

**445th Legislative Session | March 8, 2023 | Legislative Day 49**



Greetings from Annapolis!

So much has happened since our last report. Over 946 bills have been filed in the Senate, and over 1270 in the House of Delegates setting an MGA record. Six of my bills have been heard in committee and two have pass the Senate and are on their way to the House: SB0251 Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs – Alterations and State Board of Examiners of Psychologists - License and Registration Issuance and Renewals. And we have five (5) hearings scheduled over the next week in the Senate Finance, EEE and Judicial Proceedings. We are clearly up and running!

*[Click here](#) or read on to see a full list of all my bill names, numbers, texts, hearing dates, and more.*

I remain deeply concerned about the lack of transparency in the drafting of the conduit agreement between Baltimore City Government and BGE

As a member of the Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee, I look forward to continuing my advocacy and policymaking on this issue.

That's it for now. Please read below for more Annapolis happenings and updates. As always, I want to hear from you - please email [mary.washington@senate.state.md.us](mailto:mary.washington@senate.state.md.us) with any questions, comments, or concerns.

In Partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Mary Washington'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Mary' and last name 'Washington' clearly distinguishable.

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### **Women's History Month Spotlight**

**International Women's Day 2023 campaign theme:  
#EmbraceEquity**

International Women's Day, March 8th is celebrated in many countries around the world. It is a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. Officially recognized by the United Nations in 1977, IWD first emerged from the activities of labor movements at the turn of the twentieth century in



North America and across Europe. The aim of the IWD 2023 is to get the world talking about Why equal opportunities aren't enough. People start from different places, so true inclusion and belonging require equitable action.

[READ "THE ANNAPOLIS REPORT" ONLINE](#)

## **BBREAKING NEW!!**

### **Baltimore gets a Federal \$2 million Grant to plan for redevelopment of “Highway to Nowhere”**

More than 50 years ago, the first 1.4-mile stretch of the “highway to nowhere” was built and the remainder of the project halted in the early 1970s amid opposition from threatened neighborhoods along the proposed route. In the process it removed 14 contiguous blocks of a predominantly middle-class African-American community, the demolition of 971 homes, 62 businesses, and displaced over 1,500 people. The original plan was to connect Interstate 70, which now ends west of the city, with Interstate 95.

The grant is a part of President Joe Biden’s \$1 trillion bill, approved by Congress in November 2021, to rebuild highways, bridges and other infrastructure. The Department of Transportation’s “Reconnecting Communities Program” grant will begin a long-awaited down payment due on the reparations owed the West Baltimore communities.

### **Maryland will replace stolen SNAP benefits with federal funds.**

Across the country More than 3,800 Maryland recipients of a range of federal benefits, like SNAP) were scammed or robbed of nearly \$2.5 million. The "food stamps" of the past have been federal government provides benefits and other cash assistance through Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. Many were scammed via skimming and cloning their cards after using them at local ATM machines or Point-of-Sale Systems. Families who relied on their benefits to feed their children, pay bills, and afford rent, have learned their federal assistance benefits were swiped almost immediately after they were deposited onto their electronic cards.

States are now authorized to use federal funds to replace benefits “that are determined by the State Agency to have been stolen through card skimming, card cloning or similar fraudulent methods” beginning Oct. 1, 2022 through Sept. 30, 2024 (Prior to passage of the “Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023,” states were prohibited from replacing SNAP benefits using federal funds). The Maryland Department of Human Services expects that families who had SNAP benefits stolen will be able to file for reimbursement as soon as mid-March through the state’s [myMDTHINK Consumer Portal](#).



*Moore-Miller Administration’s cabinet secretaries (from MDGOV PICS)*

## Governor Moore Swears In Cabinet Secretaries in Historic Ceremony

*Gun Industry Accountability Act of 2023* prohibits firearm industry members from knowingly or recklessly creating, maintaining, or contributing to harm to the public through the manufacture or sale of a firearm-related product. The Attorney General or an individual may file a public nuisance suit against any industry member who violates this statute (SB0113, Senator Waldstreicher, Judicial Proceedings Committee and HB0259, Delegates Atterbeary and Rosenberg, Judiciary Committee).

## MARYLAND SENATE SESSION 2023

### Last Week on the Senate Floor...

My bill, **SB0251**, State Government - Commission on LGBTQIA+ Commission - Alterations, passed the Third Reading in the Senate on February 17th. It is now headed to the House.

Another one of my bills, **SB0349**, State Board of Psychologists - License and Registration Issuance and Renewals - Electronic Means is up for the third reading in the Senate. It was favorable with amendments at the second reading.

Several Legislative Bond Initiatives were introduced on February 20th. All bond initiatives are assigned to the Budget & Taxation Committee; that is where they are currently.



### ***Governor Moore's Cabinet Advance to Confirmation***

About half of Governor Moore's cabinet appointees are on their way to being confirmed by the Maryland Senate after the Senate Executive Nominations Committee unanimously recommended the secretaries Monday night. The next step will be a confirmation vote by the full Senate. The Senate committee will hear another batch of appointees next week as the executive branch is finalized.

[VIEW FLOOR PROCEEDINGS HERE](#)

## SPONSORED BILLS & UPCOMING HEARINGS

### 3 HEARINGS IN ONE DAY!!



SB0353 Higher Education - Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program - Alterations Primary in the Senate - Hearing 2/22 at 2:00 p.m. (Education, Energy, and the Environment)

SB0873 Child Care Provider Stabilization Program - Established Hearing 2/22 at 2:00 p.m. (Education, Energy, and the Environment)

SB0380 - Water Affordability Assistance - Hearing 2/22 at 1:00 p.m. (Budget and Taxation 2/22/2023 - 1:00 PM)

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN (E<sup>3</sup>)

### Fiscal Briefing for FY 2023-2024:

#### SOME HIGHLIGHTS

- The Governor's spending plan leaves a closing balance of \$2.3 billion at the end of fiscal 2023 and \$820 million at the end of fiscal year 2024.
- The Revenue Stabilization Account (Rainy-Day Fund) will have a balance of \$2.5 billion (10% of general fund revenues). With combined cash balances for a total of \$3.3 billion, the account will represent about 13.3% of general fund revenues.
- General fund spending declines in fiscal 2024 as the fiscal 2023 budget includes a one-time appropriation of \$2.3 billion to the Rainy-Day Fund.
- General fund expenditures will increase significantly due to accelerating planned rate increases for health care providers to align with an accelerated implementation of a \$15 minimum wage.
- Federal spending declines in fiscal 2024 as temporary federal aid from the American Rescue Plan Act begins to dissipate and will decrease funding available for many state programs like enhanced Medicaid matching funds and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Contingent up enactment of legislation proposed by the Governor. Tax relief proposals that reduce general fund revenues by \$204 million in fiscal 2024 and \$230 million by fiscal 2028 include:
  - Exempting military retirement income from the income tax.
  - Establishing a more robust Child Tax Credit.
  - Making temporary enhancements



Our office received the most emails and calls about **SB199: Primary and Secondary Education - Comprehensive Health Education Framework**

*For the record, under SB 199, **Schools must establish a health education framework** that includes, at a minimum, the topics of: health promotion, mental and emotional health, substance abuse prevention, family life and human sexuality, gender identity and sexual orientation, safety and violence prevention, healthy eating, and disease prevention and control.*

**This comprehensive health education framework already exists - this bill in no way is creating this concept.** All this bill does, in essence, is tighten the requirements to make sure all students get the highest level of science-based health education.

**This framework must be fulfilled in an age appropriate manner.** This means that we are not exposing children to any material that they should not be subjected to at a given age.

**Parents have the full option to opt-out of any curriculum set by the school district within this framework** Parents can stay fully informed and up to date on health subjects affecting their children, and may choose whether or not they would prefer their children to participate in this curriculum.

to the Earned Income Tax Credit permanent.

## 43RD DISTRICT CONSTITUENT & COMMUNITY MATTERS

### 43<sup>rd</sup> District COMMUNITY BOARD

If you are member a 43<sup>rd</sup> District neighbor, HOA or community association and want to see your event appear in the next newsletter, please email us [mary.washington@state.senate.md.us](mailto:mary.washington@state.senate.md.us) or call our office at (410) 841-3476.

You can follow me on **Instagram**, **Twitter**, **Facebook** or visit my website: [www.senatormarywashington.com](http://www.senatormarywashington.com)

As always, I encourage you to contact me about the issues that matter to you or if you would like me to visit your community. Please feel free to call or email me.

Until next week...

Your Senator,



*Meeting with advocates from the Alzheimer's Association*

**KEEP IN TOUCH**