

# The Prince George's Post



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## Governor Hogan Announces New Text to 9-1-1 System for Maryland

By PRESS OFFICER  
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, MD—Governor Larry Hogan announced the Board of Public Works' approval of a new Text to 9-1-1 technology for Maryland, helping to update 1960s-era emergency systems with life-saving technology. This new Internet-based infrastructure allows citizens to send a Short Message Service (SMS) text message to 9-1-1. The Federal Communications Commission estimates that more than 70 percent of all 9-1-1 calls now come from cellular users.

"This new technology is a vital public safety tool that

could potentially help save the lives of citizens who find themselves in an emergency situation," said Governor Hogan. "I want to commend the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services for their hard work to implement this system for all Marylanders."

Text to 9-1-1 supports 160 characters per message, but no multimedia messaging, such as photos or video. The Maryland Emergency Numbers System Board, under the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, is responsible for overseeing Mary-

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## Parkdale High School Student Appointed as Maryland State Board of Education Student Member

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, MD—Bryce Awono, a sophomore Pre-International Baccalaureate student at Prince George's County Public Schools' (PGCPS) Parkdale High School, was appointed by Governor Larry Hogan to serve as Student Member of the Maryland State Board of Education for 2018-2019.

Awono, who formerly served as Treasurer of Maryland Asso-

ciation of Student Councils (MASC), is a 4.0 honors student, volunteer and has advocated at the state House of Delegates and Senate and worked on students issues with local boards of education. He is also a member of Parkdale's mock trial and varsity track teams as well as a member of the African Student Association and UNICEF club.

"I've always looked to do something meaningful to help

See BRYCE AWONO Page A8



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY AARON ROSA  
A permit displayed on a tree trunk at a development site in Edgewater, Md., Feb. 22, 2018. Last week, House and Senate committees addressed cross-filed bills that would amend Maryland's Forest Conservation Act. The bills would tighten replanting requirements for developers that clear forests.

## New Bills Would Update Maryland's Forest Conservation Law

By ALEX MANN  
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, MD—Maryland's forest conservation law has failed to protect some of the state's best forests, scientists and environmentalists say.

Enacted in 1991, the state's Forest Conservation Act was in-

tended to protect Maryland's forested areas from development. The law outlined a formula for builders to follow when clearing land for development.

For each tract of forest cleared, developers of certain parcels were required to mitigate forest lost by replanting trees, or pay a fee-in-lieu.

Under current law, developers in some circumstances can replant at a ratio of one-fourth of an acre planted for every acre cleared.

The new bill would increase the ratio to one-for-one.

It would also clearly define "priority retention areas"—considered to be the state's best

forests—and lay out a framework that determines when state and local authorities can approve the clearing of these forests.

Developers say the bill is too onerous and could jeopardize local planning goals.

See FORESTS Page A3

## It's Morning in Zimbabwe and PG County

EDC and African Union Partnering to 'Change the Things They Cannot Accept'

By LORI C. VALENTINE  
PGCEDC

LARGO, MD—On March 2, 2018, top members of the Zimbabwe business community, led by Max Chard, Managing Director of Carp Global, visited the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) for a business discussion to align Prince George's County's newly formed alliance with the African Union to replicate the Prince George's County economic development model in Zimbabwe and the continent of African. EDC President and CEO Jim Coleman welcomed the international delegation whose fact finding mission to Prince George's County was to identify trading partners and potential investors on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean for agricultural opportunities.

"Helping our brothers and sisters experience the 'Wakanda Effect' is our goal," said Coleman. "The African continent is so rich with natural and intellectual resources that there is no reason that they should not experience economic hyper-growth. Today was an historic

day in the life of Prince George's County. When we combine our efforts with the Republic of Zimbabwe and the African Union, we will see billions of dollars in wealth generated and millions of jobs created across the African Continent. We've been blessed in Prince George's County and we see it as our duty to foster an environment of opportunity in the nations that make up the African Union. Today, we have solidified our commitment to replicating our success across the pond."

Carp Global, a commodities trading company in Zimbabwe who produces and exports high quality cottons to the global market, came to the attention of the Economic Development Corporation by African Union Ambassador Arikana Chihombori. The ultimate goal of the partnership between the African Union and Prince George's County is to assist Prince George's County in facilitating international business opportunities for Prince George's County companies with the continent of Africa.

Carp Global shared a message from Minister Webster



PHOTO COURTESY LORI C. VALENTINE  
Jim Coleman, EDC President and CEO with members of the African Union, Zimbabwe Business Officials, and the EDC Team

Kotiواني Shamu, Minister of Mashonaland West Provincial Affairs, Zimbabwe, that it is a new day in Zimbabwe, with a plethora of raw materials such as platinum, chrome, and gold ready for exporting. Minister Shamu, via conference call, told the EDC that Zimbabwe is open for business and excited about the possibilities of building manufacturing facilities, more tourism destinations and partnering with its African American neighbors in Prince

George's County to build an economic development infrastructure that create jobs, and share ideas and innovations.

"Today is a great day for the Republic of Zimbabwe and Prince George's County," said Chihombori. "We are coming together with our strategic partners in Prince George's County to strike while the iron is hot. Zimbabwe is primed to attract

See ZIMBABWE Page A5

## Governor Hogan Celebrates National Women's History Month During Small Business Procurement Workshop

Ready, Set, GROW! Visits Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER  
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, MD—Governor Larry Hogan will celebrate National Women's History Month by presenting citations to small business owners from Prince George's County during the Ready, Set, GROW! workshop held at MGM National Harbor on Thursday, March 22.

"There are great opportunities within the state contracting marketplace," said Jimmy Rhee, special secretary of the Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs. "We created Ready, Set, GROW! to share insights and ensure that we are being open, accessible, and transparent to the entire small business community, including those firms owned by minorities, women, and veterans."

The Ready, Set, GROW procurement connections workshop series is held at locations around the state by the Governor's Office of Small, Minority &

Women Business Affairs. This workshop highlights that the Hogan Administration is Open for Business by connecting the vendor community with buyers from various state agencies.

During the program, participants get an overview of the procurement process and learn how to access the state's contracting pipeline. Buyers from the participating agencies identify the products and services they typically buy, focusing on opportunities that exist right now. Vendors can meet with buyers one-on-one during the open networking session. Representatives from a variety of small business organizations also participate, providing access to free and low-cost organizational, financial, and managerial resources.

"Maryland is home to more than 200,000 women-owned businesses," said Secretary

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### INSIDE

#### Governor Larry Hogan Announces New School Safety Initiatives

Recent Hogan administration initiatives have strengthened emergency response procedures and agency cooperation, and the Maryland Center for School Safety is the only center of its kind in the nation to be housed in the state's law enforcement fusion center.

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#### On International Women's Day, Cardin Calls on U.S. Senate to Remove the Deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment

"The United States should be taking the lead on fostering an open and honest dialogue about women's issues internationally—not silencing it. We are better than this. We must be better than this.

Commentary, Page A4

#### Annapolis Roundup: Medical Cannabis, Other Bills Advance

It establishes a 20-license cap for cannabis growers up from 15 and alters the definition of grower to mean a certain entity that cultivates or packages medical cannabis and is authorized to provide cannabis to certain entities. It also creates a 20-license cap for processors.

Business, Page A3

#### Movie Review: Paddington 2

While searching for the perfect present for his beloved Aunt Lucy's hundredth birthday, Paddington spots a unique pop-up book in Mr. Gruber's antique shop, and embarks upon a series of odd jobs to buy it. But when the book is stolen, it's up to Paddington and the Browns to unmask the thief ...

Out on the Town, Page A6

#### Earth Talk

Dear EarthTalk:

What's the deal with some restaurants no longer offering straws to their customers? What's so bad about sipping your drink through a straw anyway?

—Jeffrey Edwards,  
Seattle, WA

Features, Page A7

# Towns and NEIGHBORS

## In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

### Sgt. Dan Rae is MVFD's Firefighter of the Year—and more awardees announced

During 2017, the Morningside Volunteer Fire Department continued to provide high quality of emergency and non-emergency life-safety services to the citizens of the Town of Morningside and Prince George's County.

At their annual Awards Banquet the following were recognized: Top Responder, Sgt. Dan Rae; Top Responder (2nd place), Lt. Craig Olander; Rookie of the Year, Firefighter/EMT Lucas Oblaender; Firefighter of the Year, Sgt. Dan Rae; Line Officer of the Year, Capt. Daniel Webster; President's Recognition for excellence, Jamie Hansen and Lisa McKlveen; Top Twenty, each member logged over 1,200 hours; Time in Service recognition (40 years and counting), President Thomas Groom.

They responded to more than 6,792 calls for service, recruited 31 new members, and suffered no major injuries during emergency operations.

### This was not a good wind!

The recent windstorm played havoc in our area, causing extensive damage and the collapse of a brick wall at Andrews Ridge, an apartment complex in the 5600 block of Regency Park Court, just off Suitland Road.

A strong windgust lifted flat roofs of several buildings and pressurized the interior causing the walls to bow outward and eventually collapse out, according to County Fire spokesman Mark Brady. Officials evacuated five buildings and more than 100 residents were displaced. Firefighters from Morningside were the first to respond, to help with evacuation.

At Andrews Manor Shopping Center, Allentown Cafe suffered major roof and side damage.

And there are so many trees are down everywhere.

### People

John Scroggins—after reading my obituary for Dick Hall—emailed one of his memories: “For many years, Dick called members of Oxon Hill United Methodist Church on their birthdays and sang Happy Birthday to them (or to their answering machines). And each Christmas he called and sang to the church. I’ll miss him.”

Condolences to Kimberly White on the death of her newborn son Julius Bailey in January, and to Julius's grandmother Stephanie White, of Upper Marlboro.

### The Cat in the Hat

Dr. Seuss's favorite cat is coming to Prince George's Public Playhouse in a theatrical adaptation of *The Cat in the Hat* on Saturday, March 24 at 2 PM. The Playhouse is at 5445 Landon Road in Cheverly. Tickets are \$8, and you can buy them by calling 301-277-1710. There is free, on-site parking.

### Aren't you glad you have Forever's?

Did you know that postage went up on January 21? Yep! First class 1-oz. is now 50 cents (or a Forever), up a penny from last year. A flat envelope (10 X 13 inches) is \$1.00. The extra ounce for either is 21 cents. Postcards are 35 cents. One ounce International is \$1.15.

### Changing landscape

Construction is underway at Allentown Andrews Gateway Center, intersection of Branch Avenue and Allentown Road. Mixed-use development plans a grocery, retail, and service, gas station and residential. This will be just down the road from Andrews' Main Gate.

Buildings are gone and the site is cleared and fenced at the intersection of Old Branch and Kirby Road. An Eco Car Wash is coming there.

The commercial building adjacent to the historic Surratt House in Clinton has been demolished and the site donated to the House. Part of the property will be appropriately landscaped as part of the museum grounds. Another portion will probably be used to extend a right-hand turn lane at the intersection of Old Branch and Brandywine Road.

### Happy 73rd birthday, Morningside Volunteer Fire Department

On March 7, 1945, Morningside founded its fire department. The first Board of Directors included Charles Benton, Lawrence Beardmore, Ward Caldwell, Norman Loveless and Albert Stahl.

The founding was in response to a Nov. 22, 1944 fire on Pine Grove Drive. Four-year-old Helen Louise Massey died in the blaze. Her half-sister, Josephine (Massey) Haney was injured trying to save her. She died the following day at Prince George's Hospital. The cause was found to be a faulty oil heater.

### May they rest in peace

• Eva Frances (Blakeney) Hay, 89, longtime Morningsider, died Feb. 9 with her children by her side. She was the wife of the late Jack Hay. Survivors include son Jack II and his wife Kim and daughter Ruth and her husband John Anthony; grandchildren, Amy Wade (Bradley), John Anthony III and Eva Marie Anthony; four great-grandchildren; sister-in-law Margie Blakeney and brother-in-law Gene Hay.

• John J. Casey, “the quintessential Irish gentleman,” died March 4. According to his Post obituary, he was a Marine, pilot and police officer, “kind and fun-loving. He believed in do-

See MORNINGSIDE Page A5

## Neighborhoods

### 19th Annual Free Family FunFest Set for Saturday, March 24, 2018

BOWIE, MD—The Bowie Baysox will host the 19th annual Free Family FunFest event on Saturday, March 24 at Prince George's Stadium from 10 AM–1:30 PM. The event occurs rain or shine and features free rides and games in Louie's Kids Park, music and activities on the stadium concourse and various interactive experiences involving local businesses, Baysox sponsors and charitable organizations.

Single game tickets for all 2018 Baysox home games go on sale for the first time at FunFest. The stadium box office will be open from 10:00 AM–1:30 PM for in-person and phone purchases. Single game tickets may also be purchased online at [www.baysox.com](http://www.baysox.com) beginning at 10:00 AM on March 24, twenty-four hours a day. Fans purchasing online will have the option to print at home or send tickets to their mobile device. Season ticket holders can pick up their ticket packages during the event and are invited to an exclusive season ticket holder luncheon in the stadium's Diamond View Restaurant.

Throughout the event, fans can hang out with Baysox fun-loving mascots Louie and Rocko along with the Oriole Bird (11 AM–12 PM) and a special appearance by Elmo (11 AM–1 PM). There will also be several carnival style games on the concourse for kids to play, free kids face painting and Baysox radio partner 1430AM WNAV will be broadcasting live from the event. The Bowie Police Department will have police cruisers on site as well as an appearance by horses from the Maryland National Capital Park Police Mounted Unit, an ambulance and fire truck from Prince George's Fire & EMS and a pair of motorcycle officers from the Maryland National Capital Park Police. Prince George's Fire will also have an interactive learn CPR station set up on the concourse for all fans to engage with.

FunFest will also feature interactive sponsor booths from Buffalo Wild Wings, Chuck-E-Cheese, Medieval Times, New York Life, Pongos, Sport Fit Bowie, What's Up Media, Thompson Creek Windows and many more.

The Bowie Baysox 2018 season is presented by Money One Federal Credit Union. Season ticket packages are on sale now at [baysoxshop.com](http://baysoxshop.com). The team's 2018 home opener is scheduled for Thursday, April 5 against the Harrisburg Senators at 6:35 PM. To keep up with Baysox news, visit [baysox.com](http://baysox.com) and be sure to follow the Baysox on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

### Protect Yourself from “Storm Chasers”

**After a Natural Disaster**  
WASHINGTON, D.C.—Storms, tornadoes, floods, wild fires, and other natural disasters often bring out the best in people, as strangers reach out to help others in need. Unfortunately, the aftermath of a crisis also brings out contractors taking advantage of those who have already been victimized. Better Business Bureau is warning homeowners affected by nat-

ural disasters to beware of “storm chasers” and out-of-town contractors soliciting businesses. Although not all storm chasers are scammers, they may lack the proper licensing for your area, offer quick fixes, or make big promises they can't deliver.

There are some things you should do when hiring any contractor (such as getting three estimates, getting everything in writing, and paying with a credit card).

### BBB also has these specific tips for victims of natural disasters:

• Contact your insurance company. Ask about your policy coverage and specific filing requirements. Save all receipts, including those for food, temporary lodging, or other expenses that may be covered under your policy. Your insurance company may also have recommended contractors.

• Do your research. Find businesses you can trust on [BBB.org](http://BBB.org). We have BBB Business Profiles on more than a million home contractors. Check your state or provincial government agency responsible for registering and/or licensing contractors. Get references from friends and relatives.

• Resist high-pressure sales. Some storm chasers use tactics such as the “good deal” you'll get only if you hire the contractor on the spot. Be proactive in selecting a contractor and not re-active to sales calls on the phone or door-to-door pitches. Disaster victims should never feel forced to make a hasty decision or to choose an unknown contractor.

• Be especially careful of door-to-door contractors. Many municipalities require a solicitation permit if sales people go door-to-door. Ask for identification. Check their vehicle for a business name, phone number, and license plates for your state or province.

• Be wary regarding places you can't see. While most contractors abide by the law, be careful allowing someone you do not know to inspect your roof and other areas of your house. An unethical contractor may actually create damage to get work. The same goes for attics, crawl spaces, ducts, and other places you cannot easily access or see for yourself.

BBB is also warning contractors to beware of storm chasers who offer to pay local construction companies substantial amounts of money to use the business's established name, reputation, and phone. They masquerade as a local business, collect the insurance money and then move on, leaving the real business to deal with unsatisfied customers due to bad workmanship, unfinished work, or unfulfilled warranties.

### Maryland Lawmakers Introduce Bill to Protect LGBTQ Youth from Dangerous, Debunked “Conversion Therapy”

BALTIMORE, MD—Last month, FreeState Justice, Maryland's LGBTQ advocacy organization, along with the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) civil rights organization, and

WISE, hailed the introduction of *HB902* and *SB1028*, legislation in Maryland to protect LGBTQ youth from the dangerous and discredited practice of so-called “conversion therapy.” The bill was introduced in the Maryland State Senate by Senator Richard Madaleno and in the House of Delegates by Delegate Bonnie Cullison.

“Banning these barbaric practices will protect children from unnecessary harm. This sends a clear message to LGBTQ youth across our state that they are welcomed and respected in Maryland,” said FreeState Justice Executive Director Mark Procopio.

“Conversion therapy denies young people their humanity,” said Senator Madaleno. “It is a cruel practice that has no basis in science. With teen suicide rates on the rise, we should do everything we can to encourage young people to live true and fulfilling lives. It is time for Maryland to join the long list of states that protect their young people from this mental abuse.”

“In Maryland we have made a commitment to individual civil rights and to honoring the wonderful diversity of our communities,” said Delegate Cullison. “In our laws we have recognized LGBTQ people as a true part of that diversity. It is unconscionable that LGBTQ youth would be subjected to inhuman treatment to hide who they are at the core of their being. As lawmakers we must protect them from the brainwashing and identity-robbing that is part of trying to convert them to be someone they are not. HB 902 will do just that. I am grateful for the opportunity to work on this legislation.”

“So-called ‘conversion therapy’ is dangerous and inhumane—no child should be subjected to this cruelty,” said HRC Legislative Counsel Xavier Persad. “This practice is child abuse that can have life-threatening consequences. We thank Delegate Cullison and Senator Madaleno for leading on this important bill and call on their colleagues to protect LGBTQ youth by quickly passing this bill.”

There is no credible evidence that conversion therapy can change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. To the contrary, research has clearly shown that these practices pose devastating health risks for LGBTQ young people such as depression, decreased self-esteem, substance abuse, homelessness, and even suicidal behavior. The harmful practice is condemned by every major medical and mental health organization, including the American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, and American Medical Association.

Connecticut, California, Nevada, New Jersey, the District of Columbia, Oregon, Illinois, Vermont, New York, New Mexico, and Rhode Island all have laws or regulations protecting youth from this abusive practice. A growing number of municipalities

See LGBTQ Page A8

## Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301 888 2153

### DOWNHOME GOSPEL MUSIC PROGRAM

Join us for an evening of Downhome Gospel Music Saturday, March 24, 2018 at 3:00 PM. The program will feature New Hope Fellowship Choir, Mighty Wonders, Soloist, Liturgical Dancers and many more performances. Free will offering (proceeds will go toward the Family Life Center Building).

The program is being sponsored by Nottingham Myers United Methodist Church, Rev. Constance C. Smith, Pastor. The address is 15601 Brooks Church Road, Upper Marlboro, Maryland. If you need additional information, contact the church at (301) 888-2171 or e-mail [newhope014@gmail.com](mailto:newhope014@gmail.com).

### BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday to Elizabeth Davis, Brewer Clark, Shirley Brown, Dezmund Wood, Anthony Oghogho, Safiya Terry-Joseph, Brittany Baker, Denise Reid Bourne, Mildred Edwards, Vedall Grant, Lloyd Brown, Patricia Stephens, Tina Fields, Aja LayLonie Bell, Neil Noel, Maya Stammer, Bonnie Fauber, Shirley Jackson, Dr. Kenneth Newby, Judy Jones-Terry, Amiya Knight, Shonnell Noel, Daniel Jones and Daniel Glee who are Clinton United Methodist Church Members celebrating their birthdays during the month of March. I would like to wish everyone a wonderful year of happiness.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Wedding Anniversaries to Emmanuel and Claudette Oghogho who are Clinton United Methodist Church Members celebrating a Wedding Anniversary during the month of March 2018.

### HEART ATTACK OR STROKE

Become aware of your risk factors for a stroke or heart attack by taking your medicine as prescribed and also by changing your daily habits. To learn more call toll-free at 1-800-AHA-USA1(800-242-8721), contact your nearest office or visit [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org). For Stroke information call American Stroke Association at 1-888-478-7653 or visit [www.Stroke-association.org](http://www.Stroke-association.org).

### DEMENTIA & ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS

Seminar brought to you by serving the world. A Dementia Friendly Prince George's Seminar will be held on Saturday, April 14, 2018 from 11:30–2:00 PM at St. Paul Oxon Hill United Methodist Church. The address is 6634 St. Barnabas Road. Contact information is 301-567-4433 or [admin@stpumcmd.org](mailto:admin@stpumcmd.org).

### DISTRICT 4 LISTENING SESSIONS

Prince George's County Council Vice Chair Todd M. Turner (D) District 4 will hold a

series of three “Listening Sessions” throughout District 4 communities to provide updates on District priorities and hear directly from residents on issues of community concern. The meeting will include an overview of District 4 achievements, Council updates and the County's Fiscal Year 2019 proposed budget. Residents are encouraged to attend the listening sessions.

The sessions will be Thursday, March 15, 2018 7:00 PM at Greenbelt Municipal Building (City Council Hearing Room). The address is 25 Crescent Road, Greenbelt, Maryland. Second session will be Thursday, March 22, 2018 at Glen Dale Volunteer Fire Department. The address is 11900 Glen Dale Boulevard, Glen Dale, Maryland. The final listening Session will take place 7:00 PM Thursday, March 29, in the Kenhill Center Multipurpose Room, 2614 Kenhill Drive in Bowie. Contact Tomeka Bumbry, District 4 Chief of Staff, at 301-952-3094, or [tcumbry@co.pg.md.us](mailto:tcumbry@co.pg.md.us) for additional information.

### COSCA TENNIS BUBBLE

The Clubhouse includes four indoor courts and six adjacent outdoor lighted courts. The courts are on a first come, first served basis. Group instruction and private instruction are available for senior, adults, and juniors. The address is 11000 Thrift Road, Clinton, Maryland. Telephone number is 301-868-6462.

# COMMUNITY

## The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

### Knowing When to Ask For Professional Help

For most of us, asking for help can often be difficult. Yes, asking for advice on planting your garden is easy. But for a serious issue, such as our mental health, we may find that we don't want to admit to the problems we're facing.

It's not hard to understand why we may be reluctant. Admitting that we're struggling or feeling overwhelmed is like we're admitting we're weak or inadequate. Most of us learned as children that it's important to be independent, strong and self-sufficient. That background makes it difficult to tell someone else that we're really not okay.

The result is that people often decide to just try and do the best they can by themselves. In some cases things might just turn out fine, though there are no guarantees. But going it alone could involve considerable amounts of stress and anxiety, and may even lead to bigger and more serious problems.

Another common option is to turn to family or friends. This can be a good idea if those we trust with our problems and fears are truly understanding and are able to offer meaningful support and help. Sometimes they can, but often times they just can't.

If you're facing a difficult time or situation, something that's causing depression, high stress and anxiety, and is making it difficult or impossible for you to enjoy life, it may be time to seek out professional help. Doing so can be a difficult choice, since it means asking for help from a stranger, and usually will involve a fee.

However, realize that a professional counselor is someone who has gone through extensive training and has many tools to help those feeling overwhelmed and unsure of how to go on. Despite the way it's often portrayed on TV, counseling is not something just for "crazy" people. Most counseling assists perfectly normal people who are simply facing issues and problems that are negatively affecting their lives.

Professional counselors specialize in numerous areas. Check with your local mental health association or visit the American Counseling Association website at [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org) (click the "Find A Counselor" tab at the top) to locate professional counselors in a variety of specialties.

Asking for help is never a sign of weakness but rather of the strength to recognize when your problems are real and that you need help to do something about them.

*Counseling Corner is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to [ACAcorner@counseling.org](mailto:ACAcorner@counseling.org) or visit the ACA website at [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)*

## Maryland Black Mayors Redefine Leadership and Action

By MONICA BISCOE  
Mason-Dixon Consulting

BOWIE, MD—The Maryland Black Mayors Association (MBM) elected new officers for the upcoming year in anticipation of rolling out a more aggressive political agenda. "We are definitely on the right track, and we believe we can make a difference in directing policy for the state and Prince George's County," said MBM President Jack Sims. "We have a lot of untapped potential and promise and we are planning to turn those attributes into strong political action."

In addition to Sims, Fairmount Heights Mayor Lillian Martin was named MBM vice president; Glenarden Mayor Edward Estes, secretary; and Colmar Manor Mayor Sadara Barrow, treasurer-second vice president, were also elected. Jacqueline Goodall, former Mayor of Forest Heights, was

named the Executive Director. "We are planning to grow our membership by actively extending an invitation to as many of the former Maryland Black Mayors to rejoin the new and improved Maryland Black Mayors Association," Sims stated. With plans to enhance visibility in Prince George's County in the state of Maryland, MBM plans to play an active role in the upcoming race for Governor. The organization would continue to advocate for legislation that supports municipalities, including *SB 516/HB TBD Permanent, Full Restoration of Municipal Highway User Revenues*. Since 2009, MBM's say they have a loss of \$865 million through the current formula for payments.

Sims said MBM would continue its community outreach efforts through its annual scholarship gala, which is scheduled for next June.

## Governor Larry Hogan Announces New School Safety Initiatives

*Will Provide \$125 Million for School Safety Enhancements, Plus \$50 Million in Annual Grants, Emergency Legislation to Create Statewide Standards, Support for Common Sense Legislation*

By PRESS OFFICER  
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, MD—Governor Larry Hogan announced a series of new initiatives, including new funding, an executive order, and emergency legislation. He also voiced his support for existing legislative proposals to enhance safety in Maryland schools; increase coordination among schools, state agencies, and law enforcement; and keep firearms out of the hands of the mentally ill and individuals with violent criminal records.

"There is no more important job than keeping our citizens safe—especially our children. In the wake of the horrific school shooting in Parkland, Florida, citizens here in our state and all across America want to know what government at all levels is doing to keep our children safe, and what we are collectively doing to stop gun violence and violent crime," said Governor Hogan. "Classrooms should never be a place of fear for our children. No mom or dad should ever have to worry when they send their kids off to school whether their son or daughter is going to come home safely."

The governor was joined by Dr. Karen Salmon, state Superintendent of Schools; Glenn Fueston, executive director of the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention (GOCCP); and Ed Clarke, executive director of the Maryland Center for School Safety. Governor Hogan attended the National Governors Association winter meeting in Washington, D.C. this past weekend, where he discussed

strategies and best practices for school safety with governors from both parties.

Maryland has already enacted many of the measures that other states are currently considering, including some of the toughest gun laws in the nation. Recent Hogan administration initiatives have strengthened emergency response procedures and agency cooperation, and the Maryland Center for School Safety is the only center of its kind in the nation to be housed in the state's law enforcement fusion center.

"Great work is already being done to ensure the safety of Maryland's students and its schools," said the governor, referencing recent successful law enforcement interventions in Frederick, St. Mary's, and Montgomery Counties. "Incidents like this here in Maryland and all across the country make it very clear that we absolutely must remain vigilant when it comes to protecting our kids, and we absolutely must do more."

To bolster school security efforts in the state, Governor Hogan announced that the administration would commit an additional \$125 million to accelerate and enhance safety improvements in schools, including secure doors and windows, metal detectors, security cameras, panic buttons, and other capital improvements, as well as an additional \$50 million in operating funds each year for new school safety grants, which could be used for school resource officers, counselors, and additional safety technology. The funding will be allocated through the governor's education lockbox proposal, which provides an additional

\$4.4 billion in education spending from casino revenues.

The governor also announced that he will submit emergency legislation to create Maryland's first statewide school safety standards, including required training and certification for all school resource officers and security staff. The legislation will require all school systems to conduct an annual school safety assessment and develop plans to address behavioral threats and emergency situations. The plans will be subject to approval by the Maryland State Board of Education and overseen by the Maryland Center for School Safety.

As an immediate step to activate the emergency legislation, the governor announced that he will submit a supplemental budget on Friday, March 2, that provides an additional \$5 million for the Maryland Center for School Safety, an increase in funding of 600 percent. The funding will enable the center to hire analysts and social media trackers, allocate staff in more regions of the state, and assist schools with conducting the mandated safety assessments.

To prevent, prepare for, and respond to threats all across the state, Governor Hogan announced that he signed *Executive Order 01.01.2018.08* directing all state agencies to develop, review, and update internal plans, policies, and procedures related to active assailant events, and to participate in a coordinated active assailant initiative that includes collaboration with public and non-governmental partners.

To take immediate action to further restrict access to guns for

individuals with mental illnesses or a violent criminal background, the governor announced support for several targeted initiatives, including:

- Support for "red flag" legislation, which allows family members or law enforcement to petition the court for an order that would prohibit an individual from possessing firearms or ammunition if they were deemed by a judge to be a danger to themselves or others.

- Federal action to institute a universal background check system, which the governor has supported since his campaign.

- Support for legislation to strengthen and clarify current law to prohibit an individual convicted of domestic violence from possessing firearms, which was a factor in the recent murder of Prince George's County Police Corporal Mujahid Ramziddin.

- Support for legislation banning "bump stocks."

Finally, the governor highlighted his proposed legislation to toughen penalties for individuals committing violent crimes with guns, who are predominantly responsible for the nearly 350 murders in Baltimore City last year. Many of the policies in the administration's violent crime package are making progress in the Maryland senate under the leadership of Judicial Proceedings Committee Chairman Sen. Bobby Zirkin.

"I want to be very clear: my most important responsibility is keeping the citizens of Maryland safe, and the most important responsibility we all have is to keep our children safe. Let's get it done together," concluded the governor.

### Forests from A1

Some of the disagreement among developers, the state and environmentalists comes down to how trees are counted.

Developers and the state have cited tree canopy cover as a way to measure the state's forested lands.

But canopy cover includes all trees—including suburban and streetside plantings—and does not accurately count forests, which environmentalists say offer superior health, economic and ecological benefits.

The current conservation formula worked for areas that originally had little forested land, Elaine Lutz, Maryland staff attorney for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, told Capital News Service. But the same formula has enabled the clearing of some of the state's most dense and ecologically beneficial forest.

According to the current law, priority forests are "trees, shrubs, and plants located in sensitive areas," including 100-year flood plains, riparian buffers to streams and coastal bays, steep slopes, critical habitats and contiguous forest "that connects the largest undeveloped or most vegetated tracts of land within and adjacent to the site," a state analysis shows.

But the language is too ambiguous, Lutz said, and has resulted in the varying interpretations of replanting requirements and, in some cases, failure to protect the best forests.

Maryland has lost over 19,000 acres of forests between fiscal year 2009 and fiscal year 2016, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation told lawmakers in the fall.

More than 7,000 acres were cleared in Prince George's County alone, the report showed.

Disproportionate forest loss in her county prompted Delegate Anne Healey, D-Prince George's, this year to introduce House bill 766, which modifies the Forest Conservation Act to better define "priority forest" and to increase the replanting requirement. Sen. Ron Young, D-Frederick, introduced an identical bill, Senate bill 610.

The Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs and House Environment and Transportation Committees addressed Young and Healey's bills last week.

Testimony from proponents—primarily environmentalists—and opponents—land development and real estate industries—dragged on for hours in the hearings, with the sides producing conflicting statistics and accounts of the Forest Conservation Act's success.

Environmentalists argued that too much important forest has been cleared. The ecological and health benefits of mature forests, they said, outweigh additional costs to developers.

Beyond providing critical habitat for many forest-dwelling creatures, "forests are the No. 1 most protective land cover for water quality," Lutz said.

States surrounding the Chesapeake Bay and federal authorities continue efforts to clean up the nation's largest estuary, but President Donald Trump's proposed budget would slash 90 percent of Chesapeake Bay cleanup funding.

One-third of nitrogen pollution in the bay comes from the

air, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Forests are efficient air filters that could help reduce air pollutants, Lutz said.

Those representing the development community staunchly opposed the bill, arguing that the Forest Conservation Act is already working and there is no need to change it.

Lori Graf, CEO of the Maryland Building Industry Association, which represents some 100,000 Marylanders, submitted in written testimony that, "Maryland's forest canopy cover" increased to 51 percent in 2017, citing a Department of Natural Resources report.

The state's Department of Natural Resources submitted a letter of concern, and Allison Cordell, the department's legislative director, also told lawmakers this week that Maryland has a "51 percent statewide tree canopy cover," according to the letter.

But tree cover is not the same as mature forest, environmentalists say. Individual trees, or patches of them, simply cannot replicate the ecological benefits of mature forests.

"I planted thousands of street trees and other communities are doing that, and they create cover, but they don't do the same thing that forest stands do," Young said. Trees "do a lot and they're good, but this is directed at trying to protect forested areas."

Healey and Young's bills are "narrowly tailored to address the most critical need of our most pressured forest land," Healey said. "We're not against development."

Developers however, aren't convinced, though.

"We're very concerned that this bill contradicts a generation of land use planning," said Tom Ballentine, vice president for policy and government affairs for the Maryland chapter of NAIOP—a commercial real estate development association—in his testimony before the Senate committee February 20, 2018.

"It makes the existence of priority forest the single most important factor in determining the location and density of future development," Ballentine added.

The amended Forest Conservation Act would also change the standard by which state and local authorities can approve the clearing of priority forest areas. Existing law "requires 'sufficient justification' to remove priority forest areas," but doesn't provide detailed guidance and has been variously interpreted across jurisdictions, according to Lutz's written testimony.

Developers said the process for clearing priority forest is already arduous. It's expensive and time-consuming, they say.

The new restrictions, Ballentine said, will "make it nearly impossible for local governments to approve clearing of priority forest."

Bill Castelli, who represented Maryland REALTORS at the Senate committee hearing Feb. 20, said this bill would increase the cost of development, and "the more development cost that occurs when you're developing property ... the more difficult it is for developers to create" affordable housing.

See FORESTS Page A6



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# COMMENTARY

## Benjamin L. Cardin United States Senator for Maryland



### On International Women's Day, Senator Ben Cardin Calls on U.S. Senate to Remove The Deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment

WASHINGTON—U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.), lead sponsor of *Senate Joint Resolution 5 (S.J.Res. 5)*, which would remove the deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment, spoke on the floor of the Senate Thursday to commemorate International Women's Day. Video of Senator Cardin can be downloaded here. His full remarks, as delivered, follow.

"I rise to recognize March as Women's History Month, and today—March 8th—as International Women's Day. Both at home and abroad, how a country treats its women is very much a barometer of its success. When women live without limitations on their ability to work, societies prosper. When women live without restrictions on their access to jobs, health care or justice, societies prosper. When women succeed, so do their families, their communities, and their countries.

"International Women's Day reminds us that America's global leadership starts with our progress here in the United States. Unfortunately, President Trump moved the United States in the wrong direction when he decided not just to reinstate the Global Gag Rule, but to expand it. The Global Gag Rule disqualifies international organizations from receiving U.S. family planning assistance if they use any non-U.S. funds to provide

abortion services or even just counseling. What President Trump fails to realize is that access to the family planning services these organizations provide is one of the best tools we have to prevent abortions. When enforced, the Global Gag Rule has closed the doors on some of the most effective, lifesaving women's health programs in developing countries. By reinstating and expanding the Global Gag Rule, President Trump is denying millions of women and their families' access to critical health care services and endangering their lives and the lives of their children.

"International Women's Day is an appropriate time to remind my Senate colleagues that we must end the Global Gag Rule once and for all.

"It was also recently reported that the State Department is removing references to women's rights from this year's Human Rights Report. Paging George Orwell. I'm troubled to learn that the Trump administration apparently doesn't feel that women's rights are important enough to include in our conversations on human rights.

"I was equally troubled to learn that Secretary Tillerson also removed gender equality integration

See **EQUAL RIGHTS** Page A7

## Marc Morial, President and CEO National Urban League



### Black (Immigrant) Lives Matter

"As we move forward in dialogue and action, as we question the legitimacy of documents, policies, and practices that render some bodies legal and others "alien." We must also push ourselves to acknowledge and address the intersections of immigrant identities. Over the past decade, as the immigrant rights movement in our country has expanded, our understanding of immigration has narrowed to the non-Black, Latino experience."

—Opal Tometi,  
Black Alliance for Just Immigration,  
"Why The Black Immigrant Experience is  
Central to Lasting Social Change,"  
State of Black America 2017

We are long overdue for a discussion about immigration as it relates to Black immigrants, particularly at this moment as the current presidential administration clamors to end legal protections for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, and congressional leaders lurch from one proposed bipartisan solution to another in search of a permanent legislative fix. To be sure, to live in this country as an undocumented person is to live a life overshadowed by fear, but combine that fear with the harsh realities of race in our nation and you have a volatile mix.

The numbers are troubling—and telling. Black immigrants make up a small percentage of DACA recipients. They are an estimated 12,000 of 700,000 recipients, and comprise less than 10% of all our nation's entire immigrant population, but at 21%, they are predictably overrepresented in deportation proceedings as a result of criminal convictions, and according to the deputy director of the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, the same yawning disparity holds true for detention rates. BAJI's State of Black Immigrants report estimates that "one out of every five noncitizens facing deportation on criminal grounds before the Executive Office for Immigration Review is Black."

While undocumented Black immigrants share a universal story of migration, struggle, and survival, they must also contend with the heightened risk of social vulnerability commonly tied to race in our nation. As we enter the proverbial ring to fight for the civil and human rights of those brought to this country as children, recognize no other home, and as President Obama once noted, are "Americans in their heart, in their minds, in every single way but one: on paper," we must en-

sure that solutions that benefit one immigrant community do not derail the opportunities of another. Therefore, the stories and voices of Black immigrants must remain top-of-mind and relevant throughout this debate.

The Trump administration recently left the fate of these 700,000 undocumented immigrants in the hands of the Supreme Court. A decision to allow the Trump administration to end the DACA program—which currently shields those young men and women from deportation—would have resulted in the near immediate loss of that protection. The added travesty for Black immigrants is that over-policing in their communities and increased engagement with the criminal justice system would have increased their risk of deportation. But in a widely expected setback, the Supreme Court rejected the administration's request to hear the case. While the court's decision offers a timely lifeline to DACA recipients, who faced the imminent expiration of the program's legal protections, the reprieve is temporary.

The disturbing language said to come from the White House claiming that Nigerians live in huts, that all Haitians have AIDS, or that Africans should return to their slur-worthy countries, would evidence a disdain for immigrants who come from majority Black countries. Various proposed congressional resolutions have highlighted the urgency of amplifying the experiences of Black immigrants. There are bipartisan proposals on the table that offer a permanent fix for DACA recipients and DREAMers (undocumented immigrants who are eligible, but have not applied for DACA), in exchange for ending established channels to legal immigration such as Temporary Protected Status (TPS), protections for immigrants who come from countries experiencing environmental or social upheaval, the visa diversity lottery program, and family-based immigration programs—some of the very programs that created and create legal pathways for Black immigration.

We are stronger together. The immigrants' rights movement needs to be inclusive and incorporate the realities of its diverse constituencies. Now is the time for rights groups, advocates, and allies to begin to specifically look at and address the complicated needs and reality of Black undocumented immigrants whose stories and voices are rarely heard above prevailing media narratives. It is time to affirm that their lives matter, too.

## The National Capital Trolley Museum



Open to the Public

PHOTO BY FRANK HICKS

### THE NATIONAL CAPITAL TROLLEY MUSEUM

The National Capital Trolley Museum preserves and interprets the heritage of electric and interurban railways of Washington, D.C. and environs for the benefit of present and future generations, while supplementing its collections with significant national and international objects to enhance its interpretive programs. The National Capital Trolley Museum was founded in 1959 after the abandonment of streetcar service in the District of Columbia had become a certainty. The Museum opened to the public in 1969 at its present location in Northwest Branch Park in Montgomery County, Maryland. The Museum is open Saturdays and Sundays, Noon to 5pm and Thursdays and Fridays from 10am to 2pm (March 15–May 15; June 15–July 15; and October 1–November 15). Admission is \$7 for Adults and \$5 for Children (17 and under) and Seniors (65 and over). For more information, visit <http://www.dctrolley.org/>.

## Child Watch

by Marion Wright Edelman



### A 50 Year Plea Persists

"In 1968, the Kerner Commission concluded that America was heading toward 'two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.' Today, America's communities are experiencing increasing racial tensions and inequality, working-class resentment over the unfulfilled American Dream, white supremacy violence, toxic inaction in Washington, and the decline of the nation's example around the world."

This quote is an introduction to *Healing Our Divided Society: Investing in America Fifty Years After the Kerner Report*, a newly released update on just how far our nation still has to go to fulfill the Kerner Report's goals. The original report was released February 29, 1968 by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders created by President Lyndon B. Johnson to study the causes of the "racial disorders" that had erupted across the country during the summer of 1967, resulting in weeks of devastating rioting, violence, and deaths. The "long, hot summer" of 1967 followed earlier riots during the summers of 1964, 1965, and 1966 and left many Americans terrified that violence would continue to escalate with no end and no solutions. But the Kerner Commission, as the National Advisory Commission came to be called after its Chair Illinois Governor Otto Kerner, Jr., did not believe our country was doomed to a permanent cycle of rioting and racial division. Its report determined that ending the violence needed to start by acknowledging the persistent American truth at its root: we were a divided society, still separate, still unequal.

The 1968 report offered specific recommendations, many focused on creating economic opportunity for Black citizens imprisoned in concentrated segregated poverty. Others addressed the need to hire and train more diverse police forces. An entire section was devoted to education with special concern about the poor reading and math skills and low graduation and employment rates of millions of Black students stuck in predominantly Black, poor, and unequal schools. The 1968 Kerner Re-

port concluded that all of its proposed solutions were not just doable, but essential: "It is time now to turn with all the purpose at our command to the major unfinished business of this nation. It is time to adopt strategies for action that will produce quick and visible progress. It is time to make good the promises of American democracy to all citizens—urban and rural, white and black, Spanish-surname, American Indian, and every minority group ... These programs will require unprecedented levels of funding and performance, but they neither probe deeper nor demand more than the problems which called them forth. There can be no higher priority for national action and no higher claim on the nation's conscience."

But *Healing Our Divided Society* shows that despite progress in many areas over the last fifty years, we still have not completed the urgent business of making the promises of American democracy good for all and the call for sustained national action must continue. The new report, co-edited by former Oklahoma Senator Fred Harris, the only surviving member of the original Kerner Commission, and Alan Curtis, CEO of the Milton Eisenhower

Foundation, includes chapters by scholars and policy experts seeking to chart our nation's course forward.

In a chapter on America's ongoing struggles to change the odds for all children, I shared my deep disappointment that even as our nation becomes much more racially and ethnically diverse, children of color, especially Black children, remain so far behind their White peers. Growing inequality exacerbates the racial divide as very large disparities in family median income, wages and family wealth stunt opportunity for children. Nearly one in five children is poor and nearly 70 percent of the almost 13.2 million poor children are children of color. The younger children are, the poorer they are, and Black children remain the poorest—most likely to be trapped in what the Kerner Report called the "prison of poverty" in our wealthy nation. Closing this indefensible and curable inequality gap and racial divide remains the major unfinished business of our nation and, I believe, the greatest threat to our national security and economic future.

See **WATCH**, Page A8

## The Prince George's Post

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# BUSINESS

## Social Security Matters

### Ask Rusty— Should My Wife Wait Until Age 66 to Claim Benefits?

by Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

**Dear Rusty:** I will be at my full retirement age of 66 in June. I now work part time and plan to continue for the foreseeable future. My wife will be 63 in June. She now works full time but plans to shift to part time in the near future. I prefer to delay applying for Social Security as long as possible. Should my wife wait until she is 66 to claim her benefits?

**Signed: Planning Ahead**

**Dear Planning:** Whether or not your wife should wait until age 66 depends on a lot of factors, including how healthy she is, what her family longevity history is, and if she needs the money sooner. If she takes her Social Security at age 63, she'll get 20.9% less than she would get at her full retirement age, or "FRA", which for her is 66 years plus 2 months. And if she claims her benefits early and continues to work, she'll also be subject to Social Security's "earnings limit" (\$17,040 for 2018) which, if she exceeds it, will cause Social Security to withhold future benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 over the limit that she earns (that limit goes away when she reaches her FRA). The earnings limit is something that you do not need to worry about because you are nearing your FRA; the limit goes way up (to \$45,360 for 2018) in the year you reach your full retirement age and goes away completely once you've attained it.

If you plan to delay applying for your own benefits, you may already know that after June you will start accumulating "delayed retirement credits" at a rate of 2/3rds of 1% per month you delay (8% per year). Age 70 is when you'll reach the maximum benefit available to you, but you can actually apply at any time after your FRA and get all the delayed retirement credits you've earned up to that point.

Because you were born in 1952 you have yet another option available which was eliminated in 2015 for all those born after January 1, 1954. If your wife decides to start her own Social Security benefits early, and after you have reached your full retirement age, you can file something known as a "restricted application for spousal benefits only." By doing so you could collect 1/2 of your wife's FRA benefit amount as a spousal benefit, while letting your own retirement benefit earn delayed retirement credits up to age 70 when your benefit would be 32% higher than it would be at age 66. This would obviously mean that your wife would be taking her benefit earlier than her FRA (and thus it would be reduced), but it would also mean that you would collect that spousal benefit for about 4 years before converting to your own. This is something you would need to look at carefully, specifically whether the financial advantage from using this option would offset the permanent benefit reduction your wife would incur by claiming her benefits earlier than her FRA.

*The information presented in this article is intended for general information purposes only. The opinions and interpretations expressed are the viewpoints of the AMAC Foundation's Social Security Advisory staff, trained and accredited under the National Social Security Advisors program of the National Social Security Association, LLC (NSSA). NSSA, the AMAC Foundation, and the Foundation's Social Security Advisors are not affiliated with or endorsed by the United States Government, the Social Security Administration, or any other state government. Furthermore, the AMAC Foundation and its staff do not provide legal or accounting services. The Foundation welcomes questions from readers regarding Social Security issues. To submit a request, contact the Foundation at info@amacfoundation.org.*

### Zimbabwe from A1

global business partners, and the African Union appreciates the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation for being the bridge to this on-going partnership."

The meeting concluded with an invitation from Minister Shamu, African Union Ambassador Chihombori and Carp Global for the Economic

Development Corporation to visit Zimbabwe to explore business opportunities.

To learn more about exporting opportunities that can lead to economic growth and prosperity on the continent of Africa and other countries around the globe, contact Martin Ezemma, EDC Director of International Business at (mezemma@co.pg.md.us) or 301-583-4650.

### Morningside from A2

ing-it-yourself and taught his family to do the same." Survivors include his daughters Susan and Regina and two grandchildren. The Requiem Mass was held at St. Mary's in Upper Marlboro.

• José Cadisal, 93, U.S. Navy, retired, died Feb. 18. He was the husband of the late Felicitas Cadisal; father of Nora, Stephen and John Cadisal; grandfather of Jaden and Jared. Mass of Christian Burial was at St. Columba's in Oxon Hill. Burial was March 13 at Arlington.

### Milestones

Happy birthday to Constance Bennett and my great-grandson Riley McHale, March 16; Sharon Ryan, Helene Williams, Judy Bornman and Alysha Perez, March 18;

Kristopher Calhoun, Audrey Pridgen and Gladys Davidson, March 20; Russ Kyser, Matthew Curcio-Bobbitt and Dejuh Bedewi, March 21.

Happy anniversary to Morrine and Harold Wilson on March 22.

*Happy St. Patrick's Day to all you Irish!*

## Annapolis Roundup: Medical Cannabis, Other Bills Advance

By SEAN WHOOLEY  
Capital News service

ANNAPOLIS, MD—Maryland legislation that expands the state's medical cannabis industry to include more minority ownership on Thursday passed in the House of Delegates—where it had failed in the waning minutes of the session last year.

The bill, sponsored by Delegate Cheryl Glenn, D-Baltimore, advanced thanks to an overwhelming majority vote. Prior to the vote, Glenn addressed the floor, thanking everybody involved for their contributions. Speaker Michael Busch, D-Anne Arundel, echoed Glenn after the vote.

"It was a lot of hard work on both sides of the aisle," Busch said. "Everyone came together." *House bill 2*, cross-filed with *Senate bill 1*, encourages industry participation by minority, women and small-business owners, reforming the Natalie M. Laprade Medical Cannabis Commission.

It establishes a 20-license cap for cannabis growers up from 15 and alters the definition of grower to mean a certain entity that cultivates or packages medical cannabis and is authorized to provide cannabis to certain entities. It also creates a 20-license cap for processors.

The legislation also institutes a "compassionate use" special fund to provide free or discounted medical cannabis to specified individuals.

The Maryland Department of Transportation's Office of Minority Business Resources Information last year conducted an analysis of business disparities in the state.

The analysis concluded minority and female entrepreneurs "earn substantially and significantly less than their nonminority male counterparts in the State of Maryland market area." The analysis said its findings are relevant to the medical cannabis industry as well.

### Constitutional amendment would allow election-day voter registration

A constitutional amendment that would allow a qualified individual to register and vote at a precinct polling place on Election Day passed in the House on Thursday, March 8, 2018.

Delegate Kirill Reznik, D-Montgomery, sponsored *House bill 532*, with 29 other delegates listed as sponsors. A state analysis found only 16 states, along with Washington, D.C., allow for same-day registration, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Currently, voter registration is continuous under Maryland law, but is closed from 9 p.m. on the 21st day preceding an election until the 11th day following it.

Delegate Nicholas Kipke, R-Anne Arundel, took to the floor to urge the chamber to reject the legislation because it lacked an amendment requiring people who register and vote on the same day to present identification.

However, the House voted, 91-47, in favor of the bill.

### Property shielding

Legislation that allows domestic violence, stalking and human-trafficking survivors to shield property records from abusers also advanced in the House on Thursday.

*House bill 633*, spearheaded by Delegate Anne Healey, D-Prince George's, would establish procedures for participants in the Address Confidentiality Program or the Human Trafficking Address Confidentiality Program to use an address assigned by the Office of the Secretary of State as a substitute.

Maryland's Safe At Home Address Confidentiality Program provides a substitute address, cloaking a survivor's location, and includes a free mail-forwarding service. Healey said the purpose of the legislation is to turn what is already practice into concrete law.

The bill passed, thanks to a 136-0 vote.

### Driving while on the phone

The House also passed, by a 78-58 margin, legislation increasing the maximum fine to \$500 for the unlawful use of a handheld telephone while driving. The previous law included a \$75 fine for a first offense, \$125 for a second and \$175 for a third or subsequent offense.

A state analysis for *House bill 42* said during fiscal year 2017, the District Court reported 31,286 citations issued to fully licensed adult drivers using handheld telephones while operating a motor vehicle.

### Tax exemptions

The House also unanimously passed legislation allowing Marylanders to claim state tax exemptions—for taxpayers, spouses and dependents—and itemized deductions.

The Senate passed *Senate bill 184* on February 7, 2018 and its cross-file, *House bill 365*, earned a 138-0 vote in the House on

Thursday, March 8, 2018. An analysis from the Office of the Comptroller found the legislation could provide up to \$1.2 billion in tax relief for Marylanders in fiscal year 2019.

The bills, which have the support of Gov. Larry Hogan, R, are a reaction to extensive recent changes to the federal tax code.

### Cyberbullying

The Maryland Senate on Thursday passed the second part of a cyberbullying package sponsored by Sen. Bobby Zirkin, D-Baltimore County. *Senate bill 725* gives authority to school principals to report cyber abuse to law enforcement directly, instead of having to first go through a board of education.

Based on legislation in Texas nicknamed "David's Law," created after 16-year old David Molak of San Antonio committed suicide in January 2016, it also makes it easier for victims to get court relief.

Under current rules, Zirkin said, civil injunctive relief requires a plaintiff to show "immediate, substantial and irreparable harm," a process he believes is slow and outdated.

"A single, huge act by that bully ... you can't take it back," Zirkin said.

This comes a week after the Senate passed the first bill, *Grace's Law 2.0*, which updates Maryland's 2013 legislation to specifically cover abuse via social media. *Senate bill 726* was named after Grace McComas, a 15-year old who killed herself in 2012 after repeated cyber abuse.

*\*Capital News Service reporter Zach Shapiro contributed to this report.*

## PGCPS Taking Action to Increase Workforce Diversity

### Task Force Recommendations Address the Critical Need for Latino Educators

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, MD—Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) has released workforce diversity recommendations to address the scarcity of Latino educators in the majority-minority school system. The Workforce Diversity Task Force's final report addresses the need to increase the recruitment, development and retention of highly-effective educators who reflect the diverse student enrollment, specifically the rapidly growing Latino population, in schools throughout the county.

Launched in 2016 by the school system's Office of Human Resources, the task force analyzed staffing, student enrollment data and workforce diversity initiatives, including those focused on enhancing the pipeline of Latino and male educators. The task force concluded that increasing the number of Latino educators is critically needed to address changing student demographics.

"Teachers who reflect their students' backgrounds have more empathy and can better relate to students who see them as role models," said Dr. Kevin M. Maxwell, Chief Executive Officer. "I am grateful to the Workforce Diversity Task Force for serving as an invaluable resource in developing evidence-based practices to improve our workforce effectiveness. Working together, we will fulfill the Promise of PGCPS by supporting outstanding academic achievement for all students."

The percentage of Latino students now exceeds 30 percent, nearly double the number from a decade ago, and continues to increase. However, the number of Latino educators in PGCPS is less than 5 percent.

### Since 2014, PGCPS has:

- increased the number of Latino teachers from 205 to 402.
- doubled the number of Latino administrators and supervisors from 8 to 16.
- maintained an 82 percent retention rate of Latino staff.
- staffed immersion schools and International High Schools with diverse candidates.
- partnered with the Spanish Embassy to hire more than 40 teachers.

The task force was comprised of six sub-committees: Sourcing of Teacher Candidates, Sourcing of Administrator Candidates, Grow Your Own Teachers and Administrators, Higher Education and Professional Development, Cultural Competence and Support, and Communication and Branding.

The 15 recommendations were organized around three major themes as listed below:

### Sourcing of Teachers and Administrators

- Develop state and local legislative bills to support teacher and administrator workforce diversity.
- Rebrand and strengthen 21st Century PGCPS Future Educators Academy.
- Provide "open contracts" to prospective teachers within PGCPS high school graduates pool.

- Create teacher referral incentive program.
- Establish foreign exchange programs for teacher diversity and provide international experiences for existing teacher corps.
- Identify current diverse staff with administrator certification.
- Develop an alternative certification program for school administrators.

### Cultural Competence and Support

- Adopt non-discriminatory statement for all staff.
- Create expectation of cultural responsiveness among all staff.
- Create culturally-proficient professional development
- Develop culturally-responsive recruitment, selection and retention practices

### Partnerships, Communications and Branding

- Conduct comprehensive analysis of PGCPS Latino teaching candidates.
- Develop partnerships with two- and four-year colleges/universities with high number of Latino students.
- Convene university partners to raise awareness of PGCPS workforce diversity initiative.
- Engage in garnering political advocacy to support PGCPS workforce diversity initiative.
- Leverage community and faith-based organizations to create positive messaging about workforce.
- Establish strong partnerships for diverse teacher sourcing.

## FREE St. Patrick's Day LYFT Rides Throughout Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER, WRAP

Upper Marlboro, MD—Preparing to combat that time of year when, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), over a third (39%) of all U.S. traffic deaths involve drunk drivers\*, free St. Patrick's Day Lyft rides will be offered to deter impaired driving throughout Prince George's County, Maryland beginning Saturday, March 17th.

# OUT ON THE TOWN

ERIC D. SNIDER'S  
IN THE DARK

## Movie Review

### Paddington 2

Paddington 2  
Grade: B+  
Rated PG, mild peril, bears  
1 hr., 43 min

If you missed *Paddington* three years ago, you missed one of the most thoroughly delightful children's movies in recent memory, about an anthropomorphic Peruvian bear (voiced by Ben Whishaw) who comes to live with a human family in London. Based on Michael Bond's beloved books (which date back to 1958) and written and directed by Paul King (director of *The Mighty Boosh*), *Paddington* fell into the sweet spot of movies meant for kids that work so well on adults that we suspect they were actually made for us.

*Paddington 2*, with King and the cast returning, is nearly as delightful as its predecessor, with effortless charm, well-choreographed humor, and a magnanimous spirit. When bad or scary things happen, the characters react to them gently, unhysterically, so as not to worry the little ones. *Paddington* gets sent to prison for a crime he didn't commit—scary!—but he immediately befriends everyone and turns the place into a civilized utopia. Politeness and manners win the day every time.

The story concerns *Paddington*'s efforts to find a birthday present for his dear Aunt Lucy (voice of Imelda Staunton), who lives at the Home for Retired Bears back in Peru. Mr. Gruber (Jim Broadbent), the antiques dealer, has a rare pop-up book about the landmarks of London that would be perfect—Aunt Lucy has always wanted to see London—and *Paddington* takes up odd jobs to raise the money to buy it, supported, as always, by his adoptive family, the Browns.

Down the street lives Phoenix Buchanan (Hugh Grant), a washed-up stage actor reduced to doing dog food commercials who believes the pop-up book has clues to a hidden treasure, which he needs to finance his career-reviving one-



ROTTENTOMATOES

*Paddington 2* finds *Paddington* happily settled with the Brown family in Windsor Gardens, where he has become a popular member of the community, spreading joy and marmalade wherever he goes. While searching for the perfect present for his beloved Aunt Lucy's hundredth birthday, *Paddington* spots a unique pop-up book in Mr. Gruber's antique shop, and embarks upon a series of odd jobs to buy it. But when the book is stolen, it's up to *Paddington* and the Browns to unmask the thief ... Helmed by twice BAFTA nominated director Paul King, *Paddington 2* is co-produced by multi award-winning David Heyman / Heyday Films (producer of all eight of the *Harry Potter* films, *Gravity*, *The Boys in the Striped Pyjamas*, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*) and StudioCanal, who will also distribute in the UK, France, Germany, Australia and New Zealand. *PADDINGTON* is based on the best-selling and internationally adored series of children's stories by British author Michael Bond, which have sold more than 35 million copies worldwide, been translated into over 40 languages and captured the imagination of children and adults around the globe.

man show. A master of disguise who talks to costumed mannequins of Hamlet, Macbeth, etc., in his attic, Phoenix steals the book from Mr. Gruber, frames *Paddington* for the theft, and hustles around town looking for the clues.

It's Mrs. Brown (Sally Hawkins) who figures out that Phoenix Buchanan is the culprit, and her husband (Hugh Bonneville) is quickly convinced as well. (I'm always pleased when the "one person knows the truth but no one will believe them" phase of the plot is minimized.) While they set out to clear *Paddington*'s name, the bear himself is helping the prison chef, Knuckles McGinty (Brendan Gleeson), revise the menu to include marmalade and other inmate suggestions. (Tattooed across Knuckles' knuckles: "N-U-C-K"; "E-L-'-S.")

Back in the Browns' neighborhood, everyone whose life had been improved by *Paddington* feels his absence.

The key to both films' success is that King casts committed actors who take their work seriously. You can tell when the performers in a talking-animal movie are phoning it in and when they're giving it the same legitimacy as their more "important" roles. Hugh Grant's hammy actor-turned-scoundrel is a hilarious villain, and the scene where Hugh Bonneville and Sally Hawkins sneak around his house looking for evidence is a work of admirable silliness—but all three are dead earnest about making their characters believable within the reality established by the movie. Ben Whishaw's work is important as well, bringing *Paddington* to life with only his voice.

Strangely, the two Brown teenagers, Judy (Madeleine Harris) and Jonathan (Samuel Joslin), are wedged into the story without being given much to do, a clumsy misstep in an otherwise well-structured movie. Judy has found an old printing press and started her own newspaper; Jonathan is into trains but fears it's a nerdy hobby. Both elements factor into things eventually, but only in a cursory, checklist kind of way.

And now that I've said that, I'm worried *Paddington* will accuse me of having forgotten my manners. Quibbles aside, this is sincere, top-notch family entertainment that appeals to children and grownups without pandering to either demographic. I don't say this often, but if you see *Paddington* or *Paddington 2* and don't like it, there's something wrong with you.

## Governor Hogan Submits \$5 Million Supplemental Budget to Enhance Safety in Maryland Schools

*\$2.5 Million for Maryland Center for School Safety Operations, and \$2.5 Million in Grant Funding for School Safety Assessments*

By PRESS OFFICER  
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, MD—On March 2, 2018, Governor Larry Hogan submitted a supplemental budget that will provide increased funding for the Maryland Center for School Safety, the state's office tasked with providing a coordinated and comprehensive policy for school safety in Maryland. The governor announced this funding as part of a comprehensive school safety plan he unveiled on February 28.

"Our one-of-a-kind Maryland Center for School Safety allows us to share safety information in near real-time among school security personnel, school administrators, law enforcement, and homeland security staff, while also providing technical assistance and training for our school personnel," said Governor Hogan. "By providing additional resources and broadening the authority of this innovative center, we can make all Maryland schools safer for our children."

The governor's supplemental budget provides \$2.5 million in

operating funds to the center to hire analysts and social media trackers and allocate personnel and resources in more regions of the state. Center personnel will assist schools in conducting safety assessments and implementing new safety standards required by the governor's emergency legislation announced earlier this week.

The legislation creates Maryland's first statewide school safety standards, including required training and certification for all school resource officers and security staff. The legislation

will also require all school systems to conduct an annual school safety assessment and develop plans to address behavioral threats and emergency situations. The plans will be subject to approval by the Maryland State Board of Education and overseen by the Maryland Center for School Safety.

The supplemental budget also provides \$2.5 million in grant funding that will go directly to schools to conduct the required assessments, with oversight from the center.

"Government at all levels is grappling with what more can be done to keep kids safe," said Governor Hogan. "In addition to the \$125 million for school safety enhancements and \$50 million in annual grants announced this week, submitting this supplemental budget is something we are doing right now, today, to make our schools safer for our children."

## A Little This, A Little that

### Grow a Bountiful Garden and Share with the Hungry

By MELINDA MYERS

Do you always squeeze in an extra tomato plant, another row of beans or hill of zucchini? It seems like a good idea at the time, until they all start to produce all at once. Your family, friends and co-workers start to hide as you try to pawn off yet another bag of zucchini or tomatoes. Here is a solution that satisfies your gardening obsession and feeds the hungry in your community. Designate some growing space to a Giving Garden and donate the harvest to your local food pantry.

Feeding America reports that 41 million Americans struggle with hunger. And many are children and seniors. Gardener's Supply Company is inviting gardeners to lend a hand and take the "Garden to Give," pledge to grow food to give to those in need.

They surveyed food pantries to find out what types of fruits and veggies people most enjoy eating, and those that store well. You'll find a simple Giving Garden plan for beets, carrots, cabbage, Swiss chard, kale and winter squash on their website at [gardeners.com](http://gardeners.com). Best of all these late maturing vegetables will be ready for harvest all at about the same time, so you can make your donation in just one trip.

Don't let a lack of space stop you from participating. Plant a row or container of one or more of these vegetables to share; join forces with a neighbor who may have the space, but only limited time to garden; or gather a few friends and rent a community garden plot. Together you can grow fresh produce and memories to share.

Get the children in your life involved in growing and giving. Gardening increases focus, decreases stress and elevates children's moods. Giving helps children grow into caring well-rounded adults. Plus, if they grow the vegetables, they are more likely to eat them!

Be sure to capture a few photographs of your donation to inspire others to follow your lead. Starting in August, you can enter Gardener's Supply's online "Show What You Share," photo contest for a chance to win a prize for you and your local food pantry.

With the "Garden to Give," program, everyone who participates is a winner. The real prize is making a difference while doing something you love. Once you've experienced the benefits of sharing fresh produce with the hungry in your community, you are likely to find yourself making regular donations of garden fresh fruits and veggies to those in need ... and feeling great about it, too.



PHOTO COURTESY ROB CARDILLO

On the way to the food pantry in West Philadelphia.

Melinda Myers has written over 20 gardening books, including *Small Space Gardening* and the *Midwest Gardener's Handbook*. She hosts *The Great Courses* How to Grow Anything: Food Gardening For Everyone DVD set and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment TV and radio segments*. Myers is also a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and was commissioned by *Bonnie Plants* for her expertise to write this article. Myers' website is [www.melindamyers.com](http://www.melindamyers.com).

### Forests from A3

fordable housing.

Former International Monetary Fund economist John Wakeman-Linn, a Shady Side, Maryland, resident, testified in favor of the bill at both hearings. He argued that the cost developers accrue for having to mitigate forest clearing pales in comparison to the value of services all Maryland citizens are deprived of when forest is cleared.

"A 2015 study in Prince George's County found the benefits received from trees there are worth around \$13 billion annually, or roughly \$80,000 per year per acre of trees," Wakeman-Linn said in his testimony.

"Compare this to the one-time cost developers would face in adhering to the regulations in this act," which, based on one developer's written testimony, Wakeman-Linn estimated to be about \$33,000 per acre of trees cleared, he said. "In Prince George's County, this one-time fee would be less than the benefits (of trees) lost every six months."

And protecting forests is about more than the health, environmental and economic benefits, Healey said.

"(The forest) is a place to refresh yourself spiritually and mentally from the stresses of city life," she said. "It makes life more livable."

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## Calendar of Events

March 15 — March 21, 2018

### The Jewels: The Divas of DC Doo-Wop

Date and time: Thursday, March 15, 2018, 12:00 PM–2:00 PM  
Description: Enjoy a 30-minute documentary on, *The Jewels* (producer, Beverly Lindsay-Johnson), a popular 1960s female singing group from Washington, D.C. who toured with James Brown and recorded Billboard Hot 100 hits such as, “Opportunity.” Enjoy a 10-15-minute Q & A session after the film, followed by a 15-minute performance by *The Jewels*.

Cost: \$12/ticket  
Ages: 60 and better  
Location: Montpelier Arts Center,  
9652 Muirkirk Road, Laurel, MD  
Contact: 301-377-7800; TTY 301-699-2544

### Xtreme Teens: All-a-Glow Basketball

Date and time: Friday, March 16, 2018, 7:00 PM–10:00 PM  
Description: If you’ve ever had fun on a basketball court, just wait until you play Glow-in-the-dark basketball - it will absolutely en-“light”-en you (see what we did there?)! A night of glow fun with 5-on-5 basketball! Who could ask for more?

Cost: FREE! with M-NCPPC Youth ID  
Ages: 10–17  
Location: Kentland Community Center  
2413 Pinebrook Avenue, Landover, MD  
Contact: 301-386-2278; TTY 301-699-2544

### Xtreme Teens: Green Food and NCAA Bracket Watch Party

Date and time: Friday, March 16, 2018, 7:00 PM–10:00 PM  
Description: Enjoy a St. Patrick’s Day-type party mix (hint: the foods will be GREEN), and enjoy the fast-paced March Madness during the NCAA Tournament watch Party! Green food, friends, and basketball ...what are you waiting for? C’mon down!

Cost: FREE! with M-NCPPC Youth ID  
Ages: 10–17  
Location: Prince George’s Plaza Community Center  
6600 Adelphi Road, Hyattsville, MD  
Contact: 301-864-1611; TTY 301-699-2544

### Xtreme Teens: Jewelry Night

Date and time: Friday, March 16, 2018, 7:00 PM–10:00 PM  
Description: Do you want to bling, but the cost is prohibitive to your grind? Well, come demonstrate your creativity using arts and crafts supplies to make bracelets and necklaces. When you’re done give them as gifts, or keep the trinkets for yourself!

Cost: FREE! with M-NCPPC Youth ID  
Ages: 10–17  
Location: Vansville Community Center  
6813 Ammendale Road, Beltsville, MD  
Contact: 301-937-6621; TTY 301-699-2544

### Xtreme Teens: XBOX 360™ Explosion

Date and time: Friday, March 16, 2018, 7:30 PM–9:30 PM  
Description: Bring your favorite Xbox 360™ video game for a friendly competition against your friends. If you’re feeling especially generous, bring a game to share, too! All games are subject to staff approval.

Cost: FREE! with M-NCPPC Youth ID  
Ages: 10–17  
Location: College Park Community Center  
5051 Pierce Avenue, College Park, MD  
Contact: 301-441-2647; TTY 301-699-2544

### Family Fun Walk/Run

Date and time: Saturday, March 17, 2018, 9:00 AM–10:00 AM  
Description: We’re calling all Prince George’s County walkers and runners to join us for a fun walk/run at the Prince George’s Sports & Learning Complex. Bring the whole family, lace up your shoes and meet us on the outdoor track! Call us at 301-446-6842 for more information.

\*Scheduled to take place outdoors; weather permitting. In the event of inclement weather, classes will be held in the gymnasium.

Cost: FREE  
Ages: All ages are welcome  
Location: Prince George’s County Sports & Learning Complex  
8001 Sheriff Road, Landover, MD  
Contact: 301-583-2400; TTY 301-699-2544

### High Intensity Interval Training

Date and time: Saturday, March 17, 2018, 9:00 AM–10:00 AM  
Description: Want to increase your calorie-burning in a short amount of time? Join us for High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)—a fun, effective, 45-minute, high-intensity class that combines several different workout methods including HIIT, cardio, bodyweight strength training, plyometrics, super-setting, and multi-planar movements! Improve your fitness, build muscle, and increase your metabolism! Sign up and get active today!

Cost: Resident: \$35; Non-resident: \$46  
Ages: 16 and older  
Location: Bowie Community Center  
3209 Stonybrook Road, Bowie, MD  
Contact: 301-464-1737; TTY 301-699-2544

### Xtreme Teens: Pizza Night

Date and time: Saturday, March 17, 2018, 7:00 PM–10:00 PM  
Description: Pizza, pizza, pizza, pizza ... and chill. You’re making dinner tonight. Chef it up and create your own pizza, followed by a night of “chill” and enjoying your master-“pizza!” (master-piece—get it?)!

Cost: FREE! with M-NCPPC Youth ID  
Ages: 10–17  
Location: Kentland Community Center  
2413 Pinebrook Avenue, Landover, MD  
Contact: 301-386-2278; TTY 301-699-2544

### March Madness Yoga

Date and time: Tuesday, March 20, 2018, 6:00 PM–7:00 PM  
Description: De-stress from March Madness with yoga. Learn basic moves, strengthen your body, increase flexibility, muscle tone, and free your mind. Please bring your own yoga mat and water.

Cost: FREE  
Ages: All ages are welcome  
Location: Glenarden Community Center  
8615 McLain Avenue, Glenarden, MD  
Contact: 301-772-3151; TTY 301-699-2544

## EARTH TALK ... Strawless in Seattle: Why Are Straws So Bad for the Environment?

Dear EarthTalk:

*What’s the deal with some restaurants no longer offering straws to their customers? What’s so bad about sipping your drink through a straw anyway?*

—Jeffrey Edwards,  
Seattle, WA

Americans use 500 million plastic straws—or 1.6 per person on average—every day. Based on this, a typical American will use more than 38,000 plastic straws over the course of a lifetime. While drinking through a single-use plastic straw seems innocent enough, don’t fool yourself: many of these straws find their way into our oceans, polluting underwater ecosystems and harming marine wildlife.

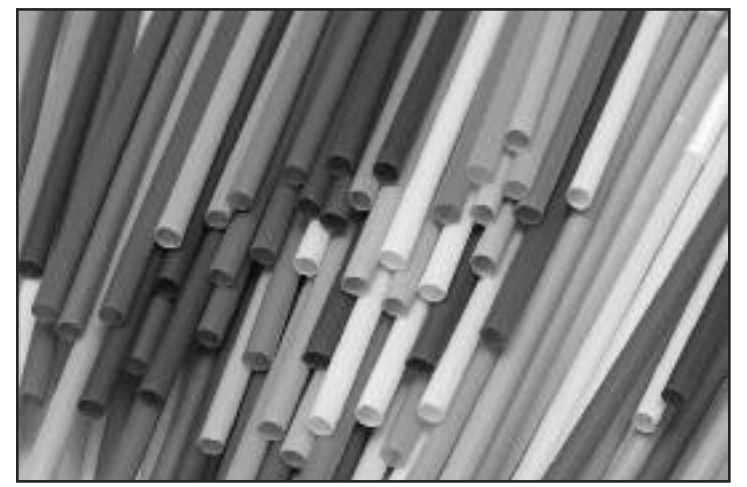
Researchers warn that if we don’t clean up our act, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish by 2050. Plastics don’t biodegrade, but instead break into tiny pieces which are scooped up by marine organisms unable to digest them — or end up in huge mid-ocean gyres too clogged for ships to pass through. Cutting way back on or eliminating single-use plastic straws won’t completely solve our ocean waste problem, but it will go a long way toward cutting back on plastic in the ocean as well as raising public awareness of the issue in general.

Last September the city of Seattle went strawless in soli-

arity with the Lonely Whale Foundation’s Strawless Ocean campaign (look for #StopSucking on Twitter), a global initiative to remove 500 million plastic straws from the U.S. waste stream in 2017. Some 2.3 million plastic straws were permanently removed from the city’s restaurants, cafes, bars and other businesses—and in July 2018 an official ban on plastic straws will go into effect there. Lonely Whale hopes that other cities will follow in Seattle’s forward-thinking footsteps.

For those who still love using straws, there are a growing number of reusable alternatives to plastic now available. Bambu Home’s handmade reusable bamboo straws come with a cleaning brush and can be used hundreds of times. Eco at Heart sells reusable steel straws that are durable, easy to clean and portable, so you can bring them into the car, work or anywhere. Steelys reusable steel straws come in a wide variety of sizes, including versions with bent tips. Aardvark’s paper straws are flexible, customizable and durable—and biodegrade on their own within 90 days.

Meanwhile, another eco-friendly option is glass, such as those made by Hummingbird Straws. And perhaps even greener are Harvest Straws, which are grown, harvested and cut by hand in Southern California from heritage, non-GMO



CREDIT: HORIA VARLAN, FLICKRCC

**he average American uses more than 38,000 straws over a lifetime without thinking about the implications of all this plastic going to waste and polluting our oceans.**

grain grown without irrigation, using no chemicals in any part of the process. And reusable water bottles with built-in straws—such as steel and silicone models from Klean Kanteen or glass and metal varieties from Simply Straws—are also a good alternative to plastic straws. You can shop for these and other alternatives to plastic via the [strawlessocean.org](http://strawlessocean.org) website.

Using disposable paper straws or opting out from using a straw at a restaurant or drive through are much better options than the conventional plastic straws that will end up as pollution in our oceans or in marine animals’ bodies. It may require a bit of extra work but using reusable straws or alternatives can make a big difference for wildlife and for ourselves.

CONTACTS: Strawless in Seattle, [www.strawlessocean.org/seattle](http://www.strawlessocean.org/seattle); Lonely Whale Foundation, [www.lonelywhale.org](http://www.lonelywhale.org); Bambu Home, [www.bambuhome.com](http://www.bambuhome.com); Harvest Straws, [www.harveststraws.com](http://www.harveststraws.com); Aardvark Straws, [www.aardvarkstraws.com](http://www.aardvarkstraws.com); Simply Straws, [www.simplystraws.com](http://www.simplystraws.com); Klean Kanteen, [www.kleankanteen.com](http://www.kleankanteen.com).

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## Equal Rights from A4

from the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM). The Foreign Affairs Manual is the chief document for instructing our foreign policy leadership on the best ways to integrate gender considerations into our diplomatic efforts. Abandoning that signals a reversal of decades’ worth of work in promoting global gender equality.

“The United States should be taking the lead on fostering an open and honest dialogue about women’s issues internationally—not silencing it. We are better than this. We must be better than this.

“Here at home, women have succeeded this past year in taking control of the narrative on sexual harassment and they have forced deaf ears to listen. We are witnessing the rise of a new, more equitable social order, built on the raw grit and courage of women speaking out to say, ‘Me Too.’

“Hearing so many of our fellow Americans—mothers, sisters, wives, daughters, friends—retell and relive some of their most traumatic experiences has been deeply troubling, but it has also been a lesson in bravery, in tenacity, and in women’s unbreakable spirit.

“It is that bravery which we must now meet with our own, as individuals and collectively. If we witness harassment, we must be brave enough to intervene. If we are told about abuse, we must be brave enough to take decisive action. If we hear of gender discrimination, we must be brave enough to fight it, even when doing so is not politically expedient or popular. Scores of women have proven their moral strength. It’s time for us to demonstrate ours.

“This Women’s History Month, let us take a moment to reflect on the thousands and thousands of ‘Me Too’ stories that go untold or unheard.

“Let us recognize the single, working mother making barely more than minimum wage, living paycheck to paycheck and struggling to turn \$5 into a meal for three. When her co-worker begins propositioning her, growing increasingly persistent and

threatening with each attempt, there are no cameras and cable talk shows waiting to expose him. She bears the burden alone, often feeling forced to choose between enduring disparaging behavior at work or providing for her children at home.

“Let us recognize the college graduate working in an office, empowered and excited about the direction of her career. But in every meeting, her boss undermines her ideas, and one day, when they’re alone, questions her suggestively about her methods of birth control. Weeks later, his lewd remarks evolve into inappropriate physical conduct, and he tells her if she ever complains, he will ensure she never finds another job in her chosen profession.

“Let us recognize the immigrant woman working hard at her new job in her new home, motivated to become part of the American Dream. Her male coworkers call her by disparaging names, and suggest openly to their supervisor that she should make less than they do, in the event she ever becomes pregnant and ‘costs the company money’. She begins to fear both for her job and for herself, but to quit would mean to lose the new life she has so painstakingly built.

“For an untold number of women, these stories are painfully familiar. The ‘Me Too’ movement has proven that sexual harassment and discrimination know no age and no income level. These experiences are felt by all women, of all backgrounds, and so it is up to every man to combat it. Sexual harassment is about power. It’s about harassers and authority figures feeling emboldened by being able to behave however they want—whenever they want—with impunity.

“So let us destroy that sense of impunity.

“If this behavior is about exerting a twisted kind of power, let us arm women with the most powerful tool in our legal system: the U.S. Constitution. Let us, finally, pass the *Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)*.

“The *ERA* is barely longer than a Tweet, but it would fi-

nally give women full and equal protection under the Constitution. Section 1 of the *ERA* states, quite simply, that ‘Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.’

“When Congress proposed the *ERA* in 1972, it provided that the measure had to be ratified by three-fourths of the States—38 States—within seven years. This deadline was later extended to 10 years by a joint resolution, but ultimately only 35 out of 38 States had ratified the *ERA* when the deadline expired in 1982. Note that the deadline wasn’t contained in the amendment itself; the deadline was in the text of the joint resolution.

“Article V of the Constitution contains no time limits for the ratification of amendments, so the *ERA* deadline is arbitrary. To put the matter in context, the *27th Amendment* to the Constitution, which prohibits Congressional pay raises without an intervening election, was ratified in 1992, 203 years after it was first proposed.

“The Senate should vote to remove the *ERA* deadline immediately, and every State in our union that has not yet taken up its consideration should do so without any further delay.

“Nevada became the 36th State to ratify the amendment last March, leaving the *ERA* only 2 States short of the required three-fourths of the States threshold under the Constitution if the deadline were to be abolished.

“I think many—perhaps most—Americans would be shocked to learn that our Constitution has no provision expressly prohibiting gender discrimination.

“The *ERA* would incorporate a ban on gender-based discrimination, explicitly written or otherwise, into the Constitution. It could change outcomes in unequal pay cases by requiring the Supreme Court to use the higher standard of ‘strict scrutiny’ when assessing those cases—the same standard used in racial and religious discrimination cases.

“Just as important, it would provide a constitutional basis for

claims of gender-based violence, and give Congress the constitutional basis to pass a law giving women victimized by gender-based violence legal recourse in federal courts.

“In a 2011 interview, the late Justice Antonin Scalia summed up the need for an Equal Rights Amendment best. He said, ‘Certainly the Constitution does not require discrimination on the basis of sex. The only issue is whether it prohibits it. It doesn’t.’

“So I ask my Senate colleagues this question most sincerely: are we willing to do what must be done to prohibit gender discrimination in the Constitution?

“Progress has no autopilot feature. We must be its agents. We must be its champions. And when we wake up each day to the loud and growing chorus of women saying ‘me too,’ how can we deny them a legal tool as powerful and important as their own country’s constitution?

“The people being affected by systemic gender inequality are our constituents. They are our wives, our daughters, and our granddaughters. They are American citizens and human beings who deserve basic respect and equality.

“We are capable of so much more than lip service. We are capable of celebrating Women’s History Month by making history. I call on this Senate to remove the deadline on passing the *Equal Rights Amendment* and show American women that we are the leaders; that we were sent here, and we will take action.

“Let us prove we will use our voices when silence becomes complicity, and that we will use our votes when our values need defending.

“Women deserve to see that their Nation’s founding document values them and treats them in a fashion equal to men. They are right to expect that gender equality should be an explicit, basic principle of our society.

“Let us all work together to get this done. Women’s rights are human rights. And human rights are not, and never should be, a partisan issue.”

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