criminals quickly doubled after the repeal. In a press release, lead author Daniel Webster, ScD, MPH, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research, said: "This study provides compelling confirmation that weaknesses in firearm laws lead to deaths from gun violence." Co-author Jon Vernick, JD, MPH,

See **WATCH**, Page A8

The Prince George's Post

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 Contents © 2014, The Prince George's Post

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

BUSINESS

The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

Don't Let The Winter Blues Get You Down

It's not uncommon in these winter months to feel a little sad, or lacking in energy, often seemingly for no real reason. While experts aren't sure exactly what causes these mid-winter blues, they do have a name for it — Seasonal Affective Disorder, or S.A.D.

Mental health experts think such feelings, when they occur regularly, are a reaction to the reduced amounts of sunlight and activity that most of us face in the winter.

There's evidence for that in the fact that S.A.D. occurs more frequently, though not exclusively, in the northern areas of the country. An estimated 9% of the population in the northern parts of the U.S. is affected by S.A.D., but even in places like Florida, winter blues affect an estimated 1.5% of the population.

S.A.D. usually appears as a form of depression, often mild, but sometimes severe. For most people the symptoms will include reduced energy, fewer activities, and loss of interest in normally enjoyable things.

Fortunately, there are ways to fight these mid-winter blahs. Since reduced winter sunlight and S.A.D. are connected, one simple remedy is getting out more into the daylight. Researchers report even a ten minute exposure to the sun can help brighten a person's mood and overall attitude.

There's also evidence that increasing your level of exercise can help limit those winter blues. Even on the coldest days, just bundling up and getting out for a walk or to play with the kids or dog can improve your day.

It also helps to put some extra effort into activities you know bring you joy. Getting together with family or friends, going to a movie, working at a favorite hobby, or just lunching with someone special, can all help raise your spirits. What you want to avoid is withdrawing and just sitting around focusing on feeling blue.

Unfortunately, in some cases S.A.D. can be a very serious, even life-threatening problem. It can cause depression serious enough to raise the chances of suicide or to require hospitalization. If you find that your winter blues, or those of someone close to you, are severe enough to truly affect your life negatively, talk to your family physician or consult a professional counselor.

From counseling, to various light treatments, to pharmaceutical therapies, there are a variety of options that mental health professionals have available to help keep S.A.D. from ruining your life.

Business Spotlight

Top Five Tips For Spotting Fraud

(NAPSI)—Investors can sometimes overlook signs that indicate an offer really is too good to be true. This can leave them vulnerable to fraud and financial predators.

The Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) is the federal government agency that regulates the commodity and security futures, commodity options, swaps, and retail foreign currency exchange markets. It also works to protect the public from fraud, manipulation, and abusive practices in the highly volatile, complex and risky commodity futures and options markets.

To help, it offers the following "top five tips" on how to spot fraud. Much of this material was developed from research conducted by the FINRA Investor Education Foundation.

- What's the rush? Investors should be cautious any time they are pressured or rushed into making a decision about an investment opportunity. Is the offer described as being good for only a limited time or in a limited quantity? Are you being led to believe you are part of a special group being notified? Take time to evaluate the offer and don't allow yourself to be rushed into making any financial decision. Most legitimate offers will be there tomorrow.

- Favors are rarely free. When the person on the other end of the trade offers to do a "small favor" for you in return for a big favor, it may be a ploy to distract you from the business at hand. It's best to stay focused on the opportunity, not to look for bargains.

- Beware of the "Phantom Riches" tactic. This is when a con artist dangles the prospect of unrealistic wealth, enticing you with something you want but can't have. Consumers should consider whether the salesperson is dangling incredible returns or guarantees. It's important to remember that all investments carry some risk.

- Selling credibility. This is when the con artist tries to build credibility by appearing successful, claiming affiliation with a reputable organization or touting a special credential or experience. A seller may have a corner office, framed diplomas or certificates and wear an expensive suit, but appearances really can be deceiving. Check out the seller's actual qualifications.

- Watch out for third-party endorsements. When someone talks about a lot of people you know investing in the opportunity and that you shouldn't be left out, it's probably a good idea to keep your hand on your wallet and your wallet in your pocket until you learn more.

To learn more, visit www.cftc.gov/consumerprotection.

O'Malley Takes Effort to Raise Maryland's Minimum Wage To The White House

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

O'Malley joins three other governors to talk about raising the wage for hardworking American families

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Governor O'Malley -- along with Governors Inslee (Wash.), Malloy (Conn.), and Quinn (Ill.) -- met with Vice President Biden, and other officials at the White House today to discuss efforts to expand opportunity and strengthen the middle class by raising the minimum wage.

Governor O'Malley has made raising the wage a top priority for the 2014 state legislative session. In the proposal, Maryland's minimum wage of \$7.25 would increase incrementally to \$10.10 in July 2016. The proposal secures the value of the minimum wage by tying future increases to inflation.

"Over the last seven years, we've made the better choice to strengthen and grow our middle class by investing in Maryland's #1 public schools, 21st century innovation, and modern infrastructure. Today, we continue our fight to expand opportunity increasing our State's minimum wage," said

Governor O'Malley. "Nobody who works hard and plays by the rules should have to live in poverty. Raising the minimum wage would lift the incomes of 455,000 Maryland workers across our State, and millions more at the national level. That's why it's critical that we give hardworking families the raise they deserve."

Vice President Biden, joined by Secretary of Labor Tom Perez, Director of the National Economic Council Gene Sperling, and a number of high-ranking Cabinet and White House officials, praised the Governor's efforts to increase Maryland's minimum wage saying, "Governor O'Malley is doing extraordinary work in Maryland to lift their minimum wage and give more hardworking Americans a raise."

Mary Kay Henry of SEIU, Olivia Morgan from the Shriver Report, along with representatives from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Center for American Progress joined the conversation which touched on two policy studies out of the University of Massachusetts and Princeton University. Both studies found that an increase to the minimum wage would have no adverse effect on employment rates when ex-



PHOTO BY AP

Gov. Martin O'Malley speaks during a rally outside of the Maryland State House in Annapolis on Tuesday. Gov. Martin O'Malley on Tuesday night proposed raising Maryland's minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour by 2016 and to index it to keep up with inflation.

amining similar increases in local jurisdictions.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, raising Maryland's minimum wage would benefit 455,000 workers in Maryland, stimulate \$456 million in new economic activity during the phase-in period, and generate or support 1,600 new jobs for the State.

Currently there are 21 states, including the District of Columbia, with minimum wage rates higher than the federal rate of \$7.25 per hour. New Jersey's minimum wage is \$8.25 and New York's is \$8.00; the

Pew Center for the States ranked both states in the top 3 for economic mobility, along with Maryland.

President Obama recently issued an executive order increasing the minimum wage for federal contractors to \$10.10. According to a recent study by the University of Massachusetts, raising the federal wage would drive down the national poverty rate by 1.7 percent, or 4.6 million Americans. Raising the wage by 2015 would increase GDP by about \$32 billion and create 140,000 new jobs for the American economy.

Carnival from A1

bers are designed to reduce air emissions from cruise ships and other marine vessels. The scrubbers are in response to new international Emission Control Area (ECA) regulations which require cruise and cargo vessels to use an ultra-low, sulfur diesel fuel or install equipment, such as scrubbers, to clean the fuel exhaust before it is emitted into the air.

"Baltimore is a convenient mid-Atlantic embarkation point for 'Fun Ship' cruising, and we're pleased to resume these attractive year-round departures which offer our guests an opportunity to visit a variety of beautiful, tropical destinations," said Gerry Cahill, Carnival's president and CEO. "We would like to extend our thanks to officials from the Port and the state of Maryland for their outstanding support in our efforts to resume year-round cruising from Baltimore."

The Carnival Pride has been based in Baltimore since it initiated the Port of Baltimore's year-round cruising schedule in 2009. It will remain at the Port through October 2014 and then head to Florida where it will be

retrofitted with new emission reduction technologies as well as the new on-board features. The 2,124-passenger ship will reposition to Tampa next winter before returning to Baltimore for a March 29, 2015 cruise. Carnival Pride's itinerary from Baltimore will again offer the popular destinations of the Caribbean, Bahamas, and Central Florida.

"Whether we are talking about welcoming back Carnival Cruise lines, forging public-private partnerships or expanding cargo operations, the O'Malley-Brown Administration and the Congressional Delegation have ensured the Port of Baltimore has what it needs to attract business, create jobs and become one of our nation's greatest and most diverse seaports," said MPA Executive Director James J. White. "With today's news, we are further establishing ourselves as one of the top cruise ports in the U.S."

The Carnival Pride will also return to Maryland with new dining and entertainment venues such as:

- EA SPORTS Bar - a sports and video game lovers' paradise;
- Blue Iguana Tequila Bar - a fun and festive outdoor watering hole;

- WaterWorks - a water park highlighted by Green Thunder, the steepest and fastest water slide at sea;

- Guy's Burger Joint - a free venue developed by Food Network personality Guy Fieri; and

- Bonsai Sushi - a full-service sushi restaurant offering delicious Asian-inspired delicacies.

About the Port of Baltimore

Business at the Port of Baltimore generates about 14,630 direct jobs, while about 108,000 jobs in Maryland are linked to port activities. The Port is responsible for \$3 billion in personal wages and salary and more than \$300 million in state and local taxes. About 2,000 ships visit the Port of Baltimore every year. Baltimore is the closest East Coast port to the U.S. Midwest. This geographic advantage allows Midwestern manufacturers significant cost and time savings when transporting their products to Baltimore rather than other East Coast ports.

About Cruise Maryland

The Port of Baltimore's cruise facility, with its unique location immediately off Inter-

state 95 and close to Interstate 70, has become a convenient drive-to cruise port for many residents throughout the Mid-Atlantic and into the Midwest. Last year more than 212,000 passengers sailed on 90 cruises from the Port of Baltimore. The Port of Baltimore ranks fifth for cruise passengers among East Coast cruise ports, 11th in the U.S. and 20th in the world. Since beginning a year-round cruise schedule in 2009, nearly every cruise that has sailed from the Port of Baltimore has left at full passenger capacity. The Cruise Maryland terminal is 2.5 miles from Baltimore's world famous Inner Harbor and 10 miles from BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport. Maryland's median household income of \$70,004 is the highest in the U.S. Baltimore is also located within a four-hour drive of eight of the ten wealthiest counties in the U.S. The Baltimore-Washington DC-Northern Virginia region is recognized as one of the most affluent in the nation. For more information on Cruise Maryland, go to: www.cruise.maryland.gov or call 1-866-427-8963.

COMMON CORE from A4

Finally, it must be said that CCSS can only be successful if it is equitably and similarly implemented in a high-quality manner. Given that excellence and equity are inseparable, states, districts, teachers and principals must have the resources and supports necessary to fully realize the promise of Common Core State Standards.

The National Urban League will continue to join parents, ed-

ucators, as well as civic and business leaders, in insisting that implementation is resourced equitably and responsibly. However, it is neither fair nor accurate to assert that the Common Core State Standards are a failure because of recent implementation challenges — for any innovation requires adjustments on its path to success. We do not need to figure out new standards; we need to figure out how to implement these effectively and equitably. Our children our count-

ing on us, and we must get this right — for them, their future and our nation.

We have long advocated a leveling of the playing field in education and the injection of additional quality as we do so. It does not serve our nation or our future when some children are systemically less prepared than others, nor does it serve our nation to have this issue tossed onto a political battlefield where it becomes a casualty of partisanship and delib-

erate misinformation. Instead this moment should be an opportunity for education stakeholders — parents, students, teachers, policymakers and reformers alike — to build a common agenda towards our shared goal of better educating the nation's children and youth. It is our belief that by raising and developing better standards for everyone, CCSS can pave the way to a 21st century American educated citizenry and workforce that is second to none.

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OUT ON THE TOWN

ERIC D. SNIDER'S
IN THE DARK

Movie Review

“Grand Piano”

Grand Piano
Grade: B
Rated R, two “F”-words,
some violence
1 hr., 40 min

Make no mistake, the premise of *Grand Piano* is 100 percent ridiculous. Do you remember Phone Booth, where Colin Farrell couldn't hang up or he'd be killed by a sniper? It's like that, only it's concert pianist Elijah Wood who has to keep playing or risk being shot. “Now you know the true meaning of stage fright!” is something that the villain really says to him. There's also an element of the plot that's not entirely dissimilar to the Bugs Bunny gag where Yosemite Sam has rigged a certain key on the piano to explode when Bugs plays it.

So yes, it's complete nonsense. The bad guy's plan, the mechanics of the plot, the pianist's ability to multitask while performing -- ludicrous, all of it. Now here's why it works: because of director Eugenio Mira's total commitment. With a game lead actor and no shortage of ingenuity, Mira applies his considerable artistic talent to this stack of baloney as if it were a brilliantly crafted and fully plausible thriller. He sells it, we buy it, everybody goes home happy.

Wood plays Tom Selznick, once the most promising pianist of his generation, now a man who five years ago had a spectacular mid-performance flame-out and retired from the arts. On the day the film is set, he's taking the stage again (with an orchestra backing him up) to play a few pieces in honor of his recently deceased mentor. He's nervous he'll choke again, and the whispers among his former colleagues don't do anything to relieve the anxiety.

At the concert hall, Tom's wife (Kerry Bishe), a superstar



PHOTO COURTESY MAGNOLIA PICTURES
Tom Selznick, the most talented pianist of his generation, who has stopped performing in public because of his stage fright, reappears in public for a long awaited concert, where he discovers a message written on the score: “Play one wrong note and you die.”

actress, watches from the box seats, beaming with pride. A pair of her tacky, coattail-riding wannabe friends (Allen Leech and Tamsin Egerton) have floor seats, from which they seethe with jealousy. We also meet a conscientious stagehand (Alex Winter). We're confident that all these non-Elijah Wood characters have been introduced because they will be significant later.

Shortly after the performance begins, with Tom seated at the one-of-a-kind grand piano his mentor built, playing again as if he never left the stage, he turns the page in his score to find some words written in the margins. The gist of the message: a sniper will shoot Tom and his wife if he stops playing before the concert is over. An earpiece is conveyed to him during a break; now the villain (the soothing voice of John Cusack) can instruct and taunt him more directly. Tom, a consummate professional, is able to have panicked conversations with the bad guy while playing complicated musical pieces, of-

ten without looking at his music or the keyboard. You will be delighted by some of the other things that Tom is able to do while playing the piano and fearing for his life.

And there you have it. The core concept and structure are similar to August's Ethan Hawke flop *Getaway*, right down to the anonymous menacing voice giving instructions to the unwilling participant. But that movie, despite having a premise no stupider than *Grand Piano*'s was terrible, and *Grand Piano* is good. So what's the difference? Execution.

I don't know what Elijah Wood's actual skill level is on the piano, but the way he fakes it here is nothing short of remarkable, and it speaks to his and Mira's commitment to taking the whole thing seriously. It would have been infinitely easier to avoid showing Wood's hands as much as possible, to focus on chest-level shots where we see his arms moving but not which specific keys he's hitting. In-

stead, Mira gives us long, unbroken takes of Wood banging away on the keyboard, our view of his hands unobstructed so we can see that what he's playing really could be the music we're hearing. The hand-synching, if that's what you call it -- sure, let's call it hand-synching -- is nearly flawless.

Moreover, Mira and cinematographer Unax Mendia are constantly pulling off carefully orchestrated shots and marvelous feats of camera movement, applying the same type of sweeping, operatic bravura that Brian De Palma applies to everything he does. (I thought of *Snake Eyes* in particular.) There's something thrilling about seeing such technical precision used in the service of such lunacy. While the screenplay (by Damien Chazelle) is overly expository and larded with repeated dialogue, everything else about the film has energy and confidence and is perfectly capable of carrying you away if you'll go along with its fantastically goofy premise.

Governor O'Malley Announces \$20 Million in Cold Weather Energy Bill Assistance

Governor Martin O'Malley today announced the release of an additional \$20 million to help lower-income Marylanders pay high utility bills resulting from recent extreme winter weather.

Working together, the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA), the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Public Service Commission (PSC) will administer the benefit. The \$20 million in supplemental benefits will be made available to all income eligible households who apply for the Electric Universal Service Program in FY2014.

“Families should not have to choose between staying warm and providing for their families,” said Governor O'Malley. “The efforts we are announcing today will help over 100,000 lower-income Marylanders stay warm and safe during this unusually cold winter.”

Households who already have been approved for assistance as of July 1, 2013 will see the benefit automatically post to their account with no further action required by the customer. Applications are still being accepted for Marylanders who qualify for the program but have not yet applied. The supplemental benefit was made possible by a higher than anticipated award from the Federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) as well as an increase in proceeds from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

(RGGI). DHR is also providing additional staffing to help administer this supplemental benefit.

Energy demands this winter have created a tremendous strain on Maryland families.

The average temperature at Baltimore-Washington International Airport in January 2014 was 27 degrees -- compared to 35 in January 2013. In Hagerstown, the difference was even more dramatic, with an average temperature of 25 degrees in January 2014 versus 34 in January 2013.

Because of these colder temperatures, the amount of electricity used by an average house in some Maryland utility territories increased significantly over this same time last year. Depending on the type of fuel and furnace model, usage could increase as much as 50 percent. Stated another way, when the temperature outside is lower, more energy is required to maintain the same temperature inside your home. This is why a customer's bill increases during the winter even though the home thermostat stays constant or is lowered.

Increased energy use can translate to an increase in energy bills -- from an average of 7% in some utility areas to 30% or more in others.

“The Fuel Fund of Maryland commends Governor O'Malley for making it a priority to release additional funds at this time for Marylanders who are impacted the most by rising energy bills,” said Mary-

Ellen Vanni, Executive Director of the Fuel Fund of Maryland. “Combined with the recent reduction in the duration of unemployment and other benefits, there is a compelling case for an immediate response through additional financial aid and additional staff to facilitate access to the funds.”

Paula Carmody, head of the Office of People's Counsel, added, “Households across the state will face significant increases in their energy bills this winter due to the extremely cold weather and wholesale price increases. The supplemental federal LIHEAP funds and funds allocated from the State's RGGI proceeds will provide much needed assistance to households with limited financial resources. I applaud the Governor's efforts to dedicate these funds immediately to address this need and provide additional staffing resources to process assistance applications. I urge everyone who has a relative, friend or neighbor facing financial challenges with these bills to tell them about the available assistance for utility bills and encourage them to apply for assistance immediately.”

Governor O'Malley has closely monitored Maryland's utilities to ensure that they are also being responsive to their customers' needs. All of Maryland's utilities, including Potomac Electric Power Company (Pepco), BGE, Choptank Electric Cooperative, Columbia Gas of Maryland, Delmarva Power & Light,

Potomac Edison, Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, and Washington Gas, as well as the State's propane, heating oil and other heating fuels distributors, are providing direct assistance to customers through various programs and payment plans. The PSC also issued an Order last week directing the utilities to appear on March 4, 2014 to discuss the status of bill payment and customer communications in light of the higher bills. Utility customers who face difficulty paying their bills are strongly encouraged to call their energy providers to discuss the options available to them.

Understanding that many Marylanders will want to help their neighbors during this challenging time, the Governor has worked with United Way of Central Maryland and United Ways across the State to create an opportunity for Marylanders to give the gift of energy. Donations will be distributed throughout the State and will help Marylanders who are struggling to keep their homes heated this winter. Please visit: www.uwcm.org/winter2014 or call (410) 895-1566.

Finally, MEA has developed a website with aggregated information about these programs, as well as answers to questions about the supplemental benefits. This can be found at: <http://energy.maryland.gov/Residential/assistance/EmergencyColdWeatherEnergyAssistance.htm>.

The Edge of Sports

by DAVE ZIRIN

The Miami Dolphins, Richie Incognito, and the Rot in the National Football League



PHOTO: AP
Former Miami Dolphins teammates Richie Incognito and Jonathan Martin look over plays during a game against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

The long-awaited report from investigator Ted Wells, regarding his investigation in the Richie Incognito's alleged racist and homophobic verbal assault against Jonathan Martin in the Miami Dolphins locker room is officially out. It is almost 150 pages, and after reading it, several points now are certain. We can safely remove the word “alleged” from the accusations against Incognito, and we can add “physical assault” to the list of offenses.

(Wells refers to the forced miming of male rape as “improper physical touching,” just one of the many euphemisms the investigator uses in an attempt to shine this turd to the best of his abilities.)

We also learn that this should not be referred to as the “Incognito scandal” any longer. This toxicity extended far beyond the two central players. Teammates on the offensive line, Mike Pouncey, John Jerry and even offensive line coach Jim Turner were all a part of this swirling, whirlpool of hatred. We also learn that those “bullied” extends beyond Martin to a teammate on the offensive line and a racially taunted Asian-American trainer. (I have gone back and forth about even using the word “bullying” to describe what is a case of assault, pure and simple. My belief is that while I understand why some people believe the word both minimizes and masculinizes the offenses on display, I also believe that “bullying” universalizes it, and allows for empathy into what Jonathan Martin and others had to endure. Reading the report, if you were ever made to feel powerless because of someone's ability to physically intimidate you, then you can understand Jonathan Martin's reality.)

The entire report is one collective “trigger warning” of the vilest imaginable behavior. People can read it themselves here. They can also read the heartbreaking written messages Jonathan Martin sent his parents over here. Rather than rehash them, I want to comment on what was for me the part of the report I found to be both predictable and gobsmacking. Ted Wells has determined that this culture of bullying was entirely confined to the team's offensive line and their coach Jim Turner, who is still employed by the team. We are also supposed to believe that Head Coach Joe Philbin and the front office knew nothing. An entire section of the report is even titled, “Coach Philbin and the Front Office Did Not Know About the Harassment.” This feels like every single report we ever see about corporate or government malfeasance from Iran-Contra to Abu Ghraib to baseball's steroid era. The goal is always to protect and insulate those at the top, who are, by the way, commissioning the report. There is even a superfluous, entirely irrelevant section at the end of the report titled, *The Dolphins' Plans To Improve the Team's Workplace Conduct Policies Are Commendable*. After reading the previous 140 pages, I could only think, “Who gives a shit?”

I have never understood why being ignorant acts as a shield of blamelessness for those in power. If Philbin did not know what was happening, then he looks like a fool. If he did know, then he looks malicious. Philbin's ignorance was described by one ESPN anchor as “hard to believe.” I agree. This is a case of either benign neglect or malignant intent. Either way, he should join former General Manager Jeff Ireland on the unemployment line.

The timing of this report also comes just as the NFL is attempting to show the world that they are a safe space for Michael Sam and any player who tells the world that he is gay. Instead we get a glimpse of a locker room that seems to be steeped in racist and homophobic violence, a bigoted gay bashers paradise. Every NFL player I've interviewed has told me that this Dolphins shit-show is an outlier. Every NFL player who I've interviewed has told me that they have never heard the kind of invective Jonathan Martin and others were subjected to. Every NFL player who I've interviewed has said this is utterly unique. I hope they were not just feeding me a line, playing their role, protecting “The Shield.” I hope they weren't protecting “The Shield” because it is only too obvious from this report that the only thing “The Shield” looks to protect is its own brand, players be damned.

At one point in the report, Ted Wells includes Jonathan Martin's private list of pros and cons for staying in the National Football League. One reason for leaving was, “I won't die from CTE” (brain damage). Underneath that was another reason for leaving, “Maybe I'll start to LIKE myself.” Those two statements, to me, need to be the start of the next discussion we need to have: how the rot in this league extends far beyond Richie Incognito.

Calendar of Events

March 6 — March 12, 2014

Senior Days

Date & Time: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 8 am-12 noon
Description: Seniors (Prince George's County residents only) are allowed FREE use of both the fitness center and pool during these times.
Cost: FREE
Ages: 60 & up
Location: Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex
 8001 Sheriff Road, Landover, MD 20785
Contact: 301-583-2400; TTY 301-583-2483

Chesapeake Woodturners Exhibit

Date & Time: March 1-31, 11 am-4 pm (Closed Wednesdays.)
Description: See Montpelier filled with beautiful turned wood objects, all handmade by members of the Chesapeake Woodturners. Demonstrations will be given Saturdays and Sundays, 1-4 pm, weather permitting. Please call to confirm.
Cost: Free
Ages: All ages (Parental supervision required.)
Location: Montpelier Mansion/Historic Site
 9650 Muirkirk Road, Laurel 20708
Contact: 301-377-7817; TTY 301-699-2544; montpeliermansion@pgparks.com

Spencer Weekend

Date & Time: Friday-Sunday, March 7-March 9; Please call for times and details
Description: Join costume historian Dr. Ann Was to make your own Regency-style Spencer jacket! Perfect for upcoming War of 1812 celebrations or Regency costume events, you won't want to miss this event! Advance registration required by February 28.
Cost: Resident \$50; Non-Resident \$60
Ages: 18 & up
Location: Riversdale House Museum
 4811 Riverdale Road, Riverdale Park 20737
Contact: 301-864-0420; TTY 301-699-2544

All-County Student Music Ensemble Showcase

Date & Time: Saturday, March 8, 2014 8 pm
Description: Did you know March is National Music in Our Schools Month? Celebrate the joy of music with outstanding young musicians from Prince George's County, performing vocal and instrumental selections ranging from smooth jazz to show tunes!
Cost: Tickets \$12/person; \$10 for seniors, students, groups of 15 or more
Ages: All ages welcome
Location: Publick Playhouse
 5445 Landover Road, Cheverly 20784

24th Annual Mineral, Jewelry & Fossil Show

Date & Time: Saturday, March 8, 2014 10 am-5 pm
Description: Enjoy unique displays of fossils, minerals, geodes and other materials related to the earth sciences! Exhibitors and vendors will be selling minerals, fossils, jewelry, gemstones, meteorites and more. See demonstrations of jewelry arts (cabochon making), gold panning, flint-knapping and fluorescent (glowing) rocks.
 A mini-mine craft will give kids a chance to dig for a keepsake fossil. There will be designated areas for Scouts of all ages to visit in order to meet badge or belt-loop requirements in geology.
Cost: Resident or Non-Resident: \$4; Free for ages 12 & under and scouts in uniform
Ages: All ages welcome
Location: The Show Place Arena
 14900 Pennsylvania Avenue, Upper Marlboro 20772
Contact: 301-297-4575; TTY 301-699-2544

Timberdoodle Hike

Date & Time: Saturday, March 8, 2014 5:30-6:30 pm
Description: Join a naturalist for a night hike to see the spectacular courtship display of the Timberdoodle, or American Woodcock. Watch as this mysterious bird reliably performs a spiraling flight display shortly after sunset. Walk to a pond and try to see if you can spot any nocturnal animals!
Cost: Resident \$2; Non-Resident \$3
Ages: 6 & up
Location: Patuxent River Park
 (Meet at the campsite front gate)
 16000 Croom Airport Rd, Upper Marlboro 20772
Contact: 301-627-6074

Kids' Day Out- Dishibem: From West Africa to Hip Hop

Date & Time: Wednesday, March 12, 2014 10:30 am
Description: Come with us on a musical journey! Trace the origins of music in West Africa to elements of step dance and pop rhythms in modern day hip-hop. Feel the power of music and dance as a positive tool of communication and self-expression.
Cost: \$5/person
Ages: All ages welcome
Location: Harmony Hall Regional Center
 10701 Livingston Road, Fort Washington 20744
Contact: 301-203-6070; TTY 301-203-3803

Smooth Sounds for Seniors at Montpelier-Ethel Ennis

Date & Time: Thursday, March 13, 2014 12 pm
Description: This spring, Montpelier has a fun, new series of special programs just for seniors ages 60 & better. A favorite at Montpelier, the incomparable Baltimore-based Ethel Ennis has sung to critical acclaim all over the world. Ethel Ennis' voice possesses a smooth, buttery tone heavily vested in swing, and versatile enough to deliver from the classic songbook, original material and the occasional rarity.
Cost: Tickets: \$12/per person
Ages: All ages welcome
Location: Montpelier Arts Center
 9652 Muirkirk Road, Laurel 20708
Contact: 301-377-7800 or 410-792-0664; TTY 301-490-2329

EARTH TALK ... What are "dirty fuels"?

Dear EarthTalk:

What are "dirty fuels" and why are they so called?

— Bill Green,
Seattle, WA

The term "dirty fuels" refers to fuels derived from tar sands, oil shale or liquid coal. Just like their more conventional fossil fuel counterparts such as petroleum and coal, they can be turned into gasoline, diesel and other energy sources that can generate extreme amounts of particulate pollution, carbon emissions and ecosystem destruction during their lifecycles from production to consumption. "Because tar sands [have] more sulfur, nitrogen, and metals in [them] than conventional oil, upgrading and refining [them] causes a lot more air and water pollution and greenhouse gas emissions," reports the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), a leading environmental non-profit. "On a lifecycle basis—that is, extraction all the way through combustion—tar sands cause about 20 percent more global warming pollution than conventional oil," adds NRDC. "Oil shale and liquid coal are even worse, causing nearly 50 percent more global warming pollution and over double the lifecycle emissions of conventional oil..."

In North America, the majority of such fuels come from Canada's vast boreal forest, to where tens of millions of birds flock each spring to nest. "Tar sands oil development creates open pit mines, habitat fragmentation, toxic waste holding ponds, air and water pollution, upgraders and refineries, and pipelines spreading far beyond the Boreal forest," reports NRDC. "This development is destroying habitat for waterfowl and songbirds that come from all over the Americas to nest in the Boreal."

Beyond impacts at the extraction sites, dirty fuels cause pollution problems all down the line. For this reason, environmental leaders are opposed to the proposed Keystone XL pipeline which, if approved and built, would transport tar sands fuels through the Midwestern U.S. to refineries in the Gulf of Mexico. "Refinery communities like Port Arthur, Texas...are already unable to comply with their air pollution regulations, so dirtier fuel is the last thing they need in their refineries," adds NRDC. And while dirty fuels may reduce our reliance on foreign oil, they won't help reduce gas prices as they are so expensive to produce that gas prices would have to be higher than they already are in order for them to be profitable. "They also can't help with stabilizing gas prices in the case of a disruption to oil shipments because each new tar sands proj-



CREDIT: RAINFOREST ACTION NETWORK

Environmental leaders are opposed to the proposed Keystone XL pipeline which, if approved and built, would transport tar sands fuels through the Midwestern U.S. to refineries in the Gulf of Mexico. Pictured: A Rainforest Action Network anti tar sands pipeline protest in front of the Canadian Consulate in Chicago.

ect requires huge infrastructure and capital investments, so it takes years for new tar sands projects to come on-line—it's not as though there is loads of spare tar sands oil just waiting to be put through the pipelines," says NRDC's Elizabeth Shope. "The fact is, we don't need these fuels," she adds. "We can reduce oil consumption by increasing fuel efficiency standards, and greater use of hybrid cars, renewable energy and environmentally sustainable biofuels. What's called 'smart growth'—how we design our communities—is also a very important element in meeting our transportation needs.

"North America stands at an energy crossroads [and] we now face a choice: to set a course for a more sustainable energy future of clean, renewable fuels, or to develop ever-dirtier sources of transportation fuel derived from fossil fuels—at an even greater cost to our health and environment."

CONTACT: NRDC, www.nrdc.org.

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Sick Calves from A1

cently, more than four years after the loophole was discovered. Maryland representatives Elijah Cummings, D-Baltimore, and Donna Edwards, D-Fort Washington, are among the signees. The letter asked the agency to prioritize and expedite closing the loophole in order to keep "tainted meat" out of the nation's food supply and curtail inhumane treatment. "I believe we must ensure the humane treatment of all animals while also protecting our food supply from the risks that downer cows can pose," Cummings said, in a statement. Edwards' office acknowledged her support, and said the letter speaks for itself. Repeated requests to the USDA for comment went unanswered.

"Although the young calves are less likely to get mad cow disease, it doesn't mean they can't get other diseases, especially if they are down and laying in their own waste," Markarian said. "When young calves go down they are not required to be euthanized, and the producers can essentially set them aside and hope that they get up eventually, so that they can be slaughtered." Calves are susceptible to kicks and prods with electrical wires in attempts to get them to move, Markarian said. The Humane Society reported that when these tactics fail, sometimes calves are transported by machinery to the "kill box." The Maryland Cattlemen's Association, a leading voice for

the state's cattle industry, is not opposed to further regulation. "Humane and proper animal care and handling is the single highest priority of Maryland cattle producers," said Dr. Scott M. Barao, executive vice president of the Maryland Cattlemen's Association, in a statement. "Non-ambulatory animals of any age should be treated under the care of a qualified veterinarian who should make the final decision regarding the course of treatment or even ultimately, humane euthanasia. There is no time that such an animal should enter the human food chain." Representatives from the meat industry agree that meat from debilitated calves should be kept out of the marketplace, however, they contend that mistreatment of young calves is not

a common response to the animals' inability to stand. A report released in 2011 by the American Meat Institute said that a slaughter plant has no economic incentive to engage in abusive behavior in order to force calves to stand. The report said that the assertion by the Humane Society "ignores the significant body of scientific literature that exists demonstrating a significant nexus between good animal welfare practices and meat quality." In Maryland, beef slaughter facilities are concentrated in the central and western regions, according to research from Johns Hopkins University. Violators of cattle treatment laws in Maryland are guilty of a misdemeanor and fined up to no more than \$100 per incident.

Data Breach from A1

actually been breached. According to notices from the university, the records breached Feb. 18 included names, Social Security numbers, dates of birth and University identification numbers. "I would've been very, very, very upset if I didn't make that third phone call and then something would've happened," Hall said. Hall wasn't the only one. Adjunct instructor Jamie Forzato said she was told her information was not exposed, but it would be another ten days before Experian had a complete list of all the names of people whose information was compromised. "People should know that if they were told they weren't breached, that may not be the case in the end," Forzato said. According to information posted Tuesday on the university's web site, the compromised database contained 309,079 records of faculty, staff, and students from the College Park and Shady Grove campuses who have been issued a University ID in 1998 and thereafter. For a while Tuesday morning and afternoon, callers could not get through on the Experian hotline. The university issued a statement on its website Tuesday stating that Experian was "experiencing technical difficulties due to high call volume." Hall said he tried several times to call the hotline on his mobile

phone but had his calls disconnected. When he attempted to call on a landline phone, he said he received an automated message saying that the lines were too busy and to call back at a later time. University President Wallace D. Loh and university officials did not respond to multiple Capital News Service inquiries made by telephone, email and an in-person visit to his office in the Administration building on campus. However, Loh did send out a mass email to the "University of Maryland community" shortly after 4 p.m. Tuesday, detailing the latest updates with the university's response to the data breach. He also uploaded a video to the university's YouTube page. "Effective immediately, I am launching a comprehensive, top-to-bottom investigation of all computing and information systems," Loh said in his email. In his email statement, Loh said a combination of state and federal law enforcement agencies, the U.S. Secret Service, outside consultants and campus IT security personnel would scan every database to find out where sensitive personal information is located, and then purge it or protect it more fully, as appropriate. Loh pledged the university would also do "penetration tests" of their security defenses, and review what databases should be operated by the university and which ones should be operated by individual units within the campus.

Loh attributed some of the problems to thousands of databases throughout the campus that were created when "the environment for cyber threats was different." "Because of the actions we are taking, I pledge to you that the University of Maryland will be even stronger, bigger and better in the unremitting and global fight against cyber-crime," Loh said in his written statement. One change that was made Tuesday was to expand the duration of free Experian credit protection services from one year to five, Loh announced.

Those who sign up would receive a free copy of an Experian credit report, surveillance alerts, daily credit monitoring and identity theft resolution. But some students on campus still weren't sold on the safety of their personal information. "Intuition tells me that if you're a criminal and you're good enough to steal information from the university, you're not going to go ahead right away and use that information," said freshman student Isaac Zhodzishsky. "You're going to wait a bit so it doesn't seem suspicious...credit checks, I personally feel, means nothing."

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Watch from A4

deputy director for the Center for Gun Policy and Research, added: "Because many perpetrators of homicide have backgrounds that would prohibit them from possessing firearms under federal law, they seek out private sellers to acquire their weapons. Requiring a background check on all gun sales is a commonsense approach to reducing gun violence that does not infringe upon the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding gun owners."

Requiring a background check seems like common sense to most Americans—and yet some lawmakers refuse to make it happen. Others, like those in Missouri, are actually moving backwards. The same press release noted: "Only fifteen states require individuals purchasing handguns from unlicensed sellers to pass background checks, with ten of these states requiring all purchasers to acquire a permit-to-purchase license. A 2013 public opinion survey from Johns Hopkins found the majority of Americans (89 percent) and gun owners (84 percent) support requiring a background check system for all gun sales. The majority of Americans (77 percent) and gun owners (59 percent) also reported supporting requiring people to obtain a license from a local law-enforcement agency before buying a gun to verify their identity and ensure that they are not legally prohibited from having a gun."

This latest Johns Hopkins study is another key step in find-

ing out what works to reduce gun violence. The available evidence is clear: Stand Your Ground laws do not reduce gun violence. Background checks do—just one part of a network of solutions that can help. We need a robust commitment to much more research on the epidemic public health threat of gun violence to identify all of them. And when we know what works, we need leaders who will listen to and act on the research and public opinion to preserve lives. We do not need any more suffering families. Jordan Davis's father Ron said: "All the other 17-year-olds out there—they shouldn't have to fear the adults with the guns that are running around here shooting them at will. If you throw popcorn in someone's face, they want to shoot you because you threw popcorn in their face. That's what we've come to. But we have to stop."

We really do have to stop! Click here to share your comments and find out what others are saying.

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.

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