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Metro Budget Cuts Would Hurt Workers and Residents

By ANEURIN CANHAM-CLYNE
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (December 3, 2020)—Proposed budget cuts at Metro threaten thousands of jobs, the closure of 19 stations, the suspension of 19 bus lines and an end to weekend rail service.

"We're facing an historic budget crisis," Metro General Manager and CEO Paul J. Wiedefeld said in a Nov. 30 online press briefing.

Wiedefeld's proposed fiscal year 2022 budget cuts, which would take effect July 1, 2021, were released ahead of a Friday WMATA Board meeting. The moves are an attempt to overcome a \$494 million operating deficit caused by a loss of riders during the coronavirus pandemic.

But the plan to slash service drew sharp attacks from a variety of critics.

Tara Maxwell, the political coordinator for Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689, said the cuts would be devastating for transit workers.

"They don't have any concern for the people that it's affecting, or for their families," Maxwell told Capital News Service.

Transit advocates like Robert Puentes said the cuts would be devastating to the economy and transit network in the capital region.

"It would have devastating effects on the city," said Puentes, president and CEO of the Eno Center for Transportation, a non-profit research and policy foundation in Washington. Cuts of this magnitude, according to Puentes, will make it hard to retain riders and scale services back up after the pandemic.

Stewart Schwartz, the executive director of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, told CNS that the service cuts would hurt other essential workers who depend on buses and trains to get to work.

"They're the ones who would be most devastated by severe cuts to bus and rail service, the people who work in our grocery stores and hospitals, support city government services, public safety, healthcare, eldercare, childcare," Schwartz said.

Metro's woes are mirrored by transit systems in other cities, like New York, where cuts to the MTA could mean thousands of job losses, and Los Angeles, where Metro authorities approved a \$1.2 billion cut.

"The pandemic has plunged the nation's transit agencies into a profound crisis," the National Association of City Transportation Officials says on its website.

"Strong federal support is essential for providing essential services, including transit, throughout this crisis and in its aftermath," the group says. "Without at least \$32 billion in additional emergency aid for transit, our cities and economy cannot fully recover."

The American Public Transit Association, an international asso-



PHOTOGRAPH CREDIT HEATHER KIM/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

COLLEGE PARK, Maryland - Trains to Greenbelt and Branch Avenue stop for passengers at the College Park Metro station.

ciation of public transit groups, called on Congress to pass tens of billions of dollars of emergency funding. APTA cited a poll from First View that found more than three-quarters of American voters supported emergency funds for public transit.

"Americans not only want actions now to save public transit during the pandemic, but they want continued long-term actions that preserve and expand public transit services," APTA CEO Paul Skoutelas said in a Nov. 19 statement.

According to Schwartz, the loss of jobs and transit opportunities could drive parts of the Washington area workforce elsewhere, while leading to heavier car traffic and more severe greenhouse gas emissions, as more workers and tourists are forced to drive.

Maxwell said job losses will also impact Black workers, noting that most of Local 689 members are Black. Job losses will hurt Maryland as well as the District of Columbia, as more than 7,000 members of Local 689 live in Prince George's County, he said.

Transit advocates agree with WMATA that the monetary problems caused by the pandemic are stark.

"The cuts reflect the reality that the agency is in," Puentes said.

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Mechanicsville, said the fate of WMATA's workers and services depends on Senate action.

"The House passed two major pieces of legislation that would provide WMATA with desperately needed funding to avoid these drastic measures, yet the Senate has refused to act," Hoyer said in a

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Prince George's Community College Announces Partnership With the University of Maryland And Prince George's County Public Schools

Middle College program designed to address statewide critical teacher shortage

By COURTNEY DAVIS
PGCC

LARGO, Md. (December 1, 2020)—Prince George's Community College (PGCC) announced today a new Teacher Preparation Program partnership with the University of Maryland and Prince George's County Public Schools designed to address a critical shortage of certified teachers in the county and larger region.

The new Middle College program partnership allows students to obtain an associate degree while in high school and prepares them to complete a teaching degree at the University of Maryland. Although graduates are not required to begin their teaching careers in Prince George's County, the Teacher Preparation Program seeks to increase the number of certified teachers throughout the county and state.

"We are enthusiastic about working together with the University of Maryland to extend

possibilities for our students. This collaboration guarantees support that prepares students for success and timely completion, removes barriers to transfer, and clarifies pathways to the four-year degree," said Dr. Mara Doss, associate vice president for Teaching, Learning, and Student Success at Prince George's Community College.

The Teacher Preparation Program at Prince George's Community College, established in 2017 as part of the Academy of Health Sciences (AHS), provides dual enrollment students with an opportunity to earn an associate degree. The Teacher Preparation Program will graduate its inaugural cohort of 31 students with an Associate of Arts in Teaching spring 2021. The Program aligns with academic programs at Bowie State University, Howard University, and the University of Maryland to ensure a seamless transfer of students.

"The collaboration is a reflec-

tion of our commitment to developing innovative new pathways to prepare an excellent and diverse teacher workforce for Prince George's County Public Schools and for Maryland. This model of 'growing your own' teachers will increase diversity in the education field, develop teachers from the local community, and address critical teaching shortages," said Dr. Jennifer King Rice, dean of the University of Maryland College of Education.

"The students are high achievers from historically underrepresented and low-income backgrounds. The partnership will prove invaluable in helping to close educational equity gaps that have become more apparent in this pandemic-impacted learning environment," added Dr. Doss.

Early and Middle College programs at Prince George's Community College primarily serve first-generation and other underrepresented students. Approximately 51% of students at

Prince George's Community College identify as "first-generation." Enrollment in the College's dual and concurrent enrollment programs has more than doubled in recent years, with total enrollment across programs at more than 1,000 students.

Additional Early College and Middle College programs offered at Prince George's Community College include: Information Technology Early College (ITEC), Academy of Health Sciences (AHS), Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH), and Prince George's 3-D Scholars Program. These programs provide a pathway to success in high-demand fields for a diverse group of students.

To learn more about the Teacher Preparation Program at Prince George's Community College, visit <https://www.pgcc.edu/programs-courses/programs-for-high-school-students/earlymiddle-college-programs/>.

Prince George's County Council Elects New Leadership Team

Council Chair Calvin S. Hawkins, II, and Vice-Chair Deni Taveras to Serve in Legislative Year 2021

By ANGELA J. ROUSON

Prince George's County Council Media

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (December 7, 2021)—The Prince George's County Council, in its first virtual Gavel Exchange Ceremony, unanimously elected At-Large Council Member Calvin S. Hawkins, II, to serve as Chair for Legislative Year 2021. Council Member Deni Taveras (D) – District 2, was elected unanimously to serve as Vice-Chair. Chair Hawkins and Vice-Chair Taveras will serve in leadership through

December 7, 2021.

Chair Hawkins, upon accepting the Council's Gavel of Leadership, noted the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, while promising to lead with integrity, prudence and clear purpose.

"Our country is facing extremely difficult times, and Prince George's County is no exception.

See LEADERSHIP Page A4

December Virtual Events at PGCMLS



IMAGE COURTESY PGCMLS

For more information on December Virtual Events at the Library, see page A3.

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation Aquatics Recognized in 2020 Best of the Best for COVID-19 Response and Reopening Plan

By ANGEL WALDRON

Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

RIVERDALE, Md. (December 3, 2020)—The Maryland – National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County is honored to be included in Aquatics International Magazine's 2020 Best of the Best for its COVID-19 Response and Reopening Plan. The publication recognized 10 aquatic teams across the country that have adapted to increase safety, inclusion and satisfaction among visitors, community and staff during the pandemic.

"Being honored for 'diversity excellence in safe, aquatic facility opening and operations in the coronavirus pandemic' reaffirms that we are making the safety of our patrons and staff our priority," proclaims Bill Tyler, Director of the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation. "The additional recognition as a 'Top 10 aquatics team in the nation' validates the excellence that the Department is known for and

that we are proud to deliver to the residents of Prince George's County."

The Department is specifically honored for its achievements in diversity, noting actions such as:

- Allowing cash and in-person payments at three of seven open facilities, to make pools as easily accessed as possible for the diverse residents of Prince George's County
- Allowing lap and general recreation swimming upon reopening, to accommodate less advanced swimmers
- Using guidance and input from facility managers, in order to consider all perspectives.

"COVID-19 demonstrated the need for thoughtful collaboration, and we believed it was vital to have our facility managers actively engaged in devel-

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The election will determine whether the Biden agenda will receive a fair hearing, or face a level of obstructionism unprecedented until Barack Obama's presidency. Commentary, Page A4

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Council Vice Chair Deni Taveras Welcomes Pennyroyal Station to Historic Singer Building in Mount Rainier

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COMMUNITY

December Virtual Events at PGCMLS

By DONNA SCOTT-MARTIN
PGCMLS

Featured Author Events:

Jennifer De Leon on "Don't Ask Me Where I'm From"

Thursday, December 10 at 7 p.m. | Teens & Adults

Author Jennifer De Leon discusses her debut young adult novel, "Don't Ask Me Where I'm From." The story follows Liliana Cruz, a first-generation American Latinx who does what it takes to fit in at her new nearly all-white school. When family secrets spill out and racism at school ramps up, she must decide what she believes in and take a stand. Jennifer will be interviewed by Lupita Aquino (@Lupita.Reads) and Nicholas Brown of PGCMLS. Co-presented with the Prince George's County Human Relations Commission.

Zack Smedley on "Deposing Nathan"

Monday, December 14 at 7 p.m. | Teens & Adults

Lambda Literary Award finalist and Maryland native Zack Smedley discusses his hit book "Deposing Nathan," which was a 2020 ALA Rainbow List Selection and winner of the 2019 YA Bisexual Book Award. He is joined by Kelsey Hughes and Isaiah West of PGCMLS. Co-presented with the Prince George's County Human Relations Commission.

Additional December Highlights:

Expungement Clinic
Saturday, December 12 at 10 a.m. | Adults
Community Legal Services of Prince George's County, Inc. and the Library host a free expungement clinic for adults who have a criminal record and need assistance with obtaining work or housing. Registration required: <https://pgcmls.info/event/4702352>.

Enjoy regularly scheduled Library events for all ages such as Read Aloud, Bibliotiños, STEM at Home, Craftermoons, Teen Action Group (TAG), Café a las cuatro, Career Chat and more by visiting pgcmls.info/events.

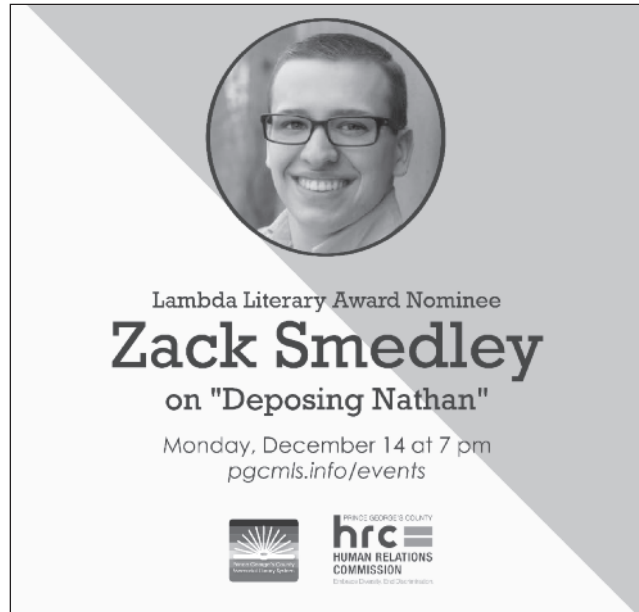


IMAGE COURTESY PGCMLS

Cloudforce Announces Laptops for Good Partnership With Prince George's Community College

Silent auction to raise technology funds to benefit students in need

By COURTNEY DAVIS
Prince George's Community College

LARGO, Md. (December 3, 2020)—Prince George's Community College announced today its selection by Cloudforce, the leading force in the Microsoft cloud, to take part in the company's Laptops for Good initiative. Through the proceeds of a virtual silent auction, Cloudforce seeks to raise funds to procure a minimum of 100 laptop computers for Prince George's Community College students to combat growing technology needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The silent auction runs from Dec. 3 at 9 a.m. through Dec. 17 at 9 p.m. EST. Visit <https://handbid.app.link/laptops-for-good> to participate. Since its founding in 2010, Cloudforce has been committed to supporting local communities, including underserved populations. A Microsoft Gold Partner, Cloudforce, which will match raised funds up to \$10,000, is in a unique position to give back to the communities most impacted by COVID-19 and the increased reliance on a remote infrastructure.

"Having hired great technical talent from Prince George's Community College just this year, partnering with the College's foundation to provide laptops to 100 deserving students was a natural fit for us," said Cloudforce president Hussein Sharaf. "Leveraging our relationship with Microsoft, we're able to maximize our impact on the local community and to contribute directly to the fast-developing tech workforce for whom

we so passionately advocate."

Regional businesses and organizations are encouraged to support Laptops for Good by donating items for the auction and bidding on products and services. Cloudforce will cover overhead costs of the initiative so that 100% of all dollars raised directly benefit Prince George's Community College students.

"We're grateful for this opportunity to partner with Cloudforce, a local Prince George's County technology company, in support of our students," said Dr. Rhonda Spells-Fentry, vice president for Enterprise Technology at Prince George's Community College. "During these challenging times in our world, this initiative serves as a refreshing reminder that community and generosity are valued by so many, and possibly to an even greater degree, during periods of crisis."

On Dec. 17 at 6 p.m., the virtual silent auction closes out with a livestream, also accessible via the virtual auction site, to allow participants and sponsors to celebrate their successes. Special guest speakers for the livestream include two former NFL players: Ken Harvey, linebacker for the Phoenix Cardinals and Washington Football Team; and John Booty, linebacker for the New York Jets, Philadelphia Eagles, Phoenix Cardinals, New York Giants, and Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

To learn more about Cloudforce, visit www.gocloudforce.com. To get involved in the Laptops for Good initiative, contact info@gocloudforce.com or foundation@pgcc.edu.

Bowie State Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations to Retire After Three Decades

By PRESS OFFICER
Bowie State University

BOWIE, Md. (November 30, 2020)—Bowie State Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations Gregory Goings announces plan to retire in May 2021 after nearly 30 years of service. Goings is currently the longest serving athletic media relations director in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA).

"When I was blessed to be selected as the next athletic director for Bowie State University in January of 2015, Greg Goings was one of the first individuals who welcomed me to Bulldog Nation, said Assistant Vice President of Athletics and Recreation Clyde Doughty Jr. "From that point, forward Greg has been a wealth of information and guidance as a senior member of the athletic administration."

Doughty went on to say, "Greg is an experienced professional who is well respected within the world of media relations. He has been recognized for his efforts within the CIAA and outside of the CIAA with organizations such as CoSIDA. Greg has mentored a plethora of young

men and women who have gone on to great careers in sports information."

"Greg is a very straight forward individual who is well organized and highly efficient. He is very supportive of his co-workers and always makes himself available to assist in any way he can. He has left an indelible mark on Bulldog Nation Athletics. He will be missed but I know he will not be a stranger and will respond if we need him. I wish him the very best as he retires from a great career in intercollegiate athletics," said Doughty.

"It has been a wonderful ride and after 12 years at Virginia State and nearly 18 at Bowie State, the time has come to step aside and let someone else captain the ship, stated Goings. In addition to Conaway and Dooley, I had some phenomenal colleagues/mentors (John Holley – Norfolk State, Bill Hamilton – S.C. State, Sam Jefferson – Jackson State and Chris Fisher - N.C. Central) to name a few that guided me along the way."

Goings holds memberships with the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA), Black College Sports



PHOTO COURTESY BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Bowie State Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations Gregory Goings

Information Directors Association (BCSIDA), former At-Large College Division Representative on the CoSIDA Board of Directors (2011–2014), Past National President of the Division II Sports Information Directors Association (2010–2014), Past President of the CIAA Sports Information Directors Association and former member of the Harlon Hill Division II Football Player-of-the-Year Advisory Committee.

Maryland Humanities Supports Twelve Maryland Organizations With Electoral Engagement Grants

By SARAH WEISSMAN
Maryland Humanities

BALTIMORE (December 4, 2020)—Maryland Humanities is pleased to award \$20,034.60 to 12 Maryland organizations producing projects focusing on civic and electoral engagement: the grantees span six Maryland counties and Baltimore City. These grants make up one component of the organization's Voices and Votes Electoral Engagement Project (VVEEP).

Grants will go to: Allegany College of Maryland; Allegany Museum; Bold Beautiful Brilliant Girls Youth Empowerment Group; Global Health and Education Projects, Inc.; March on Maryland dba March on Foundation; Marietta House Museum; Maryland Women's Heritage Center and Museum; Patapasco Heritage Greenway; Preservation Maryland; Prince George's County Memorial Library System; Queen Anne's County Historical Society; and Susanna Wesley House, Inc. The recipients are located in Allegany County, Prince George's County, Anne Arundel County, Howard County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Queen Anne's County.

VVEEP programming will consist of an oral history collection and an author event as well as these grants. VVEEP is supported by a \$50,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation administered through the Federation for State Humanities Councils for its initiative entitled "Why It Matters: Civic and Electoral Participation." This initiative explores civic participation as it relates to electoral engagement in a multivocal democracy.

Lindsey Baker, Executive Director of Maryland Humanities, says: "This subject matter is critical any year, but especially this one. We appreciate being able to support this timely programming in a such a unique moment for our state and country." She continues, "We look forward to this exploration of civic engagement with Marylanders."

Voices and Votes Electoral Engagement Program Support Grant Awards— Prince George's County:

Bold Beautiful Brilliant Girls Youth Empowerment Group

Grant Award: \$1,539
As a part of Bold Beautiful Brilliant Girls Youth Empowerment Group's mentorship program, youth will learn about the processes used to suppress the votes of Black people, the Electoral College, and the 15th and 19th Amendments. The mentees will then collaborate and create a webpage on the bbbyeg.org site for younger audiences to visit and explore. This page will be used to educate and empower the mentees' peers to learn about and reflect on the current state of our democracy.

Global Health and Education Projects, Inc.

Grant Award: \$2,000
Global Health and Education Projects will host a one-day voter education webinar on Google Meet called "U.S. Elections 101: Key Similarities and Differences for Immigrant Communities." This workshop will educate members of minority and immigrant communities on the key aspects

of U.S. elections, including the Electoral College, rules for voter eligibility, resources for voter registrations, and understanding the differences between the U.S. electoral system and systems in Africa and Latin America.

Marietta House Museum

Grant Award: \$1,520.60
Dr. Julie Rose, Marietta House Museum manager, will host an online workshop to kick off the "Giving Voice Initiative," a public history approach to convene community partners to interpret, teach, and inspire social justice. In this workshop, participants will investigate sensitive ways and strategies to engage visitors with difficult histories, by considering stories of African American disenfranchisement as an example of how to responsibly and sensitively engage learners in upsetting and controversial history.

Prince George's County Memorial Library System

Grant Award: \$2,000 (Statewide)
The Prince George's County Memorial Library System and Prince George's County Human Relations Commission will host a three-part extension of their "Voting: Democracy in Action" virtual event series. The three events will: 1) discuss the diversity of the Hispanic and Latinx communities and how that is reflected in elections, 2) the role of immigration and individuals' immigration status on inhibiting participation in our democracy, and 3) explore modern attempts to suppress Black votes and how communities can protect against those efforts on the local and state level.

The Federation for State Humanities Councils' "Why It Matters" national initiative will provide free humanities programs conducted by the US state and territorial humanities councils to engage the public in collaborative, accessible, and thought-provoking dialogues on the importance of electoral and civic participation. Programs will explore the history of civic and electoral engagement, highlight and elevate youth perspectives, and bring people together to talk, share, learn, and listen using the humanities to promote understanding through historical context and conversation. Humanities scholarship, journalism, and community dialogue will be central to hundreds of public programs, including radio programs, virtual online panels and keynote speakers, exhibitions, story circles, town halls, and more.

Maryland Humanities is a statewide nonprofit organization that creates and supports educational experiences in the humanities that inspire all Marylanders to embrace lifelong learning, exchange ideas openly, and enrich their communities. For more information, visit www.mdhumanities.org. Maryland Humanities is generously supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities; the State of Maryland; the Citizens of Baltimore County; private foundations such as the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, creator of the Baker Artist Portfolios, www.BakerArtist.org; corporations; small businesses; and individual donors. Connect with Maryland Humanities on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



UPDATED GUIDELINES

THE CHILD CARE PROVIDER RECOVERY PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY HAS BEEN EXTENDED!

All licensed centers in Prince George's County are eligible to apply for grants up to \$20,000 before the December 11th deadline.

APPLY TODAY:
pgcedc.com/childcarerecovery



COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Health Care, Voting Rights, and Pandemic Recovery Are at Stake in Georgia's January 5 Runoff Election

"Support for the majority-vote plan reinforced the moderate segregationist position. It did not remove anyone's right to cast a ballot, but it was commonly regarded as hampering African Americans—the stigmatized bloc voters—from making their votes count more effectively at the polls. In similar fashion, especially following passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, southern white politicians devised electoral techniques to offset the rising power of black ballots."

—Civil Rights in America: Racial Voting Rights, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2007

In most states, the winner of an election is determined by a plurality—the candidate with the highest number of votes wins, regardless of whether that number is a majority of votes.

In Georgia, however, if no candidate wins a majority, the top two vote-getters face one another in a runoff. In 1962, the Supreme Court struck down Georgia's old "county-unit system, a "kind of a poor man's Electoral College" that had been created 45 years prior to amplify rural voters' power while disadvantaging Black voters.

The runoff was instituted to undermine the influence of Black voters. The segregationist state representative who proposed it, Denmark Groover, had been defeated in an earlier race and blamed his loss on "Negro bloc voting." In 1990, the Department of Justice sued to overturn the runoff system, saying it has had "a demonstrably chilling effect on the ability of blacks to become candidates for public office," and calling it "an electoral steroid for white candidates." The Department cited elections in more

than 20 Georgia counties "where at least 35 black candidates won the most votes in their initial primaries, but then lost in runoffs as voters coalesced around a white opponent."

Now, almost 60 years later, a voting system that was designed to dilute the Black vote could result in the election state's first Black U.S. Senator.

On Jan. 5, two runoff elections for Senate will take place in Georgia. Neither candidate in either race earned more than 50% of the vote in the November 3 General Election.

Voters there will choose between incumbent Kelly Loeffler, who was appointed to her seat by Governor Brian Kemp last year, and challenger Rev. Raphael Warnock, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Martin Luther King Jr.'s former congregation.

They will also choose between incumbent David Purdue, a businessman first elected to the seat in 2014, and challenger Jon Ossoff.

The results will determine which party controls the Senate for the next two years. If the challengers win, the Senate will be split 50–50, with Vice President Kamala Harris able to cast a tie-breaking vote.

In other words, the election will determine whether the Biden agenda will receive a fair hearing, or face a level of obstructionism unprecedented until Barack Obama's presidency.

The outcome of these elections will determine whether Congress passes a coronavirus stimulus bill that provide more aid for struggling businesses, jobless workers or cities and states facing massive

layoffs of frontline workers like police, firefighters, healthcare workers and teachers.

President-elect Biden's proposed COVID-19 response plan calls for expanding coronavirus testing resources and increasing the country's capacity to make personal protective equipment by leveraging the Defense Production Act. He has also backed legislation that would create a separate COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force.

The outcome of these elections will determine the future of the Affordable Care Act. At risk is the insurance coverage for 20 million Americans who have gained coverage either through the exchanges or through the expansion of Medicaid. Millions more are facing the loss of coverage because of preexisting conditions—including, possibly, the more than 13 million who have been infected with coronavirus.

These elections could determine the future of the Voting Rights Act. It has been almost a year since the House passed the Voting Rights Restoration Act, which would reinstate the parts of the act that were stripped out by the Supreme Court in 2013. The bill has been stranded in the Senate.

Also stranded in the Senate has been the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, a plan to hold police accountable, change the culture of law enforcement and build trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve by addressing systemic racism and bias.

For more information about the Georgia runoff election, including key dates, visit www.ReclaimYourVote.org.

Marion Wright Edelman

President Emerita,
Children's Defense Fund



ChildWatch:

It's Way Past Time to Lift Every Child In Our Wealthy Nation Above the Scratch Line

My dear and much beloved preacher teacher friend Dr. Samuel DeWitt Proctor was a great historically Black college president, Peace Corps leader in Africa, and pastor of the historic Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, New York. He was also a very dear friend and spiritual mentor. He preached a great sermon at the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Haley Farm's opening as a center for servant leadership development and advocacy for children and others left behind which I share portions of every holy season. "We do not all start at the same scratch line," he reminded us, "although there's one original position hypothetically for everybody."

He continued: "You were born here owning nothing, having earned nothing, just born! There you are, helpless! You are indebted to everybody—but some of us opened our eyes and saw nothing but blessings just dumping on us. I opened my eyes and there was Herbert and Velma and my grandma Hattie—a slave in Chesterfield County [who graduated from Hampton Institute in] 1882—smiling on me. How in the world could I lose? Taught me how to read and sing four-part harmony before I ever got to school; taught me how to play the clarinet and the piano and made me go to Sunday school. Daddy didn't send us, Daddy took us to Sunday school. If there was nobody in the Sunday school but one person, that would've been my daddy with his six little children there in the Sunday school at the Bank Street Baptist Church.

That's what I inherited! I didn't earn it. You can't get that with a Visa card. It was given to me.

"Now, all through my neighborhood, there were other young fellas. I could remember all of them. Daddies were drunk half the time, they didn't read in their homes, nobody went to Sunday school, none of that. They started life below the scratch line. I started life way above the scratch line. Everywhere I went, someone said, 'Aren't you Ms. Hattie's grandson?' 'Are you Herbert's boy?' Skipped three grades. I never was in the 3rd grade to 5th grade or 7th grade. Everything smiling on me. Finished high school at 15, went on to college on a scholarship. None of that did I deserve; I hadn't earned any of it. I started out with a head of steam...they had trained my mother and father, they had learned poetry—Paul Laurence Dunbar, Alfred, Lord Tennyson—and they gave all of that to us in great abundance, and my buddies up the street had none of that.

"Now, if we want these bones to live again, those of us who have inherited benefits that we did not earn or deserve need to turn around and help those who inherited deficits that they did not earn or deserve and help them to rise up to the scratch line where we are so that they may earn and enjoy all of the benefits that we so take for granted. Can these bones live again, O Lord? These bones can live!"

Throughout his life my great friend and mentor Sam Proctor thanked his parents (as I do mine

everyday) Herbert and Velma Proctor and his grandparents—especially his paternal grandmother, Hattie Ann Proctor—for all they had done to ensure he started life so far above the scratch line. He understood how many millions of children do not get the same good start. How many of us were blessed with similar inheritances from parents and grandparents that made all the difference in our lives? Every year during this holy season, I hope many adults will take time not only searching for the perfect material presents for children but sharing with them the more important non-material gifts of their history and the need to ensure a just nation and world for every child. I also hope that we will follow our Christmas celebrations of a poor baby boy born in a manger in our year-round daily lives to ensure no child is left behind in our nation and world.

What will it take to lift all of our children above the scratch line? It will require every one of us to stand up and provide the powerful persistent citizen voice, faith voice, energy, and advocacy to make our nation ensure equal opportunity for every child in our midst. To push our new administration and Congress, state legislatures, and state, county and city political leaders, ask first what they can do for all the children of our nation, faiths, and communities who are struggling to survive below the scratch line. Let's act together to ensure that no child is left behind in our powerful and wealthy nation.

Anthony Brown

Maryland Congressional District 4



"I Am Deeply Concerned by the Trump Administration's Planned Deportation and Alleged Mistreatment of Cameroonian Asylum Seekers."

WASHINGTON (December 2, 2020)—House Armed Services Committee Vice Chair Congressman Anthony G. Brown (MD-04) released the following statement calling for an end to the deportations of Cameroonian asylum seekers by the Trump Administration:

"I am deeply concerned by the Trump Administration's planned deportation and alleged mistreatment of Cameroonian asylum

seekers. Cameroon's Anglophone minority has faced escalating violence at the hands of the national government. Asylum seekers currently slated deportation fear politically motivated prosecution, violence and retaliation. Many detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are still awaiting to adjudicate their claims in immigration court.

"This is precisely why we have an asylum process. For America

to lead by example, protect human rights and serve as a beacon to oppressed peoples around the globe. To deny these refugees fair process and protection is cruel and a violation of international laws and norms. I urge the Trump Administration, the Department of Homeland Security and ICE to immediately halt any and all deportations to Cameroon until the violence has abated and their pending legal motions are heard."

Leadership from A1

Even into the new year, COVID-19 remains the greatest challenge across our country and in Prince George's County. Prince Georgians have lost loved ones. Additionally, COVID has claimed jobs, businesses, and our local economy must travel a long road back to return to where it once was. Yet, with each challenge comes the opportunity to be innovative and industrious as we work to meet the needs of the citizenry, and effectively address our post-pandemic reality. "

Chair Hawkins also addressed the importance of collaboration.

"We will continue to work collectively with residents; County Executive Alsobrooks; lawmakers in Annapolis; and all stakeholders committed to improving the quality of life for Prince Georgians to pass legislation that achieves the mission we have set. The Countywide Map Amendment, school construction, Kirwan, Health in All Policies, Ad Hoc Housing, the Adequate Public Facilities test, construction of a new detention facility—all these initiatives are calling for action."

Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks attended the virtual Gavel Exchange Ceremony, congratulating the new Leadership Team and thanking the Council for its work on behalf of Prince George's County residents.

"I want to congratulate the incoming Chair and Vice-Chair. As you take over, you are inheriting a strong legacy. I know that even though we will face many difficulties together, if we stand to-

gether, we will continue to be successful. As we prepare for the 2021 new Legislative Session, we will continue to make those who sent us here, proud."

Chair Hawkins, of Upper Marlboro, was elected to serve his first term on the Prince George's County Council in the 2018 General Election, and served as Vice-Chair of the County Council for Legislative Year 2020. Vice-Chair Taveras, of Adelphi, was reelected in the November 2018 General Election, to serve a second four-year term as the Prince George's County Council Member repre-

senting District 2. She is the first Latina to serve as Council Vice-Chair.

Please visit <https://pgccouncil.us/303/County-Council-Video> for on-demand video of the Gavel Exchange Ceremony, or to access Gavel Exchange speeches. The Gavel Exchange ceremony will also be cablecast on Prince George's Community Television (CTV), Channel 42 (Verizon FIOS) and Channel 76, (Comcast). For air dates and times, please visit www.pgctv.org or contact CTV at 301-773-0900.

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Should I Claim Social Security at 62?

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

Dear Rusty: I'm looking for information about retiring and starting my Social Security very soon at age 62. I'm not sure if I want to do it because I'm not sure if I can. Can you help me figure this out? **Signed: Hesitant**

Dear Hesitant: I know it can be daunting trying to figure out whether and when to claim your Social Security benefits. I'll give you some of the basics:

First, you should know that if you claim your benefits at age 62, your benefit amount will be considerably reduced from what it would be if you waited longer to claim. At 62, your benefit will be about 28% less than it would be at your full retirement age (FRA) which, for you is 66 years and 8 months. Your benefit will continue to grow by a fraction of a percentage point each month you wait, until it reaches 100% at your FRA. You can choose to delay even longer than your FRA, and your benefit will continue to grow up to age 70 when you reach your maximum benefit amount. For you, that maximum at age 70 would be about 28% more than you would get at your FRA and about 75% more than you would get at age 62. There is a considerable financial advantage to waiting to claim.

If you continue working, and you claim at age 62 (or at any age before your FRA), you'll be subject to Social Security's "earnings test," which limits how much you can earn before they take back some of your benefits. Starting at age 62 and continuing until the year you attain FRA, there will be an annual limit to your earnings (the 2021 limit is \$18,960) and, if you exceed that, SS will take back benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit. That could mean you will go some number of months without receiving benefits until Social Security recovers what you owe because you exceeded the earnings limit. Of course, if you fully retire from work now that is not a concern, but it may influence a future decision to return to work. Social Security's earnings limit no longer applies after you reach your full retirement age.

Your marital status also comes into play. If you are married, and your benefit as a spouse will be more than your personal benefit will be, then there are some special considerations which might affect your claiming decision. Generally, if your spousal benefit will be more than your own benefit (from your lifetime work record), and your husband isn't yet collecting benefits, it's often wise to claim your own earlier and take the larger spouse benefit later. Of course, if you're not married you need only be concerned about your personal benefit from your own lifetime earnings record and waiting for a larger life-long benefit, if possible, is often the most prudent choice.

Those are the basic things you should consider when trying to decide when to claim your benefits. But your need for the money now, plus your health and life expectancy are also key to your decision. If you need the money earlier to make ends meet, and you won't be severely affected by the earnings limit, then claiming early can be your most prudent choice. Or, if you are not enjoying good health and have reason to believe that you won't live at least until today's average age for a woman (about 87), then that also suggests claiming early. But, if you are working and don't really need the money, and you are in good health and expect to live to a ripe old age, then waiting longer to claim a higher benefit is usually a better strategy.

The reality is that everyone's personal situation is different and there is no single answer to the question of when to claim Social Security. I hope the above gives you at least a starting point for your decision.

The 2.3 million member Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC) 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) 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.

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Prince George's County Resident and Contract Specialist in the Spotlight – Jillita Bulluck

By PRESS OFFICER
Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Washington

Jillita Bulluck is a Contracting Officer at the Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Washington Core and lives in Prince George's County, Md. with her husband of eight years, Kelvin. Jillita and Kelvin care for their nephew, who is nine-years-old, and they enjoy doing everything in the DMV (Washington DC, Maryland and Northern Virginia) from jet skiing to laser tag.

Bulluck, grew up in Charleston, S.C. with three older sisters. Her dad worked as a longshoreman. Her mom worked as a LPN nurse. Her parents raised her in the church.

"I started out in a holiness, or Pentecostal, church then joined a southern Baptist church with my grandmother," said Bulluck.

From an early age, Bulluck knew she possessed a talent for running, although she was more a sprinter than a distance runner. She became serious about track and field as a seventh grader. So serious that she visited different schools throughout the county to identify which one would best develop her skills.

"There were three impressive coaches that changed the trajectory of my life, [including] Curtis Hazelton, William "Billy" Griswold and Coach Wright," said Bulluck.

With their guidance, she won second place in the state in ninth grade and again her senior year. She was named MVP every year, including her senior year when somehow she ended up being the only one on the team at that point. Her Dedication earned her a full athletic scholarship at a NCAA Division I school, San Diego State University.

"At SDSU, I was part of a team that broke a twenty-two year winning streak against Brigham Young University, leading SDSU to be the 2003 Mountain West Conference Champion," said Bulluck.

Bulluck graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and Pre-Professional Studies and a minor in Political Science.

"As the youngest in my family, I was the first to attend a four-year university," said Bulluck. "I wanted to earn a full scholarship, but even if I did not, I was committed to getting my bachelor's degree."

In December 2013, she went even further and graduated from Morgan State University with a Master of Business Administration degree. That commitment to education continued in her work career, when she graduated from NAVFAC's Leadership Development Program in 2016.

"During that time, I had the privilege to be mentored by Guy Collins and be trained under Lt. Cmdr. Ian Kelly, two very talented and methodological problem solvers in the acquisition community," said Bulluck.

Bulluck began working at NAVFAC Washington in July 2008 after being recruited at a career fair. Currently, she is one of two Facility Support Contract Specialist Team Leads for the FSC CORE Team. Bulluck is responsible for a number of the FSC pre-award contracts for the region and provides reach back support to each Public Works Office and FEAD Quantico.

"I am honored to work alongside Jim Waite, who is one of the most experienced and knowledgeable 1102s here at NAVFAC," said Bulluck.

While they both execute contracts from cradle to grave, Bulluck focuses more on pre-award contracts, while Waite focuses more on post-award. Together they are a great team.

"Jim Waite and I conduct higher-level reviews and approvals, work to ensure compliance, solve complex issues with the contractors, provide support and guidance to the fields and ensure all our contracts are executed timely to avoid any gaps in service," said Bulluck.

She also works with Shonn Gilkes, who she considers a hard working contract specialist, and Peter Kho who fights for what he believes is right. Bulluck considers her supervisor, Arlene

Adonay, a servant-leader who never hesitates to jump in to support any way she can. Last but not least, the team includes Eric Walker, Tracey Stephens and Kennedy O'Shea, talented interns who support the development of contractual documentation.

Bulluck loves developing processes and tools to make things more streamlined and pays special attention to supporting team members in understanding NAVFAC's processes and systems to execute the mission. Her work philosophy for her teammates is to understand why they are performing these professional processes, not just take orders.

"Do not make the mistake of relying on other people for all your knowledge and guidance," said Bulluck. "Take ownership of your learning and your intern experience. You deserve it and you can do it. You can do hard things! You already are doing it. Just take it up a notch."

Her passion for mentorship spills over into her personal life, as she has a history of educating and equipping women of faith to change their mindset and transform their life and relationships.

"I am really good at helping others set and achieve their personal goals," said Bulluck. "I started doing that for myself as a seventh grader and started focusing on that for others back in 2008 when I became involved with the youth department in my church. Now I focus more on women. I am good at helping people start their online service business and/or publishing their book."

In the next five years, Bulluck sees herself in upper management, ideally supporting processes and policy and/or overseeing the execution of leveraging processes, systems and tools. She gives thanks to Murieta Beverly, NAVFAC Washington's former chief contracting officer, for her leadership of the Acquisition Community over the last five years.

"Ms. Beverly led with poise, confidence and integrity," added Bulluck. "I am forever grateful to have had an opportunity to be under her leadership. Thank you Murieta!"



PHOTO COURTESY NAVY OFFICE OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Jillita Bulluck

Council Vice Chair Deni Taveras Welcomes Pennyroyal Station to Historic Singer Building in Mount Rainier

By ANGELA J. ROUSON
Prince George's County Council Media

Prince George's County Council Vice-Chair Deni Taveras welcomes Pennyroyal Station, an American-style comfort food restaurant, to District 2, which she represents. Located in the heart of Mount Rainier, Pennyroyal Station is in the historic Singer Building, and joins the thriving commercial Gateway Arts District along Route 1.

Vice-Chair Taveras says Pennyroyal Station is an exciting new addition to the District 2 community.

"The opening of Pennyroyal Station signifies confidence in our future, and District 2 is excited to welcome this business to the community. COVID-19 has changed the way we live, but it

has not stopped our work to achieve a thriving community, with great amenities and vibrant spaces, exactly what Pennyroyal offers."

Pennyroyal Station co-owners Erin Edwards and Jesse Miller are veterans of Bar Pilar in Washington, D.C. Edwards, a resident of the City of Mount Rainier, says after moving into the community, she knew she had to open a restaurant there.

"I love the idea of restaurants bringing people together. In our experience, neighborhood restaurants always added to the advancement of communities. It not only helped economically but it brought people together," adding, "There are so many businesses in this area, along with a thriving arts community—we feel lucky to become a part of it."

For more information on Pennyroyal Station, including dining options under current COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions, visit <https://www.pennyroyalstation.com/>

Peterson Family Foundation to Give \$500K to Local Families in Need

Family has longstanding history of giving back to the community

FAIRFAX, Va. (November 30, 2020)—As a growing number of families in the Washington, D.C. region struggle with homelessness and food insecurity, one local family is stepping up to help. The Peterson Family Foundation is donating \$500,000 to organizations throughout Northern Virginia and Maryland that have mobilized to help those in need. Up to \$300,000 will be given this year with the balance being given the following year. The Peterson Family Foundation was created through the generosity of Milton and Carolyn Peterson. Milton Pe-

terson is also the founder of Peterson Companies, one of the oldest real estate companies in the D.C. area. The company develops and manages a large number of retail, commercial, residential and mixed-use properties.

Since the inception of the Peterson Family Foundation in 1997, the foundation has directly contributed and helped to raise millions of dollars for a diverse list of organizations with missions that the Peterson family supports.

Organizations receiving this latest round of support include,

in Maryland: Manna Food Center (Montgomery County); Stand Up & Deliver and United Way (Prince George's County.)

Through Gleaning for the World, the Peterson Family Foundation worked with local farmers and food distributors to create the Million Meals Program in Prince George's County, Md. The program provided one million meals a year, for three years, to local churches and food banks to help families with the least access to consistent and fresh food.

—Peterson Family Foundation

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Metro Budget Cuts from A1

statement Tuesday [December 1].

Schwartz echoed the sentiment, and said that Republicans and Democrats in Congress needed to intervene to save transit authorities, whose CARES Act funding has run out.

"We can't believe that it's gotten to this point and Congress is still dithering," Schwartz said.

Absent congressional action, both Maxwell and Schwartz think there are things local authorities, particularly Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan's administration, can do to soften the blow.

"We cannot and could never afford boondoggles like the maglev proposal, and hyper loops and new toll lanes," Schwartz said. "We must put our existing transit systems first."

Maxwell questioned the utility of such projects at a time when thousands of workers in existing transit services face unemployment. "But even if I was a millionaire, why would I want to pay \$50 per person for a toll," Maxwell said.

"They're spending millions of dollars right now on research and information that they're finding out is not favorable toward the maglev you know, but they are still spending that money. That money could go to operational need for transit," Maxwell said.

He added that transit operators have worked through the pandemic, despite the risk of exposure to coronavirus.

"They stood in the gap. They transport other essential workers to and from work and home," Maxwell said. "They did their part, but it doesn't seem to be enough."

Schwartz said services would take a long time to recover. "It would mean a declining economy, greater unemployment, greater inequity, in terms of ability to gain access to jobs, a traffic Armageddon, setting back the D.C. region decades," Schwartz said.

Morningside-Skyline from A2

Services were at Lee's with burial at Cheltenham.

Joe loved nothing more than big family gatherings and spending his free time at the firehouse.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Denise (Eskew) Simms, Dec. 5; Mae Boone, Sandra Mickey and Brian Doyle, Dec. 7; Crystal Pruitt and Charles Boxley, Dec. 8; Beth Shipman, Dec. 9; former Morningside Councilwoman Sharon Fowler and Diane (Williams) Zirkle, Dec. 10; Michelle Anderson, Dec. 11; Bernie Barbour Pace, Thomas Shipman Jr. and Jim Trexler, Dec. 13; Linda Gryskewicz, Dec. 15; my next-door neighbor Stacie Branham-Smith and Erin Nicole Brown-Sandoval, Dec. 16; Morningside Vice-Mayor Bradley Wade and David Williams III, Dec. 17; Charlene Baker and Paul Ratliff, Dec. 18.

Anniversary greetings to Johnny and Helen Richardson, their 18th on Dec. 14; and happy 77th (!) to Margaret and Leslie Greene who were wed Dec. 18, 1943.

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