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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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Highlights of the 2019 Session of the Maryland General Assembly

Dear Neighbors and Friends,

Our 188-member citizen legislature recently adjourned after our annual 90-day session. I thought you might appreciate a quick rundown of this year's legislative accomplishments and how they will impact the quality of life in Annapolis, Arnold, Edgewater, and throughout Maryland.

Before doing so, I want to say how grateful I am to have known and worked with Speaker Mike Busch. He gave his all, every day, for us, the people of Annapolis and of Maryland. He exuded love – love for his family, for public service, for our state, for the House of Delegates, and for his job leading the House. I will do my best to honor his memory by continuing to work my hardest for the people of District 30A and to further the causes for which he dedicated his career, including the environment, education, and the arts.

Speaker Busch appointed me to the House Ways and Means Committee, where I serve on both the Education Subcommittee and the Election Law Subcommittee. I was asked by the Anne Arundel County Delegation to serve as the chairperson of our Capital Bonds Subcommittee. This leadership role gave me a firsthand look at some truly incredible work being done in our community and enabled me, in partnership with Speaker Busch and Senator Elfreth, to help bring hundreds of thousands of state dollars to nonprofits working in our district.

I'm grateful to you for entrusting me to represent our community's shared values in our legislature. In addition to getting to work every day with Speaker Busch, it was also an honor to work alongside Senator Elfreth. Together, the three of us helped pass significant legislation that will make real, positive changes for Maryland. There were a whopping 2,499 bills introduced this session. As always, most did not make it all the way through the legislative process. Some of the key bills that did make it through are highlighted below.

Balancing the Budget

The legislature passed a balanced budget that invests \$46.6 billion in protecting and promoting our high quality of life in Maryland, including:

- A total of \$7.0 billion for our public elementary, middle and high schools, the largest commitment to K-12 education in state history. Aid to our local schools will increase by 7.5% compared to last year.
- An investment of \$500 million in the operating budget for school construction.
- More than \$110 million additional state support for four-year colleges, which will prevent significant tuition increases, and more than \$8.6 million additional support for community colleges.
- More than \$4.6 billion in the capital budget for road repairs, library and hospital construction, and other projects that improve our quality of life and create jobs in the state's construction industry.

Strengthening Our Schools

In addition to the record investment in our schools, we passed other important education legislation as well. Key education bills that I was proud to support include:

- ***The Education Blueprint for Maryland's Future:*** This bill includes funding to raise teacher pay, expand opportunities for non-college bound students, increase access to full-day pre-K, and to hire mental health coordinators in our local schools. It is the first in a series of bills that will bring to life the

recommendations of Kirwan Commission, a bipartisan group of experts that worked for over two years to study best practices of states that outperform Maryland, and of countries that outperform the U.S. on international assessments. The goal of their work was to develop a detailed plan for making Maryland's schools world-class for all students. I was pleased that four of my amendments were included in the final bill. My amendments will improve professional development for teachers, increase student access to early college/dual enrollment programs in high schools, ensure restorative practice coaches are adequately trained, and make sure the meals provided to students in community schools are healthy and nutritious.

- ***P-Tech Expansion Act of 2019:*** This bill expands the successful Pathways in Technology Early College High (P-TECH) program, which brings public schools together with a local community college and a local business to give students the opportunity to graduate from high school with a high school degree *and* Associate's degree. Thanks to this law, more students will now have alternative paths to the workplace other than four-year colleges.
- ***Safe Schools Act of 2019:*** This bill establishes the Safe Schools Maryland program within the Maryland Center for School Safety. It will establish procedures for anonymous reporting of behaviors that cause concern, are dangerous, violent, or unlawful. Other states that have created similar tip lines report that they have been successful in preventing both student suicides and school shootings.
- ***Local School Calendar Choice:*** This legislation allows county boards of education to choose the start and end dates for their school year. I supported this legislation due to concerns I heard from parents and teachers about the Governor's 2016 mandate that required all schools start after Labor Day and end by June 15. In Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS), this has led to a shorter Spring Break and the elimination of some professional development days that are important to teachers. AACPS could still choose to start school after Labor Day but it will be their decision moving forward.

Protecting the Environment

We made great progress in protecting the environment and addressing climate change. Bills passed – all of which I strongly supported – include:

- ***Clean Energy Jobs Act:*** This bill is a huge step in the battle against climate change. It increases the State's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) from 25 percent by 2020 to 50 percent by 2030, and makes other changes that will help to preserve and create jobs in the clean energy sector, while also reducing Maryland's reliance on fossil fuels.
- ***Oyster Tributary Sanctuary Protection:*** This landmark legislation, sponsored by Speaker Busch, takes the bold action necessary to save our precious oyster population in the Chesapeake Bay. Oyster populations are at an all-time low; just 2 percent of historic levels. This bill will protect the significant public investments that have been made in support of five large-scale restoration projects by making them off-limits to oyster harvesting forever.
- ***Forest Conservation Task Force:*** This bill creates an in-depth Maryland Task Force that will quantify forest loss, address future deforestation, and make recommendations to prevent forest loss without overly disrupting growth and development. The Task Force will include a diverse group of stakeholders and will create recommendations for improving forest outcomes, including avoiding loss and improving maintenance for healthy forests.
- ***Polystyrene Ban:*** Maryland passed the first-in-the-nation statewide polystyrene ban, which prohibits the sale of food or beverages in expanded polystyrene food service products on or after July 1, 2020. Polystyrene, also known as Styrofoam, is a major pollution risk for people and marine life. The hazardous material absorbs more chemicals from the water than any other plastic and exposes fish to unsafe levels of pesticides and fertilizers. The ban and enforcement provisions are an important first step in reducing the trash contaminating our waterways.

Preventing Gun Violence

I am deeply disappointed that we did not make the progress I had hoped for regarding gun violence prevention. Two bills that passed the House with my strong support stalled in the Senate. First was the bill to ban the creation, sale or possession of 3D printed guns. Second was a bill to close a loophole in the background check process for private rifle and shotgun sales that would have ensured many additional background checks take place while exempting transfers between family members, antique firearm

collectors, or hunting as long as the owner of the firearm is present. That said, we did make some progress in making Maryland safer.

- **Eliminate Handgun Review Board:** Maryland's Handgun Review Board, which is comprised of political appointees, has overturned State Police decisions at a record rate, issuing concealed carry permits to many individuals the police say should not have a gun. This legislation disbands the Handgun Review Board and, instead, sends appeals of rejected concealed carry permits to the State Police's Office of Administrative Hearings. I prefer for law enforcement professionals – rather than political appointees – to make these decisions on a case-by-case basis.

Improving Healthcare

We passed several noteworthy healthcare bills, including the following:

- **Prescription Drug Review Board:** This bill makes Maryland the first state in the country to create a state Prescription Drug Affordability Board to reduce the cost of high-priced prescription drugs in Maryland. The first step is for the board to examine the cost of different drugs and determine at what price they are affordable to everyone who needs it. Later, the board may begin to set upper payment limits for the price of a prescription drug. Additional legislation may be required.
- **Maryland Health Insurance Option:** This bipartisan legislation establishes Maryland's Easy Enrollment Health Program, a simple, seamless system for enrolling uninsured Marylanders into free or low cost health insurance coverage by adding a checkbox on state income tax returns. This new system will allow an estimated 50,000 Marylanders who qualify for Medicaid be enrolled automatically. I am proud that Maryland will become the first state in the country to implement this program allowing families to use tax information to qualify for health programs.
- **Opioid Restitution Fund:** This bill creates a special state fund for any money received by the state from legal judgements or settlements against an opioid manufacturer. This bill was important to me because this dedicated fund will ensure money recovered from those shown to be responsible for this epidemic is used to fund opioid treatment and recovery programs.

Strengthening the Economy

Maryland became the 5th state to pass a \$15 minimum wage, which will be phased in over six years.

- **Minimum Wage:** This bill will gradually increase Maryland's minimum wage to \$15/hour by January 1, 2025. More than 573,000 working Marylanders – roughly one-fifth of our state's workforce – will get a pay raise, and nearly 273,000 Maryland children will benefit from increased family income. The law includes a provision supported by many small businesses that creates a new "youth wage" of 85 percent of minimum wage for workers under the age of 18. I heard from many tipped employees who wanted to continue to receive tips rather than switch to a flat hourly rate. Their concerns were addressed by amendments that increased
- the cash minimum wage for tipped employees to \$3.63/hour while requiring the employer to pay the difference when the cash wage plus tips don't equal the minimum wage.

My Bills

In addition to the four amendments I successfully added to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. I was the primary sponsor or a leading cosponsor of several bills that made it to the Governor's desk, including:

- **Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for Annapolis:** Speaker Busch and I introduced the House bill, and Senator Elfreth introduced the Senate bill, which ensures that Annapolis will receive \$750,000 per year, every year, from the state for services used by the Maryland General Assembly since the Annapolis doesn't receive taxes on state properties. The \$750,000 will be adjusted for inflation starting in fiscal year 2022. In previous years the state has paid the city of Annapolis \$367,000 so this is a big win for our district.
- **Maryland Green Schools Act of 2019:** In an effort to build the next generation of environmental stewards, it is important to improve our students' access to environmental education opportunities. I was excited to be the chief House sponsor of the Maryland Green Schools Act of 2019, which will provide funding for schools that want to become "Green Schools" and to assist with transportation and teacher development costs associated with promoting environmental education. This bill was passed by both the House and Senate, and Governor Hogan is expected to sign it into law.
- **Human Trafficking Prevention:** In light of reports that human sex trafficking is on the rise in Maryland, I was one of several delegates to introduce anti-human sex trafficking legislation. The

Judiciary Committee merged provisions from our smaller bills into one large bill before passing it unanimously. The merged bill expands prohibitions on human sex trafficking, and makes this offense a felony rather than misdemeanor to deter trafficking in our state. Human trafficking is a widespread, but under-recognized crime, so I am very pleased that this bill was passed.

- **Freedom of the Press Day:** I was the primary House sponsor for this bill, which establishes Freedom of the Press Day on June 28th each year to honor our five local journalists, Gerald Fischman, Rob Hiaasen, John McNamara, Rebecca Smith, and Wendi Winters, who died upholding the First Amendment. We will honor them, their service, their profession, and our commitment to do everything in our power to try to prevent gun violence. This new law is no substitute for stronger legislation to prevent gun violence and I hope is that this day will remind us to continue to take more action until our workplaces, neighborhoods, and places of worship are safe from gun violence.

Bringing State Dollars to Our District

We are fortunate to have many incredible organizations working tirelessly on behalf of people in our district. Speaker Busch, Senator Elfreth, and I together helped secure hundreds of thousands of dollars in state funding for many local nonprofits that serve our community, including Annapolis Maritime Museum, Arundel Lodge, Bates Middle School (for outdoor improvements), Chesapeake Regional Adaptive Boating (CRAB) Center, City of Annapolis for flood mitigation, Deale Volunteer Fire Department, Historic Annapolis Museum, John Marshall Park, Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts, Newtowne Community Resource Center, the Ralph J. Bunche Community Center, and the Summit School.

Finally, a big shout-out to Senator Elfreth for a successful first session. In addition to the PILOT and Freedom of the Press Day bills, her legislative accomplishments included:

- **Oyster Fishery Management Plan:** This bill represents a true compromise that brought watermen, environmental groups, and a bipartisan group of legislators to the table for stakeholder-led, consensus-driven legislation to solve a generations-old challenge to save one of Maryland's greatest natural resources: the Eastern Oyster. Specifically, this bill will take the politics out of oyster restoration by using a professional facilitator and consensus-building tactics to bring watermen and scientists to the table and determine a Fisheries Management Plan that benefits everyone and restores one of our greatest natural resources.
- **University of Maryland Board of Regents – Transparency and Oversight:** When the Board makes missteps that lead to a breakdown in that public trust, as it did last fall, the General Assembly has an obligation to step in. This bill would require more accountability and transparency from the Board in governing our higher education system by implementing a wide array of reforms including; requiring the vote totals and motions to be provided in publically available meeting minutes, requiring the livestreaming of the Board meetings, requiring the ability for public comment in the meetings, requiring the Chair of the Board to be confirmed by the Senate, as well as other things.

Thank you for engaging in the legislative process by contacting me with your thoughts on the issues that matter most to you. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me any time you have questions about legislative issues or when there are other ways I can be helpful as your representative. Please also consider connecting with me on Facebook (www.facebook.com/DelegateAliceCain) and Twitter (@AliceJCain). No matter where you are along the political spectrum, I am eager to work together to improve the quality of life in our district, county, and state. I look forward to seeing you around the district soon!

My best wishes.



Alice Cain
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District 30A