



September 8, 2023

TODAY
is the day to
learn something
NEW

We're Back to School!

Our Baltimore area's public schools are in full swing, and I thoroughly enjoyed supporting "Back to School" events in the 43rd district. Each Fall, I am inspired and buoyed by the cheerful (*mostly*) faces of our students and energy on the first day of school. I am so very grateful for our educators and paraprofessionals who keep the doors of opportunity and hope open for our children and families. Here's to the 2023-24 academic season!

I trust that that you and your families had a happy Labor Day. For the last 129 years, this holiday has provided us with an opportunity to honor the efforts and sacrifices of our labor leaders throughout history and all the progress we have made because of them. Because of the labor movement in this country, we have protection against unsafe and exploitative working conditions, and we can bargain collectively, ensuring that workers' voices cannot be ignored. We have made great progress, but there is still much work to be done, and we are on the job.

We are excited to begin ramping up our legislative wing this fall as we head toward Legislative Session 2024. We will meet with advocates and groups to discuss legislative ideas and priorities for bills and legislative bond initiatives. I am looking at legislation pertaining to energy, education, and the environment and continuing efforts on legislation from previous sessions. Stay tuned for further updates on my legislative priorities as we move into the fall.

As always, if you have an issue or event that you would like me to discuss or attend, please email mary.washington@state.senate.md.us, or call our office at (410) 841-3476.

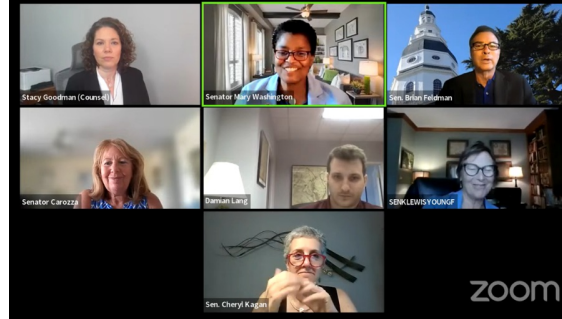
In Partnership,

*Here I am at the
the Teacher's Association of
Baltimore County (TABCO) booth
at the Baltimore County Public Schools
Back to School Fest (August 19)*



LATE JULY

- MTA briefing on Towson Transit Hub 7/20
- EEE Briefing: Overview K-12 Governance - 7/26
- York Road Partnership Meeting - 7/27
- GEDCO Networking Event - 7/27
- Belvedere Improvement Association Meeting- 7/28
- Towson Manor Village Community Association - 7/31



EEE K-12 Education Governance 101 Briefing

AUGUST

- National Night Out - 8/1
- Annual Elks Grand Lodge & 118th Grand Temple International Convention - 8/4
- Administrative Executive and Legislative Review Committee Monthly meeting
- Maryland Association of Counties Conference 8/17
- EEE Committee DNR Site Visit: Shoaling Problems In Ocean City Inlet - 8/17
- Baltimore County Public Schools Back to School Fest - 8/19
- EEE Committee Briefing: Public Service Commission Overview - 8/29
- Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland Baltimore County Townhall - 8/29



Wilson Park National Night Out



Senator Washington and Superintendent of Baltimore County Schools Dr. Myriam Yarbrough at the Baltimore County Back to School Fest

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland Baltimore County Town Hall

On August 29th, members of the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland gathered at West

Towson Elementary School to deliver the third in a series of Town Halls throughout the State—discussing the Caucus priorities for the 2023 Legislative Session: Cannabis Legalization, Education, Wealth & Black Businesses, Health, and Housing and looking ahead to 2024.

Superintendent Dr. Myriam Rogers (Yarbrough) and Caucus Chair Jheanelle Wilkins provided opening remarks. Delegates Cheryl Pasteur and Aletheia R. McCaskill delivered a compelling exposition of the founding of Antebellum Period free African-American communities like 43rd's East Towson, Turner Station, and Winters Lane in Baltimore County. Each caucus member presented wins in one of the priority policy areas. Senator Washington covered, among other things, the Maryland Educator Shortage Act (SB893), the Student Loan Debt Relief Tax Credit (HB680), and the need to ensure equity in our funding and policy decisions. Each member participated, including fellow EEE Committee member Senator Ben Brooks and Baltimore County Senate Delegation Chair, Senator Charles Sydnor.



Senator Washington and the Baltimore County Members of the Legislative Black Caucus with House Speaker Adrienne Jones, LBC Chair Jheanelle Wilkins and Baltimore County Executive Johnny Olszewski



The Diggs-Johnson Museum in Woodstock, MD contributed visual representations and pictures of past community members from East Towson dating back to the formation of the historic Black community in 1853.



National Night Out

This year's National Night Out on August 1st marked the 40th Anniversary of the

community event building towards strengthening the bonds between public safety agencies and the neighborhoods they serve. I visited events in Waverly, Coldstream-Homestead-Montebello, Wilson Park, and Lake Walker; enjoying the home-cooked meals and live DJ performances put together by community members.

A huge thanks go out to York Road Partnership, CHM Community Corporation, the Lake Walker Community Organization, and the Zeta Sigma Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity for partnering with the Northern and Northeast Baltimore City Police Districts to organize these events!



Coldstream Homestead Montebello - CHM National Night Out and Book Give Away



Lake Walker Community Association at their National Night Out Block Party

LAW & POLICY UPDATES: ICYMI

STATE UPDATES WITH LOCAL IMPACTS



Maryland Higher Education Commission: Degree Program Review

In Maryland, degree reviews are driven by an objection process, and the most common complaint is that a new program would duplicate an existing one at another institution. On June 30th, the EEE Committee received a letter from Morgan State University President Dr. David Wilson, requesting the Committee to weigh in on the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)'s decision to allow Towson University to implement a graduate program the University determined was substantially duplicative to an existing degree program it offers. Interestingly, these institutions are located in the 43rd District, just 4.6 miles apart. After much discussion, including a review by the Attorney General, Towson ultimately withdrew its program application.

Background: This past legislative session, the MGA passed HB200 to create a workgroup of stakeholders to study and develop measurable criteria to determine when a proposed new program is considered duplicative and already offered by one of Maryland's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). In July, Rai and Commission Chair Catherine "Cassie" Motz sent a memo suggesting that colleges and universities in the state pause their pursuit of new degree programs if another institution objects — at least until the workgroup makes recommendations on potential changes to state policy. The workgroup held its first meeting in August and is due to submit a report by December 1st.

Maryland Supreme Court LGBTQIA+ Decision

The Maryland Supreme Court ruled on August 14th that state laws, such as the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act and the Fair Employment Act that usually grant job protections to workers on the basis of sex, do not extend to workers based on their sexual orientation. The ruling came from a case of a Catholic Relief Services employee suing for the right for his health insurance to extend to his husband, as such job benefits extend in straight marriages under the organization's policies. The Court ruled that while Maryland laws specify equal gender protections, there is no similar protection for LGBTQIA+ members of

the Maryland Workforce.

Last month, the Maryland Legislative LGBTQ+ Caucus released a statement expressing profound concern: *"The strides taken by the Maryland General Assembly in recent decades lay bare the collective resolve to dismantle and eliminate the deep-seated structures of discrimination. The Maryland LGBTQ+ Caucus is evaluating the ruling and will support legislative remedies that bridge the gaps caused by this ruling in our 2024 session."*

Update: Maryland Public Service Commission Orders BGE to Allow Customers Options in Gas Regulator Location

This Tuesday, The Maryland Public Service Commission ruled that Baltimore Gas and Electric customers can decide whether to have high-pressure gas regulators installed at their homes, and a judge extended the existing restraining order. Additionally, the Commission approved an agreement among Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, a group of affected customers, the Maryland Office of People's Counsel (OPC), and the Commission's Technical Staff that directs BGE to work with these parties to develop a written notice to be delivered to customers at least 14 days in advance of an installation, informing them a gas regulator will be installed and giving them the choice of exterior or interior installation.

Background: BGE adopted the default practice of external installation beginning in 2021, and complaints since then have related to the aesthetics and safety of external gas service regulators.

Invasive Spotted Lanternflies Set to Swarm in September

The quarter-sized insects you may have seen throughout the Baltimore region this summer are set to enter a new stage—breeding season. Feeding on the sap of another invasive species, the Tree-of-Heaven, Spotted Lanternflies pose destructive risks to beneficial species and our local ecology.

The Department of Recreation and Parks has tips on how you can prevent and manage these insects [here](#).



State Climate Town Hall at Morgan State University on September 12th - 6pm

Discussion on implementation of the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 (SB528) and the POWER Act (SB781), will be held by the Department of the Environment at Morgan State on September 12th at 6pm, at the Center for the Built Environment and Integrated Studies.

This event is part of a series of seven public listening sessions to hear your thoughts and discuss Maryland's strategies to combat the harmful effects of climate change. The in-person session

You can find more details and learn how to participate by [signing up here](#).

MD Student Loan Debt Tax Credit Deadline - 9/15

The Maryland Higher Education Commission provides all Maryland residents with a Student Loan Debt Relief Tax Credit program. A total of \$18 million in tax credits is available to Maryland residents filing their 2023 tax returns.

To be eligible, you must claim Maryland residency for the 2023 tax year, file 2023 Maryland state income taxes, have initially incurred at least \$20,000 in undergraduate and/or graduate student loan debt, and have at least \$5,000 in outstanding student loan debt at the time of applying for the tax credit.

The deadline to submit your application is **September 15th**. To apply, go to the Maryland Higher Education Commission's website at: <https://mhec.maryland.gov/preparing/papers/studentloandebtrelietaxcredit.aspx>

Water Bill Debt Relief

75,811 Baltimore City and County residents who accrued water bill debt during the COVID-19 pandemic will receive credits on their upcoming water bills. These credits are funded by a \$15.87 million grant under the American Rescue Plan Act. DPW is one of 19 water systems throughout the state that applied for and were awarded funding from the Maryland Water Assistance Relief Program.

Eligible customers will receive a credit for outstanding water bill debt accrued during the pandemic between Jan. 27, 2022 – Sept. 30, 2023. The grant distribution has been prioritized for City and County customers currently participating in financial water assistance programs.

***DPW will notify the eligible City and County residents who will receive the debt relief credit.*

Maryland Transit Administration Offering Free Transit September 22-24

To celebrate World Car-Free Day on September 22nd, the Maryland Transit Administration is offering free rides on Local Bus, Light Rail, Metro Subway, MARC, Commuter Bus and Mobility transit services from Friday 9/22 to Sunday 9/24. Just in time to see the Ravens beat the Indianapolis Colts! Check your route by visiting <https://mta.maryland.gov> or using the Transit app on your smart device.



SAVE THE DATE! DISTRICT 43 GRANTS WORKSHOP

Are you a community organization, nonprofit, or interested community member looking for funding opportunities? Look no further!

District 43 is hosting a grants workshop to help communities get the knowledge and funds they need to improve and revitalize their communities.

DATE
WEDNESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

TIME
6:30PM - 8:00PM

SIGN UP

The Office of Senator Mary Washington
District 43 - Baltimore City and
Baltimore County



43rd District Grants Workshop

Our Office is hosting a virtual grants and funding workshop on September 13th, and all are welcome! If you're a member of a community organization, nonprofit, institution, or just generally interested in how to improve your community, join us and explore your options. We look forward to seeing you soon!

[Sign up here!](#)

We Help?

Do you have an issue you need help with? Are you interested in having the Senator or her staff attend or speak at an event? You can reach out on our [website](#) and fill out our [contact form](#). You can also email or call us at:
mary.washington@senate.state.md.us or by calling 410-841-3145.

THE OFFICE OF SENATOR MARY WASHINGTON



DISTRICT 43
BALTIMORE COUNTY AND BALTIMORE CITY
SUITE 200 - BASEMENT
MARY.WASHINGTON@SENATE.STATE.MD.US

43RD DISTRICT COMMUNITY BOARD

MARYLAND MEDICAID RENEWAL IS NOT AUTOMATIC THIS YEAR.

- ✓ Make sure your contact info is up to date so that you can receive your renewal notice for your health insurance.
- ✓ Once you receive it, you'll have 45 days to renew.

Get started at MarylandHealthConnection.gov/Checkin or call 855-642-8572 and check in with Medicaid today.

KEEP YOUR INFO CURRENT. KEEP YOURSELF INSURED.



DEMONSTRATION PLANTING DAY

Saturday, September 9
10:00 a.m. - Noon

Govans Presbyterian Church
5828 York Rd., Baltimore, MD 21212

Join us as we plant our first crops for the Govans Community Farm. All ages welcome.

- Plant your choice of veggies!
- Enjoy food made with the veggies we are planting.
- Make custom crop markers.
- Coffee and hot chocolate for all.
- Music/Food/Community Connection.

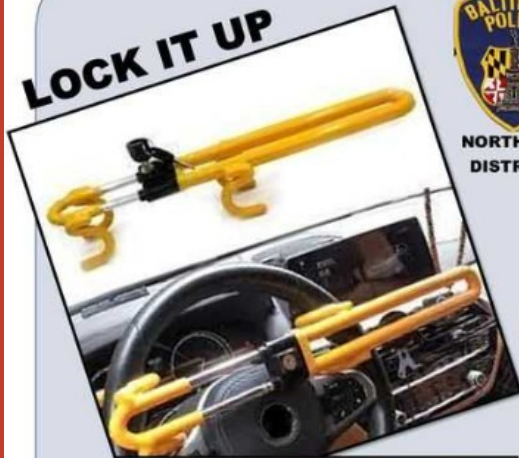
Email govansfarm@govanspres.org
for more information!



Scan the QR Code to
sign up for our email list.

STEERING WHEEL LOCK DISTRIBUTION

LOCK IT UP



NORTHERN
DISTRICT

- ONLY KIA & HYUNDAI
- MUST BE CITY RESIDENT
- MUST PRODUCE A VEHICLE REGISTRATION
- **LOCKS ARE FREE** (UNTIL SUPPLY RUNS OUT)



* YOU CAN PICK UP A LOCK FOR VEHICLES AT THE NORTHERN DISTRICT

2201 W COLDSRING LN
BALTIMORE MD 212109
MORE INFO CALL: (410) 396-2455

PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY



A FREE HIGH SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

The Excel Center® is a free high school that provides adults 21 and over the opportunity to earn a Maryland State Department of Education diploma and begin post-secondary education. In addition to a high school diploma, students earn industry-recognized certificates. The Excel Center model removes barriers to education and empowers individuals to achieve their goals.

Who Can Enroll?







The Excel Center is located in Baltimore City and enrolls students who live in the Baltimore Metro area and do not have a high school diploma.

To learn more and apply visit excelcentermd.org

What Makes Us Different?

The Excel Center is tailored for your needs as a student providing traditional high school course requirements in an adult environment. Students are able to attend classes in the morning, afternoon and evening, 5 days a week, 12 months a year. The Excel Center also provides access to employment opportunities, transportation, drop-in childcare, mental and physical health support.

Students earn credentials that increase access to higher education, employment with higher wages and increased career prospects.

-  High School Diploma For Adults
-  College and Career Pathways
-  Life Coaching
-  Free Child Care
-  Flexible Scheduling
-  Transportation Assistance

Do you have an event or information you would like to share on our District Community Board?

Submit it online anytime at <https://www.senatormarywashington.com> or by emailing us at mary.washington@state.senate.md.us, or call our office at (410) 841-3476.



Senator Washington with BPD and Brothers of the Zeta Sigma Chapter of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity (Greenmount Ave & 28th) National Night Out Event, August 1, 2023

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That's all for now, folks! Please reach out anytime.
Happy Back to School from Senator Washington and our team!

