



MARYLAND SENATOR ROGER MANNO

2017 Report of the Maryland General Assembly

The 2017 legislative session of the Maryland General Assembly began on Wednesday, January 11, and adjourned *Sine Die* at midnight on Monday, April 10. During the 90-day session, the legislature considered nearly 3,000 bills, and passed a balanced budget. I am proud of our work in the General Assembly, and the collaborative role that my office played in making progress for our community, our county, and our great state.

LEGISLATIVE APPOINTMENTS

Since my swearing-in to the Senate of Maryland in 2011, I have served as one of three Senators from Montgomery County on the Budget and Taxation Committee, and as a member of its subcommittees on Health and Human Services, and Pensions. In addition, I am honored to serve as Senate Chair of the Spending Affordability Committee (SAC), and as Senate Chair of the Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review Committee (AELR). This year, I was honored to be appointed *Senate Majority Whip*, and was re-elected by the Montgomery County Senators to continue serving as *Vice Chair* of Montgomery County's Senate Delegation for a third year.

Beyond these appointments, I am also pleased to continue my work on the Joint Committee on Federal Relations, and as the Senate Chair of the State Advisory Council on Quality Care at the End of Life. These appointments allow me to pursue improvements in the health care system and reform of our labor laws, which are among the issues that I care most deeply about. I was also selected to serve as a member on the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council, on the Health Policy Committee of the Council of State Governments, and as a member of both the General Assembly's Joint Committee on Pensions, and the Legislative Policy Committee.

Chair of the Spending Affordability Committee: The Spending Affordability Committee is integral to the State's budget process. This committee has a statutory responsibility to analyze state revenues and expenditures in order to limit the rate of growth of state spending to a level that does not exceed the rate of growth of our state's economy. The Committee recommends annual spending levels, the appropriate levels of new debt authorizations, overall levels of state personnel, and the appropriate use of all budget surpluses. This year, I led the committee in mitigating the impact of revenue volatility on the State budget, maintaining a minimum balance of at least \$100 million in the General Fund for fiscal 2018, and maintaining an overall governmental workforce of 80,323 public employees.

Chair of the Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review Committee (AELR): The Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review Committee is the regulatory committee in the legislature, and periodically reviews and evaluates existing regulations and implementation of specific legislation by State agencies. In addition, the Committee may inquire into any alleged failure of a State government officer or employee to comply with Maryland statutory or constitutional law. As Senate Chair of AELR, I led the committee in “holding” or stopping misguided regulations on a range of issues, including regulations to undermine unemployment insurance and severance pay, as established in the Workplace Fraud Protection Act of 2009, and regulations that would have allowed natural gas drilling (“fracking”), among many others.

Senate Majority Whip: In my first legislative session as *Majority Whip*, I was proud to assist in obtaining the necessary votes to guarantee a veto-proof, “super majority” to pass the *Healthy Working Families Act* for paid sick leave, and the necessary votes to override Governor Hogan’s vetoes of the *Clean Energy Jobs Act*, and the *Protect Our Schools Act of 2017* against privatizing underperforming schools.

A BALANCED BUDGET BLUEPRINT FOR CONTINUED PROGRESS

As a state, we met our constitutional mandate to balance the budget while working to protect vulnerable populations and maintain our critical investments. This year's \$43.5 billion State Operating Budget and \$4.5 billion Capital Budget represents a significant blueprint towards financial stability and progress – leaving more than \$860 million in the Rainy Day Fund, and an additional \$100.2 million General Fund balance. Overall, the budget grew by a fiscally responsible 1.4% - well below the 4.85% limit recommended by the Spending Affordability Committee.

As a member of the Budget and Taxation Committee, I joined my colleagues in restoring a 3.5% rate increase for providers serving Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Last year, I wrote to Governor Hogan requesting a \$1 million appropriation to reestablish and fund the *Partnership for Workforce Quality (PWQ)* program at the Maryland Department of Commerce, to provide workforce training grants in the manufacturing sector. I am pleased to report that these funds are now included in the State Budget.

WINS FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY

As one of three Senators representing Montgomery County on the Budget and Taxation Committee, I was pleased to partner with my colleagues to secure increases in funding for Montgomery County in 2017. This includes:

- \$780,571,000 in direct State aid for our county
- \$167,701,000 in local retirement contributions
- \$688,909,000 for education
- \$49,784,000 for community colleges
- \$3,120,000 for libraries
- \$3,968,000 for health care
- \$16,126,000 for public safety
- \$10,203,000 for transportation

WINS FOR THE 19th DISTRICT

This year, Montgomery County received \$194,708,698 in capital project funding, including projects in the 19th District. I partnered with our 19th District Delegates – Bonnie Cullison, Ben Kramer and Maricé Morales – to secure funding for capital improvement projects that provide public facilities and access for the 19th District. These projects are:

- \$150,000 for partial roof replacement in public community areas of the Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy in Aspen Hill;
- \$50,000 for renovations to the public social hall at Young Israel Shomrai Emunah in Kemp Mill.

2017 LEGISLATION

This year, I was proud to partner with constituents and stakeholder advocacy groups to advance new policies that will improve our state and our district. For a complete list of bills, please visit the Maryland General Assembly website (<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov>).

Less Testing, More Learning Act of 2017 (SB 452 / HB 461): The exorbitant and ultimately unproductive standardized testing requirements is a serious and pervasive problem that hinders the progress of our children and teachers in our K-12 education system. That’s why I authored and passed Senate Bill 452 – *Education – Education Accountability Program – Limits on Testing*, which drastically reduces onerous testing time by setting a statewide maximum amount of hours for the administration of district, state and federal mandated tests to 2.2% of a school year’s instruction time. I was particularly honored to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with National Education Association (NEA) President Lily Eskelsen Garcia, Maryland State Education Association President Betty Weller, House sponsor Delegate Eric Leudtke, and hundreds of state education leaders who worked tirelessly through the 90-day session to get this groundbreaking legislation passed into law.

Revenue Estimates and State Budget Projections (SB 371 / HB 503): For as long as anyone can remember, Maryland government has struggled to balance its budget just like families and businesses do every year: by knowing how much money is coming in, so that responsible spending decisions can be made as to how much money can go out. It’s been a serious problem that has led to a vicious, year-after-year, cycle in which state revenues are over-estimated at the beginning of the budget process, resulting in huge shortfalls later in the year, which necessitate enormous mid-year cuts to health, education, public safety and environmental services throughout government. That’s why, as the recently appointed Senate Chair of Spending Affordability Committee, I called for reforms of the Board of Revenue Estimates, and introduced Senate Bill 371 - *State Budget - Appropriations - Income Tax Revenue Estimate Cap and Revenue Stabilization Account*, to finally address the underlying structural problem. This legislation now mitigates the impact of revenue volatility on the State budget. Specifically, it establishes a new methodology for estimating nonwithholding revenues, creates a new “Fiscal Responsibility Fund,” increases Rainy Day fund balances, and dramatically increases capital school construction funding.

Statewide Fracking Ban (HB 1325): There is no way to extract natural gas from Marcellus Shale deposits, while protecting public health and safety, and guaranteeing good, high-paying, Maryland jobs. That is why, as Chair of the Joint Committee on Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review Committee, I put a “hold” on the Governor’s regulations on fracking, which was a key factor in the eventual statewide ban on fracking. I am pleased to report that House Bill 1325 - *Oil and Natural Gas - Hydraulic Fracturing – Prohibition* passed and was signed by the Governor. Many thanks to the hard work of stakeholders, including Engage Mountain Maryland, Food and Water Watch, Citizen Shale, Earthworks, Sierra Club Maryland, and League of Conservation Voters of Maryland.

Clean Cars Act of 2017 (SB 393): Incentivizing the purchase of electric vehicles is an important tool in reducing emissions and gas consumption, while also providing consumers with a more reliable and cheaper way to power their cars. That’s why I passed legislation in 2014 that restructured the Electric Vehicle Recharging Equipment Rebate Program and the Excise Tax Credit for plug-in electric vehicles, and why I passed Senate Bill 393 – *Clean Cars Act of 2017* this year, to reauthorize and improve that program through fiscal year 2020.

Hate Crime Security Grant Program for Schools and Day Care Centers (SB 1191 / HB 1661): Over the past few months, incidents of hate speech and hate crimes have increased nationally and across the state. As the number of these reports rise, government has a responsibility to protect the families and communities we serve, with every available resource and tool at our disposal. That’s why I introduced and passed Senate Bill 1191 - *Schools and Child Care Centers – State Grant Program – Security Upgrades for Facilities at Risk of Hate Crimes or Attacks*. This legislation authorizes the Maryland Center for School Safety to make grants to schools and child care centers determined to be at risk of hate crimes or attacks, for security-related technology and facility upgrades, and security personnel. I’m especially thankful to the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), Baltimore Jewish Council, Orthodox Union, Al-Huda School, United Maryland Muslim Council, and Maryland Parents for Education for their advocacy on this legislation.

Bicyclist and Pedestrian Safety (SB 337 / HB 527, SB 338 / HB 578): The pedestrian crossing at Turkey Branch Parkway and Veirs Mill Road in Rockville is one of the most dangerous intersections in Montgomery County. Two young men – Frank Towers and Oscar Osorio – have died in the past two years, trying to cross Veirs Mill Road on their bikes. I introduced Senate Bill 337 – *Vehicle Laws – Bicycles and Pedestrians – Use of Crosswalks* to give bicyclists like Frank Towers and Oscar Osorio the same right-of-way as pedestrians in a crosswalk. I also introduced Senate Bill 338 - *Vehicle Laws – Pedestrian Hybrid Signals* to authorize the use of pedestrian hybrid signals on Maryland roadways, and passed *Senate Bill 142 – Task Force to Study Bicycle Safety on Maryland Highways*. Thanks to the tireless advocacy and hard work of Bike Maryland, Potomac Peddlers, Bike AAA, Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), and the testimony of Frank Tower’s friend, Alyx Walker, there will be a pedestrian hybrid signal at Veirs Mill Road and Turkey Branch Parkway. I am hopeful that this signal will help save lives.

Civil Penalties on EZPass Tolls (SB 139 / HB 963): In the past year, my office has received dozens of cases of registered vehicle owners accruing exorbitant and punitive civil penalties on unpaid video tolls as they travel the Intercounty Connector on their way to work and school. Deep in debt collection, these Montgomery County residents have been financially jeopardized

by steep fines that accrue as a result of not receiving proper notification in the mail, problems with credit card processing, a lack of customer service from the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA), and faulty EZPass transponders. I authored Senate Bill 139 - *Maryland Transportation Authority - Video Tolls – Collection* to reduce civil penalties on unpaid video tolls, and help hardworking, middle class families. In addition, I followed-up by testifying before the MDTA Board of Directors to plead the case of the many Marylanders caught in this punitive and predatory toll penalty scheme. Although Senate Bill 139 didn't pass, it has pressured MDTA to begin overhauling its customer service and report to its board of directors on the myriad of problems with video tolls and civil penalties. I'm especially thankful to Rev. Kenneth Nelson and the many District 19 constituents who came to testify for this legislation, as well as Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition, and Maryland CASH Campaign for their untiring work on behalf of consumers.

Open Meetings Act (SB 450 / HB 880): Transparency and accountability in government is crucial to building and preserving the public's trust in government. In order to strengthen this transparency and accountability, I partnered with Delegate Maricé Morales to author a new law that substantially strengthens the Open Meetings Act by requiring training, oversight, and accountability in governmental proceedings. Thanks to the work of our coalition partners, Common Cause Maryland, Maryland Association of Counties (MACo), MDDC Press Association, and Maryland Municipal League (MML).

Attendance Policy for Pregnant and Parenting Students (SB 232 / HB 616): Young women who are pregnant or parenting are often hindered in their potential to learn as many schools in Maryland do not provide proper resources or support when these students need excused absences for medical appointments or to care for their children. When excused absences from school are not meaningfully established, and students' rights to a full high school education are not clearly communicated by staff, these students may perceive being unwelcomed, thereby forcing them to drop out, which triggers a truancy investigation. That's why I partnered with NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland to pass Senate Bill 232 – *Education – Pregnant and Parenting Students – Attendance Policy*, which creates an attendance policy in schools for pregnant and parenting students for their medical and legal appointments. Many thanks to the Maryland Catholic Conference, Women's Law Center of Maryland, Advocates for Children and Youth, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists for their support.

ADVICE AND CONSENT OF KEY GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENTS

The Maryland Constitution (Articles II and III) gives broad "Advise and Consent" powers to the Senate of Maryland over gubernatorial appointments. As in previous years, I supported many key appointments including those pertaining to the Governor's Cabinet, the judiciary, and boards and commissions. I was particularly honored to approve the appointments of the following 19th District residents: David Cox to the State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners; Linnette Rivera to the Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers; David Edimo to the State Board of Education; and Vikki Porter to the Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

SPECIAL MENTIONS AND NOTABLE MARYLANDERS

We were pleased this year to welcome many Montgomery County High School students who served in Annapolis this past session as Legislative Pages. Thanks to the students who served in the House: Joy London, Devon Blackwell, Julia Jacobson, Scott Sledjeski, Meagan Collins (District 19), Mikaylah Sayles, Michael Blakeslee, Rashid Haddad, Heven Haile, and Anais Tana. The students who served in the Senate were: Adam Schneider (District 19), Spencer Regan, Jackson Malmgren and Alexandra Romano.

SENATOR ROGER MANNO SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOLARSHIP

I am pleased to continue to offer my unique Special Needs Scholarship, which has awarded more than \$400,000 in scholarships to residents of the 19th District. Awarded in partnership with the *Montgomery County Collaborative Council for Children, Youth and Families*, these scholarships provide students with the financial resources they need to attend an institution of higher education in Maryland. I would like to extend special thanks to Ms. Alicia Church for her outstanding service and hard work to make this program possible. The deadline to apply for scholarships is June 1, 2017. For more information or to receive an application, please contact my Annapolis office.

OUR SENATE OFFICE

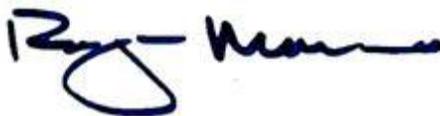
Special thanks to our Chief of Staff, Ruthie Herman, and our Legislative Director, Katie Mullen. We were also joined this year by Emily Cruikshank and Patricia Tuon, Legal Externs from the University of Baltimore School of Law, Jake Dunn of Springbrook High School in Silver Spring, and Dylan Laconich, a senior at Broadneck High School in Annapolis. Thank you for your hard work.

My Senate office staff and I take great pride in the work that we do to improve the lives of those we represent. We consider our Senate office to be a “help office” – providing a range of services to assist you and our community, including assistance with state agencies, capital funding (bond bills), information and briefings on pending legislation, appointments of notaries, and State Capitol tours. Please call us if there is any way that we can help you.

IN CLOSING

Please do not hesitate to contact my staff directly to voice your concerns or views, or if we may assist you or provide you with additional information about our work on your behalf. As always, thank you for your interest in our work in Annapolis, and for the honor that you have given me and my staff to serve our community in the Senate of Maryland.

Sincerely at your service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Roger Manno". The signature is stylized and cursive.