



July 24, 2023

"It's Summer, summer, summertime.
Time to sit back and unwind."
** DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince



Happy Summer,

The pace of my work in the spring and summer as your State Senator is much slower than the legislative session. However, like the flowers of this season, the work is varied, colorful and, requires maintenance and regular weeding.

It's been a while since I shared an update. All the happenings in June and July have kept us very focused and engaged in addressing a range of issues that affect our communities, leading and attending meetings, and taking time out to enjoy the many celebrations and special events the 43rd District has to offer.

There is way too much to describe in this update, but some highlights included: issuing statements supporting neighborhood challenges to the location of crematoriums and gas regulators, an organizational meeting for the AELR committee, reviewing agency regulations on topics like foster care, electric car charging stations and, of course, cannabis legalization. My team and I met with advocates and experts on challenges and opportunities relating to education, energy, and environmental policy and laws.

Other highlights included attending a foreign educational exchange with the Fujian Provincial Foreign Affairs Office, hosted by my former Senate colleague, Maryland Secretary of State Susan Lee. We marched beside Governor Moore in the pride parade, and rode Yama: a Tiny Japanese firetruck in the Towson Fourth of July parade.

While there is so much more I could share here about our summer activities, I will focus on federal, state, and local news that will give you a sense our work, and as well as provide you some information you may find interesting or helpful. **"And with a pen and pad I compose this rhyme, to hit you and to get you equipped for the summertime."****

In Partnership,

Do you have an issue or event or 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.



Events, Meetings & Speaking Engagements

LATE MAY

- Enoch Pratt Free Library's Career Online High School (COHS) 2023 Graduation

JUNE

- Baltimore County Delegation Breakfast with Count Executive
- Greater Baltimore Group Sierra Club meeting at Lake Roland
- Southern Regional Education Board & 72nd Annual Legislative Work Conference
- MDOT Red Line & East-West Transit Project Relaunch Announcement
- Chesapeake Climate Action Celebration: MD POWER Act
- Govans Ecumenical Development Corporation (GEDCO) Community



Dr. Senator Washington, at Enoch Pratt's Career Online High School

- Hub Ribbon Cutting & Open House
- Opening Remarks of Tri-State Association of Order of Elks of the World (IBPOEW) Convention
- Center for Diversity in Public Health Leadership at Kennedy Krieger Scholars Program
- Baltimore Annual Pride Parade & other LGBTQ+ Pride Celebrations.



Sen. Washington, wife Jodi and Governor Wes Moore at Baltimore Pride Parade



GEDCO Community Hub Ribbon Cutting & Open House (w Delegate Boyce, Councilman Conway.)



Baltimore City and Baltimore County State Delegations showing regional pride at the MDOT Red Line Relaunch Announcement

JULY

- Towson July 4th Parade
- Ednor Gardens/Lakeside Yard Sale & Ice Cream Social
- Baltimore County Young Democrats
- Baltimore City Delegation's Legislative Black Caucus Townhall



- Vice-President Kamala Harris Announcement, \$20 billion Clean Energy Financing Network, Coppin State University



Senator Washington, 43rd District Team and Yama, the little truck at the Towson July 4th Parade



Baltimore City Delegation - LBC of Maryland Town Hall, Coppin State University

OPENING OF THE DISTRICT 43 SENATE OFFICE OF SENATOR MARY WASHINGTON



A very special event that stole the show last week was the **Opening of the District 43 Senate Office!!** We are so pleased to announce that we are officially up and running Senator Washington's office along the York Road Corridor. We would love to host any group interested in a meeting and a tour at our new headquarters, please reach out to mary.washington@senate.state.md.us to learn more!

THE OFFICE OF SENATOR MARY WASHINGTON



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

LAW & POLICY UPDATES: ICYMI



MARYLAND UPDATES

GOVERNOR WES MOORE ISSUES EXECUTIVE ORDER.

On June 6th, Governor proclaimed Maryland a safe haven state for transgender individuals seeking gender-affirming health care. This executive order comes after the recent wave of legislation banning or restricting access to gender-affirming health care across the nation. In May, Moore signed the Trans Health Equity Act (SB460), requiring Medicaid to cover treatments deemed medically necessary. Combined with the executive order, social service and public health providers say Maryland is now on the map for those seeking safety. In the weeks following the order, **Baltimore Safe Haven** has received over 7,000 phone calls, mostly from out of state, seeking housing in Baltimore. Renee Lau, the organization's director of senior and disabled housing, said they typically get between 800 and 1,000 calls a month. You can learn how to support this important resource at donorbox.org/bmoresafehaven or baltimoresafehaven.org

GREAT NEWS FOR 529 PREPAID COLLEGE ACCOUNT HOLDERS!

On July 10th, Treasurer Davis announced that he will apply 6% earnings retroactive to the date of contribution for Maryland Prepaid College Trust (MPCT) accounts that were open and active on November 1, 2021. **Account holders are not required to file a claim.** The earnings will appear in the accounts once the system is updated by staff. The Treasurer's office has implemented a four-stage plan to improve the MPCT, including redefining the benefit plan for 2024, hiring new staff, enhancing communication with vendors and account holders, and bringing in a qualified third-party administrator for claims. (43rd District Delegate Cathi Forbes sponsored legislation (HB 1290), along with Senator Benson (SB 959) moving oversight of Maryland's Prepaid College Trust to the Treasurer's office.)

MD CANNABIS ADMINISTRATION EMERGENCY REGULATIONS

Last November, Marylanders voted in favor of legalizing marijuana for adults, and during this year's legislative session, the General Assembly passed the accompanying Cannabis Reform Act ([HB556/SB516](#)). **The Maryland Cannabis Administration** submitted Emergency Regulations to the Joint Committee on Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review (AELR), which were approved on June 23rd and took effect on July 1st, 2023, and will expire on June 30th, 2024. Learn more on the Administration's website: mmcc.maryland.gov/Pages/law.aspx.

BALTIMORE REGIONAL WATER TASKFORCE MEMBERS APPOINTED

On July 20th, The Governor and other state and local officials named members appointed to the Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task Force. The Task Force will be chaired by City Comptroller Bill Henry. The Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task Force was established under state law sponsored by Senator Charles Sydnor and Delegate Stephanie Smith to make recommendations to modernize the governance of the Baltimore region's water and wastewater utilities and help ensure residents efficiently, equitably, and sustainably receive high-quality water and sewerage services. The Education, Energy, and Environment Committee handles all utility-related legislation, and the Baltimore Regional Water Taskforce bill was heard, amended, and passed by the committee. Senator Washington looks forward to hearing from the unique perspectives and expertise of the 13 members of the task force and continuing our work together clean, affordable, and accessible water for all who are served by the system.

NEW LAWS IN EFFECT JULY 1

The Fair Wage Act of 2023

The Fair Wage Act of 2023, will increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour on January 1 of 2024. The law accelerates the increase two years ahead of schedule and will increase wages for approximately 163,000 workers. Raising wages for Maryland's lowest-paid workers will benefit children, families, and the state's economy.

Family Prosperity Act of 2023

Will lift at least 34,000 Maryland children to the next rung on the economic ladder and combat the root causes of child poverty. The new law permanently extends the Earned Income Tax Credit created by the legislature in 2020 and removes the \$530 cap for adults without qualifying children. Additionally, it expands the Child Tax Credit to cover all taxpayers who have children aged six and under who have a federally adjusted gross income of \$15,000 or less (up from \$6,000); the expansion retains credit for children over age six who are living with disabilities.

Maryland Educator Shortage Reduction Act of 2023

The Act provides a \$20,000 yearly stipend to eligible student teachers to address the state's teacher shortage. To qualify for the stipend, students must be enrolled in a teacher preparatory program and commit to work two years in a high-needs school in Maryland. It also requires the Higher Education Commission's Office of Student Financial Assistance to publicize the financial incentives at the state's four historically Black colleges and universities and to other students of color that are underrepresented in the teaching profession. The bill also includes financial assistance for mental health professionals who work in

schools for at least two years, and allows “eligible” prekindergarten providers to provide teacher preparation programs.

Child Victims Act of 2023

The Child Victims Act of 2023 entirely eliminates the statutes of limitations on reporting sexual abuse, allowing survivors to file a civil suit arising from allegations of child sexual abuse at any time. Maryland is the first state to pass a lookback period of indefinite duration.

The POWER (Promoting Offshore Wind Energy Resources) Act

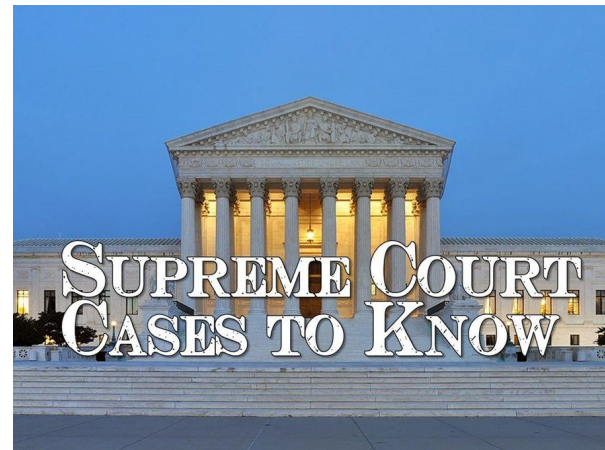
This bill sets a goal of producing 8.5 gigawatts of power from offshore wind by 2031. Maryland now has one of the largest offshore wind goals in the nation and will play a key role in achieving the **Biden Administration’s goal** of deploying 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030. Maryland’s POWER Act is projected to create **12,000** direct full-time equivalent jobs. The law also requires the study of the transmission of power from offshore energy to main power grids in Maryland.

Cannabis Reform Act

While the bill took May 3, 2023, The Maryland Cannabis Administration offered what I referred to as “safer, legal, tested cannabis to adults in Maryland beginning on July 1.” The Maryland Cannabis Administration approved 42 cultivators and manufacturers. **The following are the main provisions:**

- **Adults twenty-one or older may now possess up to 1.5 ounces of cannabis flower, twelve grams of concentrated cannabis, or a total amount of cannabis products that do not exceed 750 mg of THC.**
- **Adults may also grow two plants at home, out of public view, for recreational purposes. Marylanders can only consume cannabis on private property.**
- **Smoking or vaping of cannabis is prohibited in public places and motor vehicles.**
- **Like alcohol sales, Maryland law sets a 9% sales and use tax on sales of adult-use cannabis (although medical cannabis remains untaxed).**

The Maryland Cannabis Administration anticipates the industry will see a staggering \$600 million in retail sales during the first year and that the state will take in approximately \$54 million. These funds will cover government oversight costs, and some will be allocated for community reinvestment and public health initiatives through the Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund. These Funds are to be directed toward community organizations in neighborhoods disproportionately affected by marijuana arrests and must be used for neighborhood-based initiatives.



SUPREME COURT RULINGS

Dobbs: One Year and Counting

June 24, 2023, marked the one-year anniversary of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*. The decision overturned the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision protecting the right to choose in all 50 States. Many legal experts say that the decision fundamentally changed the reproductive healthcare landscape across the country. Moreover, undoing a constitutional right that has been in place for nearly half a century may prove to be the most consequential Supreme Court decision of this generation.

SCOTUS JUNE 2023

The Supreme Court issued its biggest decisions of the term during the month of June.

VOTING RIGHTS & REDISTRICTING: *Allen, Alabama Secretary Of State, Et Al. V. Milligan Et Al.*

On June 8th, Justices rejected effort to weaken the landmark Voting Rights Act by ruling in favor of Black voters in Alabama in a congressional redistricting case. The Court upholds provision prohibiting racial gerrymandering and reaffirmed the court’s 1986 precedent interpreting how legislative districts must be drawn under the landmark voting rights act, as amended in 1982. The state, where more than 24% of voters identify as African-American. Alabama is required to redraw its congressional districts in a way that ensures all eligible voters are able to exercise their constitutional right to vote free from discrimination based on their race.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: *Students for Fair Admissions v. U of North Carolina*

In a major reversal, the Supreme Court struck down affirmative action policies at colleges and universities that use race as a factor in deciding who is admitted. The ruling on June 29th officially ended affirmative action in college admissions by banning race-conscious admissions in both private and public institutions. While the ruling will force many universities, including their law and medical schools, to change admissions policies, it won’t prevent them from pursuing diversity or giving extra consideration to students who have overcome hardships or discrimination.

STUDENT LOANS: *State of Nebraska, et al v. Joseph Biden, Jr., et al*

On June 30th, the Supreme Court held that the Secretary of Education does not have the authority under the HEROES Act to cancel roughly \$430 billion in student debt. Maryland ranks second highest in the nation for student debt. This impacts the over 800,000 Marylanders holding student debt, totaling around \$34.5 billion.

LGBTQ DISCRIMINATION: *Creative LLC v. Elenis*

In its June 30th ruling the Supreme Court ruled that businesses have a first-amendment right to refuse service to couples, despite state laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, gender, and sexual orientation. The Court sided with a web designer in Colorado who refuse to design wedding websites for same-sex couples despite a state law that forbids discrimination against gay people. Dissenting justices called the majority decision a “license to discriminate.”

STATE POLICY WITH LOCAL IMPACTS

Greater Govans Neighbors Continue Challenge to Crematorium

The number of crematoriums in Maryland has been increasing steadily every year, according to MDE, which regulates crematoriums' emissions through the department's air permitting and compliance programs. As a former member of the Baltimore City Commission on Sustainability, Senator Washington has had a longstanding interest and history of advocating for a cleaner environment for more than a decade. In her role as a member of EEE (formerly EHE) she has focused on environmental policy and social justice as it relates to air and water quality. Toward the end of the 2021 session, members of the Govans and Mid-Govans community reached to the 43rd District Delegation about an application by an existing funeral home in their neighborhood to add a crematory incinerator to their facility.

After learning about Vaughn Greene's request to build a crematory incinerator in their community, residents of the surrounding neighborhoods signed a petition, asking MDE to either deny the permit, or if it grants the permit that it would be with conditions — such as having the crematorium at another location or putting it at least 1,000 feet from a residence. There have been a number of efforts by the community including a "petition for judicial review" on the BMZA's 2022 decision to allow the application for a crematorium. The Judge in the case upheld the Zoning Board's decision on May 16th, 2023. Subsequently, the proprietors of the establishment have filed for an air quality permit, and the residents have filed an appeal in this case.

On June 6, 2023, Senator Washington issued the following statement regarding these events.

"As the elected representative of the affected areas within the 43rd State Legislative District, I join with concerned residents, and the members of the York Road Partnership—a coalition of over twenty neighborhoods, churches, and community associations encompassing areas from Cedarcroft to Pen Lucy who continue to have grave concerns about the placement of a human crematorium at this location due to the detrimental health impacts this facility will add to the already overburdened health status of the thousands of families, children, and elders living in the majority-black, working class communities surrounding Vaughn Greene Funeral Services' York Road location.... You can read my full statement [HERE](#).

We continue to advocate on behalf of the community and will keep you updated on any progress we make.

Maryland Public Service Commission to Hold Hearing on BGE External Regulators

Residents across Baltimore (including the 43rd District) have expressed concern about BGE's project to replace more than 11,200 indoor gas regulators with external ones by the end of 2031. Citing the safety of external regulators if cars and scooters crash and other matters, residents of South and West Baltimore have entered into a lawsuit. In response a Baltimore City Circuit Court judge has issued a 60-day restraining order prohibiting BGE from installing external regulators and cutting gas service to homes whose owners do not consent to the regulators. The Circuit Court has postponed the hearing for this case until September.



On July 6th, Senator Washington issued a statement regarding the ongoing installations of external gas regulators in Maryland:

"My office has been contacted by affected individuals, concerned constituents, community and association leaders in the 43rd District regarding BGE's installation of external gas regulators in our residential neighborhoods." [Read the full statement HERE](#)

Because the Maryland Public Service Commission regulates utilities and oversees BGE, it has opened a proceeding to consider the relocation of gas service regulators in the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company's service territory. **The Commission will hold a hearing on Tuesday, August 15, 2023 at 10 a.m. in the Frank O. Heintz Hearing Room, 16th Floor, William Donald Schaefer Tower, 6 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, Maryland. Instructions on how to file public comment can be found [HERE](#).**

CONSTITUENT RESOURCES & SERVICES

2023 Fearless Strivers Grant Contest

Black women-owned businesses are vital to our economy yet receive less than one percent of venture capital funding. Fearless Fund is deepening its commitment to this community with the launch of the 2023 Fearless Strivers Grant Contest. With Mastercard prizing, we'll be awarding four lucky small businesses across the country with \$20,000 grants, digital tools to help them grow their business online, and mentorship so they can continue to bolster their business. There are four entry periods throughout the year.

See Program Eligibility and Application Here : https://fearlessfund.smapply.io/prog/2023_fearless_strivers_grant_contest/

The Bmore Connected Campaign

An Abell Foundation report found that 40% of Baltimore households do not have wireline internet access or experience multiple disruptions in service due to inability to pay. The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) provides eligible Baltimore City households with \$30/month toward home internet services? ACP makes internet free with some plans. Check eligibility by calling (877) 384-2575 to reach the ACP/FCC support center to retrieve a paper application. Households with internet may also visit bit.ly/bmoreconnected2.

Constituent Services: HOW CAN 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? Hop on our [website](#) and fill out our contact form and we will get back to you as soon as we can!

Community and Legislative Affairs Coordinator, Dustin Branch.

43RD DISTRICT COMMUNITY BOARD



BALTIMORE RESTAURANT WEEK
SUMMER 2023
JULY 21 - JULY 30

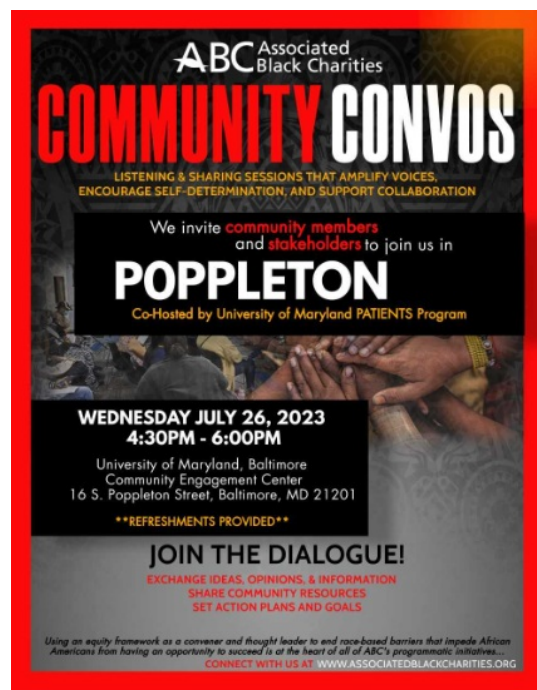
BRUNCH, LUNCH & DINNER STARTING AT \$15, \$25, \$35

VISIT BALTIMORE
 HOME CENTER & SUPPLY CO., INC. FOUNDED 1946
 BaltimoreRestaurantWeek.com



Gardening Tips with Senator Washington

A season for squash (and many other fruits and vegetables) is upon us! In the midst of the incredible rainfall we have been having, my garden has been flourishing. I would definitely recommend planting squash this summer, as it grows like a weed and will give you fresh vegetables all season. Another great fruit to grow right now is blueberries - but learn from my mistakes, and always put a net over your plants so that you are the one enjoying the sweets, and not the birds!



ABC Associated Black Charities
COMMUNITY CONVOS
 LISTENING & SHARING SESSIONS THAT AMPLIFY VOICES, ENCOURAGE SELF-DETERMINATION, AND SUPPORT COLLABORATION

We invite **community members** and **stakeholders** to join us in **POPPLETON**
 Co-Hosted by University of Maryland PATIENTS Program

WEDNESDAY JULY 26, 2023
4:30PM - 6:00PM
 University of Maryland, Baltimore
 Community Engagement Center
 16 S. Poppleton Street, Baltimore, MD 21201
****REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED****

JOIN THE DIALOGUE!
 EXCHANGE IDEAS, OPINIONS, & INFORMATION
 SHARE COMMUNITY RESOURCES
 SET ACTION PLANS AND GOALS

Using an equity framework as a convenor and thought leader to end race-based barriers that impede African Americans from having an opportunity to succeed is at the heart of all of ABC's programmatic initiatives.
 CONNECT WITH US AT: WWW.ASSOCIATEDBLACKCHARITIES.ORG



Application Opens June 20, 2023

Does your organization have an idea that will spruce up the neighborhood but you need a little funding to make it happen? If so, consider applying for Love Your Block microgrant, ranging from \$500- \$1500

Grant Examples:

- Community Sign Restoration
- Tree Pit Makeovers
- Small Public Art Projects

For More Information:
www.ecb.baltimorecity.gov/bmore-beautiful
 Email: BMOREBeautiful@baltimorecity.gov



EVERYDAY FIELD TRIPS
 FOR PARENTS THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER

Free Always
 Baltimore Museum of Art
 Walters Art Museum

Free on Fridays
 Reginald F Lewis Museum- free Fridays 10-2
 American Visionary Art Museum- free on Fridays



Activate Your Space
 Enhance & Protect Your Greenspace

What is Active Your Space Grant?
 Activate Your Space is a grant opportunity that supports community organizations utilizing CEPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) techniques and strategies to protect and activate greenspaces into usable community assets.

Grant funding up to \$20,000 to support CEPTED influenced lot transformations.

Strategies to Consider

- Define Territory
- Control Access
- Maintain Image/Purpose
- Natural Surveillance
- Positive Activities
- Community Connectivity

Request for Proposals Open: July 5, 2023

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

Submit it online anytime at www.senatormarywashington.com or please email us at mary.washington@state.senate.md.us, or call our office at (410) 841-3476.

That's all for now folks! Please reach out anytime. Happy Summer from Senator Washington and her team!



