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## Kelsey Hughes of PGCMLS a Recipient of YALSA's 2021 Volunteers of the Year Award

By DONNA SCOTT-MARTIN  
PGCMLS

LARGO, Md. (Feb. 16, 2021)—The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) is proud to announce that Kelsey Hughes of the South Bowie Branch Library was recently awarded the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) 2021 Volunteers of the Year Award. Hughes' exemplary service on the 2019 Outstanding Books for the College Bound and Lifelong Learners Committee is an example of the international leadership that PGCMLS staff demonstrate in the field of library and information science.

The award-winning committee members are:

- Yolanda Hood, Chair, University of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown, PEI, Canada
- Donna Steel Cook, Central ISD, Pollok, TX
- **Kelsey Hughes, South Bowie Branch, PGCMLS, Bowie, MD**
- Jane Nichols, Oregon State University Libraries and Press, Cor-



PHOTO COURTESY PGCMLS

**Kelsey Hughes of the South Bowie Branch Library was recently awarded the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) 2021 Volunteers of the Year Award.**

- vallis, OR
  - Jennifer Powell, Tarrant High School, Tarrant, AL
  - Jamie Watson, Baltimore County Public Library, Towson, MD
- "We are truly honored to re-

ceive this award," said the 2019 Outstanding Books for the College Bound Committee. "We were happy to have an opportunity to work on the 2019 Outstanding Books for the College Bound. Despite a challenging year, our team was able to come together from all different parts of the continent and find joy in sharing about books and learning together. I am so proud of the final list we developed and so pleased that I get to share this honor with my five fellow committee members," remarked Kelsey Hughes, who serves as a Librarian at PGCMLS' South Bowie Branch.

The two other recipients of the 2021 YALSA Volunteers of the Year Award are Gregory Lum, individual YALSA member and Molly Dettmann, Coordinator of YALSA's 2021 Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers Blogging Team. The 2021 Volunteer of the Year Award Jury members are: Chair Jessica Hilbun Schwartz, Louisville Public Library, Louisville, CO; Betsy Fraser, Calgary Public Library, Calgary, AB, Canada; Jennie Randolph, Wake

County Public Schools, Raleigh, NC; Caitlyn Seale, Mississauga, ON; and Carolyn Vidmar, Baltimore, MD.

This award acknowledges the contributions of an individual YALSA member, YALSA chair or team lead, and YALSA group who have demonstrated outstanding service to the mission, goals and work of YALSA during a given service year. Each recipient receives a complimentary membership to YALSA for one year. For more information, visit the Awards and Grants section of the YALSA website.

*Kelsey Hughes is the Librarian III at the South Bowie Branch of Prince George's County Memorial Library System. She previously served as the Library's Adult and Teen Services Specialist. She also serves as the chair of the Maryland Library Association Teen Interest Group. She received her master's degree in Library and Information Science from the University of*

See YALSA Page A5

## Governor Larry Hogan Appoints Rachel Jones to Maryland House of Delegates

*Jones to Represent Legislative District 27B, Calvert, Prince George's Counties*

By SHAREESE CHURCHILL  
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Feb. 17, 2021)—Governor Larry Hogan today announced the appointment of Rachel Jones to the Maryland House of Delegates. The governor appointed Jones to the Maryland House of Delegates following the recommendation of the Calvert County Democratic Central Committee.

"I am confident that Rachel Jones will be a strong advocate for constituents in Calvert and Prince George's counties in her new role as delegate," said Governor Hogan. "I offer her my sincere congratulations, and I look forward to working with her to change Maryland for the better."

Jones has worked as a field representative in southern Maryland for Sen. Ben Cardin since 2016. Prior to that, she worked as an assistant to Sen. Barbara Mikulski for three years. Additionally, she has worked as an associate consultant for the Federal Communications Commission and as a legislative aide to former Sen. Nathaniel McFadden. She is very active in her church community and is the vice president of the board of directors for Farming 4 Hunger. She received her bachelor of arts degree from Morgan State University.

## MahoganyBooks Opens Second Location at National Harbor

By PRESS OFFICER  
MahoganyBooks

WASHINGTON (Feb. 11, 2021)—MahoganyBooks, an award-winning, New York Times reporting bookstore that specializes in books written for, by or about people of the African Diaspora, is opening its second bookstore at National Harbor located in Prince George's County, Maryland. MahoganyBooks will open their doors on the Juneteenth holiday (June 19). Recently MahoganyBooks was featured on the Today Show after being surprised by President Barack Obama during their book club meeting.

"Growing up in Prince George's County, this has become a full circle moment for me," stated Derrick Young, co-owner and co-founder of MahoganyBooks. "MahoganyBooks is excited to open our doors to the visitors of National Harbor, and the residents of Prince George's County. Opening on Juneteenth reminds us that we carry forward the rich history and legacy of our community."

"This is truly a testament to the support of our MahoganyBooks family. Throughout the pandemic and the 13 years prior, our community has rallied around us," said Ramunda Young, co-owner and co-founder of MahoganyBooks. "Our mission is clearer than ever. We will continue to provide a space that elevates Black authors and Black voices of the diaspora."

"We are delighted to welcome MahoganyBooks to National Harbor," said Kent Digby, EVP and senior asset manager at National Harbor. "This unique bookstore, with its regional and quickly growing national following, is the perfect complement to our retail portfolio of national brands and one-of-a-kind boutiques. National Harbor has quickly become a haven for successful retail entrepreneurs and well-loved brands."

Derrick and Ramunda founded MahoganyBooks in 2007 as an online bookstore. In 2017, MahoganyBooks opened its first physical location in the historic Anacostia community in Washington, DC, becoming the first bookstore to do so in over two decades. Since then, MahoganyBooks has hosted book discussions and signings with prominent authors, leaders, and entertainers as well as book drives to promote children's literacy. Derrick and Ramunda have taken leadership roles in the African American community by promoting reading, writing, and cultural awareness as tools to improve self-esteem, self-love and ultimately our communities to enrich the lives of motivated individuals.

### Co-owners and Co-founders of MahoganyBooks

**Ramunda Lark Young:** Occupation: Entrepreneur & Keynote speaker, co-founder/owner of MahoganyBooks in Washington DC. College/University: Langston University, Interests/Fun facts: Skydived once and eager for more. Passionate about people's voices being heard & decided to serve. Vice Chair of Human Rights Commission in VA, Mother to daughter Mahogany.

**Derrick Young:** Occupation: Entrepreneur, bookseller, co-founder/owner of MahoganyBooks in Washington DC. College/University: Bowie State University, Interests/Fun Facts: Comic book collector, sneakerhead, and avid cyclist, father to daughter Mahogany.

The store is named for their daughter, Mahogany.

*Started in 2007 by husband and wife, Derrick and Ramunda Young, MahoganyBooks is the fastest growing online bookstore for people of the African Diaspora. It has grown from being exclusively an online bookstore to opening the doors of their first physical location in the historic Washington, DC neighborhood of Anacostia. Derrick and Ramunda's love for culture, community and connection and their desire to see books empower others as it had empowered them.*

## Maryland Must Boost Affordable Housing Efforts to Keep Pace With Projected Surge in Low-Income Households, Report Finds

*New report outlines current housing needs, tools, for Maryland lawmakers*

By PRESS OFFICERS  
UMD / Enterprise

COLLEGE PARK, Md. (Feb. 17, 2021)—A new report by the University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth and Enterprise Community Partners finds that affordable housing stock in Maryland has not kept pace with the state's housing needs, and that state and local leaders must accelerate their efforts to provide a range of rental and for-sale housing options for Maryland's growing number of residents.

Commissioned by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (MDHCD), the report shows that, despite efforts by the state to create more affordable housing, high construction costs, barriers to development and a lack of public/private investment have led to a deficit of affordable homes in rural and urban areas alike.

- Key report findings include:
- A shortage of 85,000 affordable apartments in Maryland for families and individuals earning less than 30% of median income, representing the most serious gap in supply for people at all income levels;
  - An additional 97,200 families and individuals earning less than 50% of median income are expected to move to the state by 2030, highlighting the need to dramatically increase affordable housing supply over the next 10 years; and
  - People of color, individuals with disabilities and seniors—who represent 14% of all Maryland families—face additional hurdles

such as lack of flexible standards used by landlords when screening tenants and requiring high down payments. These disparities have been made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"While the D.C. suburbs and Baltimore and its suburbs face significant shortages, this is really something we're seeing statewide, from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore," says Nicholas Finio, associate director at the National Center for Smart Growth and one of the report's lead authors.

"Maryland Housing Needs Assessment & 10-Year Strategic Plan" outlines the housing needs and obstacles facing Maryland renters and homeowners, and provides a framework to guide state and local governments, housing organizations and partners across Maryland over the next 10 years. It was developed through a comprehensive analysis of current conditions and data projections, and an evaluation of existing housing and development programs available across the state.

The report was commissioned in 2019 in response to a request from the chairs of the Maryland General Assembly's Senate Budget and Taxation and House Appropriations committees. It was submitted last week by MDHCD to lawmakers.

The analysis points to a shortfall in housing for low and very low-income families and individuals who will make up half of all new Maryland households by 2030. An increase in housing costs relative to sluggish incomes has resulted in a significant financial burden for low-income residents; one-third contribute at least 30% of their household income toward their mortgage

or rent payments. The share of both owner and renter households that are severely cost burdened—people who pay 50% or more of their income towards housing—has increased dramatically since the year 2000.

A lack of equitable and affordable housing results in community disinvestment and concentrations of poverty, a problem, the report states, that affects families with children, seniors, people with disabilities and communities of color more than others. Racial inequality in the state is exemplified by homeownership rates. Among Black Marylanders, the homeownership rate is 26 percent lower than that of White households.

"Maryland will need a lot more for-sale and rental homes to serve the needs of a rapidly growing population over the next 10 years," said Chris Kizzie, VP of Enterprise Advisors, the consulting and technical assistance arm of Enterprise Community Partners. "We know what's needed to address the shortage: intentional and sustained investment in a range of housing options as well as programs that align with a racially and ethnically diverse state."

Initiatives that boost opportunities, such as increasing awareness of housing assistance and subsidies for affordable housing developments, the report suggests, are key to achieving more equitable, positive outcomes across the board.

An advisory group of representatives from statewide organizations and local and regional governments helped shape the assessment and propose five statewide priorities: promote equity in housing; create

a balanced housing supply; increase access to opportunity; support economic growth; and create content-specific approaches to meet housing needs. The report includes a toolkit with nearly 70 housing-related actions for local and state decision-makers and their partners to meet housing needs over time.

*The National Center for Smart Growth is a non-partisan center for research and education on smart growth, sustainability and related land use issues—national and international. Located at the University of Maryland, College Park, the NCSG conducts research in five general areas: community development, international planning and urban management, land use, smart cities and transportation. It has an established track record in community development, anti-displacement strategies, technical assistance and stakeholder engagement and it houses the UMD-Morgan State Economic Development Administration University Center.*

*Enterprise is a national nonprofit on a mission to make home and community places of pride, power and belonging for all. To make that possible, they operate the only organization designed to address America's affordable housing crisis from every angle, as they develop and deploy programs and support community organizations on the ground; advocate for policy on a nonpartisan basis at every level of government; invest capital to build and preserve rental homes people can afford; and own, operate and provide resident services for affordable communities. All so that people not only make rent, they build futures. Join us at EnterpriseCommunity.org.*

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# COMMUNITY

## Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

### Avoiding WEP & GPO Reductions

By RUSSELL GLOOR,  
AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor  
Association of Mature American Citizens

**Dear Rusty:** I am a retired Texas teacher receiving my State pension. I retired in February 2009, before the end of a "loophole" which affected my future Social Security. I had earned enough credits to receive Social Security benefits in addition to my Teachers Retirement System (TRS) pension. At 62 I began getting my SS benefit (reduced by my TRS pension).

My husband didn't start his SS until last year, at which time I contacted Social Security so my benefits would "no longer be reduced" as per the TRS loophole. I have spoken with the local SS office three times and sent them the documents requested, but my SS payment remains the same! How do I bypass the local office to get my benefit increased to the amount I was told when I retired under this Texas loophole? **Signed: Wanting My Increase**

**Dear Wanting:** Your question requires some explanation of two SS rules known as the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). These rules affect anyone, like you, with a pension from an employer which did not participate in Social Security, and who is also eligible for Social Security benefits. WEP applies to your personal SS retirement benefit; GPO applies to any spousal (or survivor) benefit you might become entitled to.

There are 27 States (including Texas) which, to varying degrees, have exempted some State employees from paying into Social Security. But for employees who, nevertheless, also become entitled to SS benefits, either from other SS-covered employment or a spouse, WEP and GPO will affect their SS benefits. Both rules apply to you because you did not contribute to Social Security while you earned most of your TRS pension. Your SS retirement benefit was reduced by WEP and, since your husband is now collecting SS, you might be entitled to an additional amount as his spouse, depending on whether the GPO will apply. The GPO did originally contain a "loophole," but the loophole didn't work as you think it did.

When the GPO was first enacted in 1977, it included a rule known as the "last day exemption." That rule stipulated that if, on your last day of employment prior to retirement, you contributed to both your non-covered pension and to Social Security under the same plan the GPO would not apply. State retirees in many of the 27 affected States took advantage of that loophole. That is, until Congress changed the GPO rule to eliminate the loophole.

A change in 2004 eliminated the "last day exemption" and replaced it with a rule saying that a GPO exemption would occur only if the employee contributed to both the non-covered pension and Social Security under the same plan every day for the last 5 years prior to retirement. A "transition" rule sometimes applied which allowed less than 5 years of contributions to both programs immediately prior to retirement. Each State decided if they would permit employees to take advantage of this option, which Texas did until just after you retired in 2009.

Your own WEP-reduced SS retirement benefit is not affected by, nor will it change because of any "loophole." Based upon the dates you shared, the "last day exemption" for GPO doesn't apply to you, but the changed rule may. The current rule permits a GPO exemption if you also contributed to Social Security under your TRS pension plan every day during the last five years of your TRS employment, or if the special "transition rule" applies to you. If that is the case, then you are, indeed, eligible for an exemption from the Government Pension Offset and your SS benefit will increase. But if not, the normal GPO spouse benefit reduction of 2/3rds of your TRS pension will be prorated and based only on the months you didn't pay into Social Security.

Since you've already contacted Social Security several times and sent them the requested documentation, I know of no way to "bypass" your local SS office. But it might help to ask your Congressional Representative to intervene by contacting the SSA and request that your case be expedited.

The 2.3 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] [www.amac.us](http://www.amac.us) is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation's capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation ([www.AmacFoundation.org](http://www.AmacFoundation.org)) is the Association's non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting and educating America's Seniors. Together, we act and speak on the Association members' behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at [www.amac.us/join-amac](http://www.amac.us/join-amac).

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## Hoyer Announces 40th Annual Black History Month Virtual Celebration With Keynote Speaker Vice President Kamala Harris

By ANNALIESE DAVIS  
Congressman Steny Hoyer's Office

WASHINGTON (Feb. 19, 2021)—Today, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-05) announced that the 40th annual Black History Month Virtual Celebration will take place on Saturday, February 27, and Vice President Kamala Harris will serve as this year's keynote speaker. The theme of the this year's Black History Month Celebration is "The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity."

"I am honored to welcome Vice President Harris to Maryland for the 40th annual Black History Month Celebration," said Congressman Hoyer. "Although we cannot gather in person, I'm looking forward to joining together with hundreds of Marylanders to celebrate the

achievements and contributions of Black individuals in our state and across the nation. I can think of no one better to serve as our keynote speaker for this year's celebration than Vice President Harris."

"As the first Black woman to serve as Vice President, Vice President Harris has broken barriers throughout her career," continued Congressman Hoyer. "Her extraordinary achievements have inspired countless Americans, and as Vice President, she is working tirelessly alongside President Biden to make life better for Maryland families. It is fitting that as we continue to celebrate the contributions of Black Americans who stood up to injustice and fought for equal rights in our democracy, we recognize individuals like Vice President Harris, who adds her own groundbreaking legacy to our county

and Black history. I look forward to showing Vice President Harris a warm Maryland welcome."

Congressman Hoyer has brought together community leaders, elected officials, and Fifth District residents at the Black History Month Breakfast each year for the past 40 years to celebrate the many achievements of Black Marylanders and Americans. Past speakers at the event include former President Barack Obama, Congressman John Lewis, Congressman Elijah E. Cummings, Director of the Smithsonian Institution Secretary Lonnie Bunch, and Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this year's celebration will be virtual. The event will take place on Saturday, February 27 at 10 a.m. To RSVP for the event, email [RSVPM05BHB@gmail.com](mailto:RSVPM05BHB@gmail.com).

## Alzheimer's Association to Host Maryland State Advocacy Week

Maryland Residents Invited To Champion Critical Alzheimer's Legislation

By CINDY SCHELHORN  
Alzheimer's Association

MCLEAN, Va. (Feb. 22, 2021)—The Alzheimer's Association will host its virtual Maryland State Advocacy Week from March 1-5. This year's advocacy event has expanded from the single day activity held in previous years to a robust five days of virtual opportunities for Marylanders to learn about policy priorities and engage with their legislators on key issues.

Highlights of the week's events include a conversation with Dr. Quincy Samus, chair of Maryland's Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council on March 1 and a panel discussion with long-term care ombudsmen from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia on aiding seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic on March 3.

"Alzheimer's Advocacy Week presents an opportunity to learn from leading state policymakers in the morning and to directly engage elected officials in a series of evening sessions," said Eric Colchamiro, Director of Government Affairs for the Alzheimer's Association in Maryland. "Together, we can build awareness and eliminate Alzheimer's disease through our advocacy."

Following is a schedule with highlighted events and delegation meetings for Charles County and Prince George's County. Interested individuals may register to participate in one or more of these free virtual public meetings. Registration for each event is required to receive the Zoom link for that specific event. To view the complete schedule, learn more and/or to register, visit [alz.org/nca/volunteer/advocacy/maryland](http://alz.org/nca/volunteer/advocacy/maryland).

### Monday, March 1

• 9 a.m. A Conversation with Dr. Quincy Samus, chair of Maryland's Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Council

### Tuesday, March 2

• 9:30 a.m. Alzheimer's Association and Montgomery County  
Lylie Fisher, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, discusses the County's far-ranging partnership with the National Capital Area Chapter.

### Wednesday, March 3

• 9:30 a.m. COVID-19 and Long-Term Care: A Conversation with our Region's Ombudsmen.  
Join Maryland's Gail Gannon, D.C.'s Mark Miller, and Virginia's Joani Latimer for a conversation about their experiences aiding seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic.  
• 6 p.m. Prince George's County Delegation Meeting with Delegate Erek Barron.  
• 6:30 p.m. Charles County Delegation Meeting with Delegate Edith Patterson

### Thursday, March 4

• 9:30 a.m. Building a Better Long-Term Care Workforce.  
Join Ron Carlson, Executive Director of the Maryland Regional Direct Services Collaborative, to learn about the challenges and future of our workforce serving our seniors.

### Friday, March 5

• 10 a.m. Elected Official Town Hall  
Talk with Delegate Sheree Sample Hughes and Senator Malcolm Augustine about their work as elected official representatives to the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders

### Council

Policy priorities for the Alzheimer's Association in 2021 include the following three bills:

- HB 119/SB 313: Increasing public awareness, early detection and diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease (Sample-Hughes/Washington)
- HB 141/SB 275: Building a dementia-capable home care workforce (Sample-Hughes/Hester)
- SB 204/HB 416: Enhancing the quality of care in residential settings (Beidle/Belcastro)

In addition to these three bills, the Association supports the following coalition priorities:

- Maryland Health Equity Resource Act (HB 463/SB 172). This legislation, via a one cent per dollar increase in the alcohol tax, will provide grants, tax initiatives, and health care provider loan repayment assistance to locations in the state with poor health outcomes that contribute to health inequities.
- Essential Workers Protection Act (SB 486/HB 581). This legislation mandates worker rights including: access to personal protective equipment, emergency action plans, and the right to refuse dangerous work.

For additional information on Maryland Advocacy Week and/or these legislative priorities, contact Eric Colchamiro at [mdadvocacyday@alz.org](mailto:mdadvocacyday@alz.org).

The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia—by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia®. Visit [alz.org](http://alz.org) or call 800.272.3900.

## Earn 2 CEUs Learning to Help Grievors Make Peace With Guilt With April Webinar

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN  
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (Feb. 22, 2021)—Social workers can earn continuing education credits while learning how to help grievors with "Guilt & Bereavement," a continuing education webinar offered by Chesapeake Life Center.

Guilt is a common element in the experience of grieving persons. Yet an understanding of its components and its impact on the grief process has not been well-defined. In this live, interactive virtual workshop, participants will take a deeper dive into an understanding of the concept of guilt, its intersection with grief, and how caring professionals can facilitate their clients making peace with this difficult emotion.

This webinar will take place from 9 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. April 23 and will be presented by Roberta Rook, licensed clinical professional counselor, and Casey Dressel, licensed clinical social worker, both with Chesapeake Life Center.

The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners certifies that this program meets the criteria for 2.0 credit hours of Category 1 continuing education for Social Workers in

Maryland. An application has been sent for approval to the Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists so that this program can be certified as meeting the criteria for 2.0 credit hours of Category A continuing education for Counselors and Therapists in Maryland.

The cost is \$30. Preregistration is required and can be completed online at [/bit.ly/GuiltandBereavement](http://bit.ly/GuiltandBereavement). For questions, contact 888-501-7077 or email [griefinfo@hospicechesapeake.org](mailto:griefinfo@hospicechesapeake.org).

### About the presenters:

**Roberta Rook**, LCPC, has over 20 years of experience in the field of counseling. For the past 18 years, she has been working as a bereavement counselor and program coordinator for Chesapeake Life Center.

Rook holds a post-graduate certificate in thanatology, the study of death, dying, and bereavement, and is a facilitator in the expressive therapeutic technique known as SoulCollage. She has conducted trainings

and presentations on grief-related issues for hospice staff, volunteers and professionals from the community at large.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY HOSPICE OF THE CHESAPEAKE

**Casey Dressel**, LCSW-C, has experience working with the geriatric population in skilled nursing facilities and as a psychotherapist at an outpatient mental health agency. Dressel joined the Chesapeake Life Center in the fall of 2019.

Chesapeake Life Center, a program service of Hospice of the Chesapeake, serves hospice family members and the community with bereavement services and activities aimed at enhancing the quality of life for those grieving the loss of a loved one. Chesapeake Life Center is authorized by the Board of Social Work Examiners in Maryland to sponsor social work continuing education programs and maintains full responsibility for this program.

# COMMENTARY

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



### To Be Equal:

## Coronavirus Rescue Plan Must Be Big, Bold and Transformative

*“President Joe Biden has inherited an even worse situation than our nation faced back in 2009: a national health crisis that has led to the deaths of more than 400,000 Americans on top of an economic catastrophe that has put tens of millions out of work and shuttered hundreds of thousands of businesses, with both crises hitting communities of color especially hard. Unfortunately, his efforts to restore the economy by putting money in people’s pockets and saving jobs are already being met with opposition from those claiming we can’t afford it. They are using the same arguments they used to undermine the ARRA that cost our economy nearly a million jobs. But we know from history that they are wrong and sabotaging the*

*ability of our nation to fully and equitably recover. The only thing we can’t afford is to underfund America’s recovery.”*

—Open Letter to Congress, signed by 200 former Obama Administration officials

More than 860,000 Americans filed for unemployment compensation this week. The official unemployment rate is 6.7 percent, and 9.2 percent among Black Americans. Factoring in the functionally unemployed—those who have stopped looking for work, who are working for poverty wages or who work only a handful of hours a week, the real unemployment rate is above 25 percent.

That’s tens of millions of Americans struggling to pay their bills, possibly facing eviction or foreclosure, or waiting hours online at food bank.

“We’re seeing clients who are sleeping in their cars, arriving on-site at 2, 3 in the morning, sometimes even the night before,” Emily Slazer of New Orleans’ Second Harvest Food Bank told NPR. “It’s just a stunning and heartbreaking visual to see so many members of our community who are hungry.”

Hundreds of thousands of businesses have closed, with Black-owned businesses shutting down at twice the rate of white-owned establishments.

This is not a time to be timid. It’s not a time for half-measures. It’s time for transformative action that not only repairs the pandemic-inflicted devastation but also strengthens the economy to ward against future collapse.

President Biden’s American Rescue Plan would accomplish these goals.

- Some of the provisions of the plan are:
- A federal minimum wage increase to \$15 an hour;
  - \$1400 direct payments to individuals and families to offset financial hardships caused by the crisis;
  - Support to state and local governments to keep frontline workers employed, distribute the vaccine, increase testing, and safely reopen schools;
  - Expanded emergency paid leave and extended

- emergency unemployment benefits;
- Targeted paycheck protection program funding to support Black businesses and non-profits;
- Extension on the eviction and foreclosure moratorium, rental assistance, and aid for households unable to pay utilities;
- Homebuyer assistance/ rescue, housing counseling, fair housing enforcement services...and much more.

Key among these provisions is directly targeted aid to Black businesses, which largely missed out on Paycheck Protection Program funding last year. Only 2% of Black-owned businesses received loans as part of the CARES Act. The initial round of PPP funding focused on businesses that had large staffs or payroll budgets, but 99% of Black-owned businesses are run by sole entrepreneurs. Furthermore, Black-owned businesses entered the pandemic already thinly capitalized and facing a range of challenges. In fact, Black businesses seeking funding are three times as likely to get rejected than white business owners.

Most importantly, the American Rescue Plan will beat back the virus. It invests \$20 billion in a national vaccination program in partnership with states, localities, tribes and territories. As President Biden said, “Here’s the deal: The more people we vaccinate, the faster we do it, the sooner we can save lives and put this pandemic behind us and get back to our lives and loved ones.”

## Marion Wright Edelman

President Emerita, Children’s Defense Fund



### ChildWatch:

## Remembering Wonderful Mississippi Governor William Winter

Mississippi’s former Governor William Winter, who died on December 18, 2020, helped transform Mississippi’s rigidly segregated public education system. He ran for office promising to focus on education and kept his promise. His signature accomplishment was a law that improved the futures of Mississippi’s children—especially Black children who had been harmed for decades by a separate and profoundly unequal education system. When he took office in 1980 Mississippi was the only state with no compulsory public education requirement, a result of Mississippi’s state legislature’s racist actions after the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court ruling sought to desegregate public schools. Governor Winter spent hours campaigning on the need for change, supported by many Black citizens and community coalitions led by local leaders like the indomitable Mayersville

mayor Unita Blackwell. The first two attempts to get reform through failed, but after Governor Winter called a special legislative session just before Christmas 1982 focused only on education, the Education Reform Act of 1982 finally passed by one vote. The resulting sweeping and long overdue changes included requiring school attendance, adding funding for public schools, increasing teacher pay, and providing public kindergarten in Mississippi for the first time.

Governor Winter’s attempts to level the educational playing field for Mississippi’s children were part of the trajectory that ultimately made him a champion of equal rights and civil rights in his state despite his segregationist roots. His experiences in the Army during World War II serving alongside two Black soldiers in his training class and then as an instructor to an all-Black regiment were among his first exposures

to Black citizens as equals and peers and helped shaped his later moderate approach to civil rights as a politician. In his first run for governor in 1967 against a segregationist opponent who accused him of being too liberal, he defended himself by staunchly supporting segregation too.

As Governor he grew and began to welcome and celebrate extraordinary Black Mississippi leaders like Myrlie Evers-Williams. After his term-limited single term ended, Governor Winter continued to promote civil rights on state and national stages. He served on the Mississippi Department of Archives and History’s board for nearly fifty years and helped ensure that the Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, the nation’s first publicly funded civil rights museum, were built together near the state’s Capitol. President Clinton appointed Governor Winter to the National Commission on Race and the University of Mississippi founded the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation. In 2008 I served on the selection committee when he received the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Lifetime Achievement Award for advancing education and racial reconciliation. Among his many other honors were the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Award from the National Education Association and the National Civil Rights Museum Freedom Award. He was a vocal supporter of the 2001 referendum to remove the Confederate emblem from the Mississippi state flag which failed, but Mississippi voters chose a new flag in November 2020.

He was a champion for Mississippi’s children and all children and a longtime friend of the Children’s

Defense Fund (CDF). He spoke at CDF national conferences and participated in the CDF Freedom Schools® pilgrimage to Philadelphia, Mississippi to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Freedom Summer. He joined 300 young people CDF convened from across the country to visit the site where James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner were murdered in June 1964 trying to establish Freedom Schools and help local citizens register to vote. He met with community members terrorized during that time and apologized for the state of Mississippi’s complicity. He showed our young servant-leaders that personal and political transformation are possible.

After Governor Winter passed, his pastor in Jackson wrote: “The William Winter I came to know as a man of faith was as shaped by humility of spirit and gentleness of character as the politician I looked up to as a young man. Beneath his accomplishments as a politician, a public servant, a visionary for a better Mississippi, and an advocate for a more just and equitable world was a humble and hopeful faith. It was that faith that let him see a world beyond the limitations of the moment. He was a dreamer of big dreams and when our imaginations failed us, he was there to help us see through his lens of hope...Combating racism and working for racial reconciliation are, he estimated, some of the most important work a public servant or private citizen can do. He recognized that racism does not always announce itself in the public square. It all too often hides in the structural disparities of society. The only way to fight the structures of racism is to reform the structures that promote it.” Amen.

## Anthony Brown

Maryland Congressional District 4



## Congressman Anthony Brown Praises Secretary Buttigieg’s Commitment to Infrastructure Equity

*“I believe Secretary Buttigieg will help lead our country forward, modernize outdated transportation systems and ensure equity for every American”*

WASHINGTON (Feb. 19, 2021)—Congressman Anthony G. Brown (MD-04) released the follow-

ing statement after a virtual roundtable with Department of Transportation Secretary Pete

Buttigieg and Congressional Black Caucus members on the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure:

“Secretary Buttigieg understands how smart investments in infrastructure and forward looking transportation policies can empower and revitalize communities of color. Ensuring equity as we build back better, is a core component of the Biden-Harris Administration’s recovery plans.

“For too long underserved communities have gone overlooked as residents lived with subpar infrastructure that simply does not work for their daily lives. With a commitment to safe, affordable and multi-modal transit options, I believe Secretary Buttigieg will help lead our country forward, modernize outdated transportation systems and ensure opportunity for every American.

“Under Secretary Buttigieg, the department has already designated hundreds of millions for Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) grants dedicated to projects that include a racial equity component. Secretary Buttigieg has also made clear his intention to improve the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program.

“Our roads, rails and waterways are more than just concrete and steel. They form the backbone of our communities, connect Americans and provide economic opportunities. Through transit-oriented development and investments in 21st century transit that reduces traffic congestion, limits greenhouse gasses and promotes equity we will help communities of color, the state of Maryland and our country build for the future.”

## Van Hollen, Senate Democrats Push to Secure Additional Emergency Relief for HBCUs

WASHINGTON (Feb. 17, 2021)—U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) along with Senators Reverend Raphael Warnock (D-GA), Jon Ossoff (D-GA), Christopher Coons (D-DE) sent a letter urging Senate leadership to allocate additional emergency relief for both public and private Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the COVID-19 relief proposal. Additionally, the lawmakers pushed the Senate leaders to ensure that HBCUs, Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) have equitable access to additional federal relief funds. Maryland is home to four HBCUs; Morgan State University, Bowie State University, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and Coppin State University.

“HBCUs have historically experienced challenges in gaining access to the resources necessary to consistently provide quality academic programming to their students, maintain adequate infrastructure, hire and retain leading experts in various fields

of study, and honor necessary financial obligations,” the lawmakers wrote. “Despite these challenges, HBCUs have been remarkably successful at educating our Nation’s political and economic leaders, including members of both chambers of Congress and the current Vice President of the United States.”

The lawmakers’ letter seeks to build on the \$1.7 billion in federal investments HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs received in the relief bill passed in December 2020, noting that this funding has been critical during the on-going pandemic for institutions that educate a disproportionately high percentage of the nation’s underserved students. In the letter, the lawmakers also pressed Senate leadership to make sure that HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs receive at least the same proportion of federal funding they received in previous relief packages.

“President Biden, in his America’s Rescue Plan, proposed that Congress expand the Higher Education Emergency Relief

Fund to ensure colleges have critical resources to implement public health protocols, execute distance learning plans, and provide emergency grants to students in need. The President also proposed that Congress provide at least \$35 billion in funding to the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, including funding to public and private HBCUs, MSIs, and TCUs. It is critical that Congress, at minimum, enact President Biden’s proposal and ensure that HBCUs, MSIs, and TCUs have equitable access to this fund,” the lawmakers added.

This letter was also signed by U.S. Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Tina Smith (D-MN), Michael F. Bennet (D-CO), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Richard J. Durbin (D-IL), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Bernard Sanders (I-VT), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Jeffrey A. Merkley (D-OR) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ).

## The Prince George’s Post

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The mission of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) is to support library staff in alleviating the challenges teens face, and in putting all teens—especially those with the greatest needs—on the path to successful and fulfilling lives. For more information about YALSA or to access national guidelines and other resources go to www.ala.org/yalsa, or contact the YALSA office by phone, 800-545-2433, ext. 4390; or e-mail: yalsa@ala.org.

## SoMar Drummers, Leonardtown Maryland, announces the Mid-Atlantic Overnight DrumSet Camp for young drummers, Ages 12-18. The camp is set for July 25-30, 2021, at Hard Bargain Farm, Accokeek Maryland.

Camp instructors include Camp Director, Sheila Klotz, Hit Like A Girl International DrumSet Champion 2020 and WFLIII Drums Educator / Clinician. Klotz, a retired Army Band Commander, will be joined by the nation's top professional drummer guest artists / educators including:  
Juan Carlito Mendoza, Penny Larson, Alex Cohen, Somdahi (DrumTraxApp) Sherrie Maricle & Alton Clark.

The guest artists are professional drummers specializing in genres such as Jazz, Latin, Flow Development, Shed, Polyrythms, Rudiments and more. The camp's "drumset immersion" format is group-based, yet individually structured to each student's skill level. Each evening, artists conduct DrumSet Master Classes and Clinics, sharing insight about the drum industry and careers in music. 16-DrumSets will be scattered around the camp for group learning, individual practice and jam sessions. To ensure young drummers progress at a comfortable pace, students can request individual help or instruction from any guest artist, at no additional cost, during camp breaks or free time.

Overnight option \$850 includes bunks, meals, snacks, water, sports drinks and pool time.  
Commuter option \$650 includes lunch & dinner meal, snacks, water, sports drinks.

Music & Arts Councils, Rotary Clubs, Churches, etc. in surrounding areas are encouraged to help young drummers in their community take part in this incredible opportunity.

ONLINE REGISTRATION BEGINS March 15, 2021  
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