

SHANEKA HENSON  
Legislative District 30A  
Anne Arundel County

Ways and Means Committee

Joint Committee on  
Children, Youth, and Families



The Maryland House of Delegates  
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Dear District 30A Friends and Neighbors:

It continues to be my great joy to represent you as your Delegate in the Maryland General Assembly. This session I rededicated myself to the truth I have long believed, **everyone deserves the opportunity to live well!** I fought for all Marylanders, especially District 30A residents, focusing on better housing quality, greater physical and mental wellness, economic empowerment, and preserving African-American history and culture. I proudly sponsored, co-sponsored, or supported with my vote more than 800 bills that passed in both chambers and were sent to the Governor for ratification.

This session I was honored to be appointed to the House Ways and Means Committee. This committee is responsible for legislation relating to children, youth, and families; education, election law, and state and local taxes. I continue to serve as Chair of the Anne Arundel County Capital Budget Subcommittee, as well as a member of the Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families and the Maryland Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Policy and Funding Committee. These committee assignments enabled me to focus on legislation designed to give Maryland families the opportunity to live well.

I am particularly thankful for those of you who contributed to my work to improve rental housing quality. After a four-year-long effort, we finally passed my bill, **HB976 Mold Assessment and Remediation - Standards**, which creates a powerful coalition of government and industry experts to craft statewide standards for mold assessment and remediation. Additionally, my work to safeguard elections was recognized in **SB001 Criminal Law - Wearing, Carrying, or Transporting Firearms - Restrictions (Gun Safety Act of 2023)**. In future sessions, I look forward to revisiting my efforts to improve working conditions and wages for educators and healthcare workers. I also intend to refile **HB295 Public Institutions of Higher Education - Student Withdrawal Policy - Reimbursement of Tuition and Fees**

**(Cameron Carden Act of 2023)** to support student mental health. The bill passed the House again this year but stalled in the Senate.


The General Assembly took significant steps to keep Marylanders safe from gun violence following the Supreme Court's recent decision in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Assn., INC. v. Bruen* which invalidated most state restrictions on carrying guns in public. Our response included passing **HB824 Public Safety - Regulated Firearms - Possession and Permits to Carry, Wear, and Transport a Handgun** which raises the age to purchase a firearm from 18 to 21 and increases permit fees and penalties for illegal possession. Additionally, **SB001 Criminal Law - Wearing, Carrying, or Transporting Firearms - Restrictions (Gun Safety Act of 2023)** establishes an opt-in system for business owners and homeowners to choose whether to allow licensees to conceal and carry firearms in their home or establishment.

In November Marylanders voted to legalize recreational marijuana use. In support of this, we passed laws to establish effective regulations for this new industry. **HB556 Cannabis Reform** expands the existing medical cannabis market for recreational use, authorizes licenses for growing, processing, and retail sales for social equity applicants, requires a licensed dispensary to be at least 500 feet away from a school or childcare facility, and sets the cannabis sales and use tax rate at 9% apportioning the revenue between state, county and municipal governments. **HB1071 Criminal Law and Procedure - Cannabis - Fines for Smoking in Public, Stops, and Searches** prohibits a law enforcement officer from conducting a traffic stop and/or a search solely based on the odor of marijuana.

This session we welcomed Governor Wes Moore's new administration. We passed many of the Governor's priority bills aimed at eliminating childhood poverty, and supporting veterans and families. The House and Senate worked with the Moore administration to adopt a responsible balanced budget that secures our state's financial future while continuing to make critical investments in Maryland's economy. We took bold steps to support transportation, education, technology, infrastructure, and health sectors to support working Marylanders and their families.

Thank you for trusting me to be your voice. More specifics on everything listed above is available in the attached report. I can't wait to see what we accomplish this term as we continue to create the opportunity for everyone to live well.

With Respect and Deep Appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shaneka Henson', written in a cursive style.

Delegate Shaneka Henson District 30A

## ECONOMICS

### **SB555 Fair Wage Act**

This bill accelerates Maryland's \$15/hr minimum wage so more workers can earn a living wage. It moves the state's \$15 minimum wage up from its January 1, 2025 timeline to January 1, 2024.

### **SB551 Department of Service and Civic Innovation and Maryland Corps Program Service Year Option Pathways - Established (Serving Every Region Through Vocational Exploration Act of 2023)**

The Young Adult Service Year Option Pathway channels youth into impactful public service in state and local parks; public and community health sectors; and the clean and renewable energy sector. Applicants must be Maryland residents within three years of graduation from high school or a similar level of education completion. The program will include 200 participants in the first year and 2,000 participants in the fourth year. Participants must work at least 30 hours per week and will be paid \$15 per hour or the State minimum wage, whichever is higher.

### **HB111 Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Workgroup on Low-Income Utility Assistance**

House Bill 111 streamlines the process by which people sign up for safety-net services such as Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and energy assistance programs. By establishing categorical eligibility, one application process will allow an individual to enroll in all services. Streamlining and creating one eligibility process will maximize the number of State residents who qualify for the Program. House Bill 111 will automatically enroll 65,000 SNAP recipients into Medicaid. This timely legislation will also help SNAP recipients already enrolled in Medicaid automatically renew their coverage.

### **HB988 Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Modifications**

This bill implements the Time to Care Act for paid Family and Medical Leave that was passed last year and requires the Secretary of Labor to set the initial total rate of contribution by October 1, 2023, which applies from October 1, 2024, through June 30, 2026, and may not exceed 1.2% of an employee's wages. The program provides up to 12 weeks of benefits to a covered individual who is taking leave from employment due to caring for certain family members, the individual's own serious health condition, or a qualifying exigency arising out of a family member's military deployment.

## **EDUCATION**

### **HB1219 Maryland Educator Shortage Act of 2023**

This bill establishes the Teacher Development and Retention Program as a pilot program to encourage college students to pursue teaching careers and makes a number of additional changes related to the recruitment and retention of teachers, including prekindergarten teachers, and school-based mental health professionals. The bill establishes an alternative pathway to meet minimum requirements for highly qualified teachers for specified prekindergarten providers. The bill expands eligibility for the Loan Assistance Repayment Program (LARP).

### **SB959 Higher Education - Maryland 529 Program - Reform**

This emergency bill, beginning June 1, 2023, transfers administration of the Maryland 529 Program from the Maryland 529 Board to the State Treasurer, abolishes the Maryland 529 Board, and makes conforming changes to specify that the State Treasurer must perform all duties previously performed by the board. The bill also phases out the Maryland Senator Edward J. Kasemeyer Prepaid College Trust (MPCT) by establishing that, beginning June 1, 2023, no new MPCT accounts may be created, either directly or via rollover.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **HB723 Natural Resources – Forest Preservation and Retention**

The bill modifies the State's policy to encourage the retention and sustainable management of forest lands by replacing the outcome of achieving no net loss of forest with the outcomes of increasing, as measured every four years, the acreage of (1) forest land in the State and (2) land in the State covered by tree canopy, for land located inside an urban area and outside an urban area.

### **HB793 Offshore Wind—Expanding Maryland's Commitment**

This bill supports the expansion of offshore wind power by increasing Maryland's offshore wind goal from generating 2 gigawatts (GW) power to 8.5 GW by 2031, initiates a state process to build coordinated transmission infrastructure, invests in the full build-out of the existing offshore wind lease areas, and establishes strong labor standards for this growing industry.

## **FAMILY LAW**

### **HB267 Family Law - Maryland Child Abduction Prevention Act**

Authorizes a court to order abduction prevention measures in a child custody proceeding if the court finds there is a credible risk of abduction of the child. The bill also authorizes a court to

issue an ex parte warrant for physical custody of the child if the court finds that there is a credible risk of abduction and establishes related requirements and procedures.

### **HB14 Family Law - Grounds for Divorce**

This bill repeals the authority of a court to grant a limited divorce and alters numerous grounds for an absolute divorce. The bill authorizes a court to grant an absolute divorce on the grounds of a six-month separation; irreconcilable differences based on the reasons stated by the complainant for the permanent termination of the marriage; or permanent legal incapacity of a part.

## **HEALTHCARE**

### **HB283 Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Gender-Affirming Treatment (Trans Health Equity Act)**

Maryland Medicaid currently covers gender-affirming treatments for (1) outpatient psychotherapy or mental health services for gender dysphoria; (2) continuous hormone replacement therapy; (3) outpatient laboratory testing to monitor continuous hormone therapy; (4) gender reassignment surgery; (5) specified procedures for individuals transitioning from male to female (MTF) and from female to male (FTM); and (6) post-transition services as medically necessary for transgender persons appropriate to their anatomy.

Notwithstanding current coverage, this bill requires Medicaid to cover the following services (*which are not eligible for federal matching reimbursement*): (1) hair alteration; (2) voice modification surgery and therapy/lessons; (3) alterations to the abdomen, trunk, and buttocks; (4) alterations to the face and neck; (5) fertility preservation services (which are not covered for any other Medicaid participants for any reason); and (6) revisions and reversal of prior treatments. Additionally, the bill expands Medicaid coverage to include (1) hormone blockers, and puberty blockers for minors; (2) alterations to the genitals and gonads; (3) laser treatment for scars from gender-affirming treatment; (4) any other treatments as prescribed to suppress the development of secondary sex characteristics to align the individual's appearance or physical body with gender identity.

### **HB477 Public Senior Higher Education Institutions - Reproductive Health Services Plans - Requirements**

This bill requires a "public senior higher education institution," in consultation with students, to develop and implement a reproductive health service plan, as specified, to provide at the institution or to refer students to a comprehensive range of reproductive health services. Each plan must include the provision of or referral to off-campus services for obtaining (1) all methods of federal Food and Drug Administration-approved contraception, including prescription

emergency contraception; (2) prevention and treatment services for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV prevention; and (3) abortion care services.

### **HB705 Declaration of Rights – Right to Reproductive Freedom**

The Reproductive Freedom Constitutional Amendment establishes a constitutional right to abortion and other reproductive health care. It allows Maryland voters to decide whether the fundamental right to reproductive freedom should be enshrined in our state constitution, which is the highest level of protection that we can give to Marylanders in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court decision last summer which overturned the landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision.

### **HB333 Hospitals–Financial Assistance–Medical Bill Reimbursement Process**

Requires hospitals to identify patients who paid more than \$25 for hospital services who may have qualified for free care on the date the hospital service was provided during calendar years 2017 through 2021 and assist with obtaining a refund.

## **HOUSING & REAL PROPERTY**

### **HB826 Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program – Establishment**

Establishes the Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program to provide vouchers and housing assistance payments for low-income families that are currently on a waiting list under the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP).

### **DELEGATE HENSON SPONSORED BILL – HB976 Mold Assessment and Remediation - Standards**

This bill requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), by June 1, 2025, and in consultation with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Department of General Services (DGS), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), industrial hygienists, and other professionals actively involved in mold contamination remediation, to adopt regulations that establish uniform standards for mold assessment and remediation.

### **HB036 Real Property – Actions to Repossess – Proof of Rental Licensure**

In any eviction proceeding, including an action for tenant holdover and breach of lease, a landlord must demonstrate by a preponderance of the evidence that the property is licensed or unlicensed in compliance with applicable local rental license laws.

### **HB150 Housing and Community Development - Adaptive Reuse**

Establishes that adaptive reuse (repurposing an existing building) of a property to develop affordable multifamily housing is an eligible use of the proceeds of a loan for specified housing programs administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

#### **SB445 Appraisal Gap From Historic Redlining Financial Assistance Program - Alterations**

The purpose of the program is to provide financial assistance to affordable housing developers working in low-income census tracts to help close appraisal gaps that occur in historically redlined neighborhoods. The bill also modifies the definition of “eligible construction expenses.” and authorizes financial assistance for affordable housing developers in sustainable communities.

**HB169 Energy Efficiency—Investing in Efficiency for Low and Moderate Income Housing:** coordinates and consolidates a range of federal and state funding sources, enables state-funded home energy audits in low-income homes, and increases EmPOWER and state funding for programs targeting low-income households who wish to make energy efficiency improvements.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

#### **HB001 Civil Actions - Child Sexual Abuse - Definition, Damages, and Statute of Limitations (The Child Victims Act of 2023)**

This bill establishes that an action for damages arising out of an alleged incident or incidents of “sexual abuse,” as defined under the bill, that occurred while the victim was a minor may be filed at any time. The bill must be construed to apply retroactively to revive any action that was barred by the statutory period of limitations applicable before October 1, 2023.

#### **SB858 Firearm Safety - Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention (Jaelynn's Law)**

This bill strengthens Maryland’s gun safety laws and reduces children’s unsupervised access to firearms. The bill enhances the penalty for violating the state’s safe storage laws and increases the age restricting unsupervised minors to possess or have access to loaded firearms from 16 to 18. The bill also takes action to help prevent youth suicide by requiring the Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services to develop a youth suicide prevention and firearm safe storage guide.

#### **HB1243 Public Safety - Protecting Against Hate Crimes Grant Fund - Establishment**

This bill establishes the Protecting Against Hate Crimes Grant Fund, a special fund administered by the Executive Director of the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (GOCPYVS), to make grants to nonprofit organizations, including faith-based organizations, to provide security enhancements to protect against hate crimes.

## **SB001 Criminal Law - Wearing, Carrying, or Transporting Firearms - Restrictions (Gun Safety Act of 2023)**

Senate Bill 1 makes communities safer by limiting the circumstances where firearms can be conceal-carried. The bill tightens Maryland state gun laws in an effort to combat gun violence and in the wake of the Supreme Court's Bruen decision that rendered some existing Maryland gun laws unconstitutional. It makes the licensing process for wear and carry permits more strict, prohibits an individual from knowingly wearing, carrying or transporting a firearm on private property without consent, and prohibits guns in certain locations, including courthouses, hospitals, schools and areas where alcohol is served.

## **VETERANS**

### **SB286 Department of Veterans Affairs - Burial in State Veterans' Cemeteries - Spouses and Dependents**

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) to bury an "eligible spouse" or "eligible dependent" (including a child or parent) of a veteran in a State veterans cemetery without charge.

### **HB 554 Income Tax – Subtraction Modification for Military Retirement Income (Keep Our Heroes Home Act)**

This bill expands the State's existing tax exemption for military retirement income to encourage more of our military veterans to retire here at home in Maryland. Currently, retirees under age 55 may be exempt up to \$5,000 of military retirement income and retirees over age 55 may be exempt up to \$15,000. The legislation would eliminate the age distinction and allow for the exemption of up to \$25,000 for the taxable year beginning after December 31, 2022, and \$40,000 for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2023.



## BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

<b>Environment, Health &amp; Public Safety</b>		<b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b>	
\$863,000.00	Luminis Health Anne Arundel Medical Center/Adult Behavioral Health Center	\$2,500,000.00	Sandy Point State Park – Water Tower and Water Treatment Plant and Tower Upgrade
\$11,057,000.00	Jessup Region Correctional Facility Electrical Infrastructure Upgrade	\$100,000.00	Senior Dog Sanctuary
\$10,000,000.00	AACo – Joint 911 Public Safety Center	\$100,000.00	City of Annapolis – Stanton Community Center Renovation
\$1,500,000.00	AACo Grain Elevator	\$250,000.00	Tanyard Springs – Park Improvements
\$3,000,000.00	Annapolis City Dock Flood Mitigation	\$2,200,000.00	Southern High School Turf Field
\$230,000.00	Church Creek Dredging	\$75,000.00	Annapolis - Fourth Street Public Boating Access Improvements
\$367,500.00	Duvall and Kitty Creek Dredging	\$75,000.00	Annapolis - Shipwright Street Public Boating Access Improvements
\$75,000.00	Annapolis - Hawkins Cove Dredging	\$102,000.00	AACo Fairgrounds
<b>History, Arts &amp; Culture</b>		<b>State Office Complex</b>	
\$3,000,000.00	Historic Annapolis Restoration Brice House	\$20,339,000.00	State House Exterior and Grounds Restoration
\$100,000.00	William Paca Garden Accessibility Construction	\$63,265,000.00	New Courts of Appeal Building
\$3,000,000.00	Banneker Douglass Museum	\$24,889,000.00	Department of Legislative Services Building
\$920,316.00	Historic Annapolis Foundation	\$2,500,000.00	St. John's Street Utility Undergrounding
\$18,080.00	Historic London Town & Gardens		
\$5,000,000.00	Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park		<b>Transportation</b>
	<b>Education</b>	\$1,150,000.00	Parole Transportation Center
\$3,268,000.00	Annapolis Middle School	\$500,000.00	Sound Barrier Wall Northbound MD 295
\$720,000.00	AACC – Florestano Building Renovation		<b>Housing</b>
\$287,000.00	Central Elementary School	\$1,500,000.00	HACA/ Robinwood Community Center