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Upper Marlboro Native Defends America From Under the Sea

By MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 1ST CLASS
MITCH MEPPELINK
Navy Office of Community Outreach

KINGS BAY, Ga. (June 4, 2025)—Petty Officer 2nd Class Justin Morton, a native of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, serves the U.S. Navy assigned to USS Tennessee, homeported at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay. As a submariner, Morton is part of a small percentage of Navy personnel continuing a 125-year tradition of service under the sea to help ensure Americans' safety.

Morton graduated from Bishop McNamara High School in 2018.

The skills and values needed to succeed in the Navy are similar to those found in Upper Marlboro.

"I learned growing up that being social and talking with people goes a long way," Morton said. "If I don't know how to do something, I can reach out to people who have done it or experienced it, and they can teach me because trying to do it on my own won't get me very far."

Morton joined the Navy three years ago. Today, Morton serves as an electrician's mate.

"I joined the Navy to make myself marketable," Morton said. "I also wanted to set myself up for the future. After watching both my mom and dad serve in the Air Force, I knew the benefits of the military and the importance of following that tradition as well."

Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay is the homeport of East Coast ballistic-missile and guided-missile submarines. These submarines are capable of conducting operations in the Atlantic, Arctic, Eastern Pacific, and Indian Oceans and the Mediterranean Sea. It is also the only Navy base with the capability to support the Trident II missile, the most sophisticated nuclear missile designed to be launched from a submarine.

Known as America's "Apex Predators!," the Navy's submarine force operates a large fleet of technologically advanced vessels. These submarines are capable of conducting rapid defensive and offensive operations around the world, in furtherance of U.S. national security.

There are three basic types of submarines: fast-attack submarines (SSN), ballistic-missile submarines (SSBN) and guided-missile submarines (SSGN).

Fast-attack submarines are designed to hunt down and destroy enemy submarines and surface ships; strike targets ashore with cruise missiles; carry and deliver Navy SEALs; conduct intelli-



PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 1ST CLASS HUNTER HARWELL, NAVY OFFICE OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Petty Officer 2nd Class Justin Morton

gence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions; and engage in mine warfare. The Virginia-class SSN is the most advanced submarine in the world today. It combines stealth and payload capability to meet Combatant Commanders' demands in this era of strategic competition.

The Navy's ballistic-missile submarines, often referred to as "boomers," serve as a strategic deterrent by providing an undetectable platform for submarine-launched ballistic missiles. SSBNs are designed specifically for stealth, extended patrols and the

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Tara H. Jackson Is the new Prince George's County State's Attorney

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Judiciary

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (June 16, 2025)—Tara H. Jackson has been selected as the new State's Attorney for Prince George's County. Jackson succeeded Angela D. Alsobrooks, who was elected to the U.S. Senate, to serve as the Acting County Executive for Prince George's County, Maryland. Jackson will serve as Prince George's County State's Attorney as Aisha Braveboy has been sworn in as county executive.

Jackson's career includes more than 20 years in the government and legal community. Jackson formerly served as Prince George's County's Chief Administrative Officer, beginning in December 2020. She began her career in public service

as a prosecutor in the State's Attorney's Office, and later took on a role serving as Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Government Operations under County Executive Alsobrooks.

Jackson earned a Bachelor of Science from James Madison University, a Juris Doctor from the University of Maryland School of Law, and a Master of Divinity in Leadership Development from the Phoenix Seminary.

Pursuant to Article V of the Maryland Constitution, the circuit court judges of Prince George's County appointed Jackson to fill the vacancy of State's Attorney for the remaining term.



PHOTO COURTESY AAA

Pictured left to right: Bonnie Schlorb, AAA School Safety Patrol Advisor/Paraprofessional Educator; Tori Tate, AAA Outstanding School Safety Patroller; Crystal Smalls, Retail Manager, AAA Laurel Car Care, Insurance and Travel Center

AAA Honors Prince George's County Student With Outstanding School Safety Patroller of the Year Award

Longfields Elementary Student Recently Honored

By PRESS OFFICER
AAA

FORESTVILLE, Md. (June 18, 2025)—AAA proudly announces that Tori Tate, a fifth grader at Longfields Elementary School is Prince George's County's 2024–2025 Outstanding School Safety Patroller of the Year.

Tori was nominated for this honor by her School Safety Patrol Advisor, Ms. Bonnie Schlorb for her exemplary leadership qualities. Like thousands of her peers across the country, Tori has remained committed to keeping her fellow students safe and being a positive role model at her school.

While Tori was nominated for this award by her advisor, several of her teachers, peers and even her principal wrote letters of support for this honor and shared numerous examples of Tori's leadership.

One such example illustrated Tori's response in offering guidance and suggestions to a fellow patroller to handle a delicate situation more effectively. Tori's actions showed a "level of maturity and self-reflection (that) is rare in students her age, and it highlights her natural leadership abilities," said Ms. Carmen L. Bell, Principal at Longfields Elementary.

Ms. Bell continued, "Tori Tate's dedication to her responsibilities, her ability to foster a positive school environment, and her thoughtful, reflective approach to leadership make her an outstanding candidate for the School Safety Patrol of the Year Award. We are proud to have Tori as part of our team and are confident she will continue to inspire those around her."

For more than 100 years, the

See PATROLLER Page A3

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PART SEVENTEEN

Youth Mental Health? There's an App—Many Apps—for That. But Are They Effective?

By LILLIAN GLAROS
Capital News Service

A little bird helps Sarah Mann deal with her anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder, but it isn't a talkative parrot or a mockingbird. It's a virtual avatar on Finch, a self-care app Mann has used at least once a day since August 2024.

The 18-year-old said Finch allows her to take control of her mental health. In the app, Mann can decide what tasks she wants to complete and reminders to receive.

"Having control over that has been very helpful in being able to control that sort of aspect of my mental health, and being able to be reminded to take a deep breath every once in a while," Mann said.

Mann's therapist recommended the app, and Mann said it reminds her of topics she and her therapist have discussed.

A University of Maryland freshman this past academic year, Mann said sending the "finch" on adventures makes the app interactive and entertaining, which encourages her to open the app's notifications. Part of the app's appeal is it feels like a game, she said.

Welcome to the modern world of mental health care, where help can arrive on your phone. Young people—and in fact, people of all ages—now have access to a variety of apps that can help them get through the day and through tough times.

Yet not all mental health apps are proven to be effective, said Adam Horwitz, a licensed clinical psychologist and assistant



PHOTO COURTESY CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Sarah Mann

professor at the University of Michigan Medical School.

"A lot of them are out there without necessarily having undergone formal scrutiny to determine their effectiveness," Horwitz said.

A variety of apps

The Finch app is just one of many apps that target mental health conditions. Some, like Finch, promote self-care and goal-setting while providing daily affirmations. Others teach users about coping mechanisms or allow users to record their emotions.

Prosper, a free mental health app, was developed to find a new way to help people with self-care, develop coping strategies

and become more resilient, said Eric Sullivan, CEO of Uneo Health, which launched the app in 2023.

The app includes guided journals, daily check-ins, habit reminders, meditations and mindfulness videos.

Sullivan said the app is most often used to help with sleep, sadness, anxiety or stress. For example, if a user is stressed, the guided journals can help identify why, while other features, such as breathing exercises, can help the user calm down.

Uneo Health and its partner agencies, including National Alliance on Mental Illness Maryland, received \$1.4 million in state grants to share the app in Calvert, Frederick and Prince George's counties.

Another app that works with schools is the Alongside platform, which also has a website.

Alongside was created by educators, therapists and psychologists in collaboration with about 100 teenagers to address youth mental health issues, said Elsa Friis, Alongside's head of product and clinical.

According to Friis, the platform does that through various features, including mood trackers, videos that provide students with information on topics such as adjusting to college and Kiwi, a chatbot that uses artificial intelligence to simulate human conversation. Users can chat with Kiwi about their mental health and get recommended content based on the conversation.

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

With Mary McHale, will return soon!

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

FOUR WONDERFUL WOMEN HONORED

During Women’s Day Celebration at Nottingham Myers United Methodist Church in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, four wonderful women were honored. The women were Miss Rosalind Pinkney, Mrs. Janice M. Hawkins, Mrs. Tracy Pinkney, Mrs. Lisa Mckelvy. These women were honored for their dedicated service and being faithful servants.

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Bowie State University is known as Maryland’s first Historically Black College and University (HBCU) and one of the oldest HBCUs in the nation, founded in 1865. It has a strong focus on STEM education and offers a wide range of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs, including those in computer science, education, and nursing. Bowie State is also recognized for its commitment to providing affordable and accessible higher education to a diverse student population. <https://www.bowiestate.edu>.

TRIOFEST

Join us for TRIOFEST 2025: Wine, Beer & Food Festival Saturday, August 2, 2025, at 11 a.m. The event will be at 8440 Fairground Road, LaPlata, Maryland.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Join Clinton United Methodist Church’s Vacation Bible School from July 14, 2025–July 18, 2025, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. every day. Each day our K–5th graders will discover God is with us everywhere we go. You are cordially invited to join us for our follow-up Vacation Bible School Sunday, July 20, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. We will have a Children’s Church VBS summary presentation. Please register your child for VBS Registration 2025 on our website at

<https://cumcmd.org/>. Please contact our office 301-868-1281 if you need a printed form. Clinton United Methodist Church, 10700 Brandywine Road, Clinton, Maryland 20735.

SALUTE THE SUNSET CONCERT SERIES

Saturday evenings throughout the summer are military band nights at National Harbor. Bring a chair and enjoy an evening with performing ensembles from a variety of United States military bands at 7 p.m. Concerts are free and open to the public. These events are subject to weather (<https://www.nationalharbor.com/about/weather> cancellations. To check the status of a concert, please visit our Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/visitnationalharbor>) or Twitter (<https://twitter.com/NationalHarbor>).

August Concerts: August 2 United States Air Force Band Air Force Strings (<https://www.nationalharbor.com/events/salute-the-sunset-united-states-air-force-band-air-force-strings2/>). August 9 United States Air Force Band Max Impact (<https://www.nationalharbor.com/events/salute-the-sunset-united-states-air-force-band-max-impact-2/>). August 16 United States Air Force Band Airmen of Note (<https://www.nationalharbor.com/events/salute-the-sunset-united-states-air-force-band-airmen-of-note-2/>). August 23 United States Air Force Concert Band (<https://www.nationalharbor.com/events/salute-the-sunset-united-states-air-force-band-concert-band/>). August 30 United State Navy Band Sea Chanters (<https://www.nationalharbor.com/events/salute-the-sunset-united-states-navy-band-sea-chanters-2/>)

Shawn Joseph Named PGCPS Interim Superintendent

By PRESS OFFICER
Prince George’s County Coouncil

Prince George’s County Executive-elect Aisha Braveboy announced Friday, June 13, that she has selected Shawn Joseph, Ed.D., co-director of the AASA/Howard University Urban Superintendents Academy, as the interim superintendent of Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS).

This selection follows Thursday’s decision between the PGCPS Board of Education and superintendent to part ways effective June 18, 2025, a move that comes after weeks of discussion about the future of PGCPS.

“Moving swiftly and decisively now is critical to ensuring forward momentum in our public schools,” said Braveboy.

The interim superintendency represents a homecoming for Joseph, who previously served as PGCPS deputy superintendent for teaching and learning from 2014–16.

Currently, Joseph sits on the faculty of Howard University, home to one of America’s top-ranked colleges of education, where he serves as assistant professor of educational leadership, administration, and policy. In that role, he also serves as co-director of the AASA/Howard Urban Superintendents Academy, through which he mentors top administrators in local school districts across the country on priorities including academic improvement, program evaluation, and student-focused budgeting.

“I’m pleased to welcome Dr. Joseph home to Prince George’s County, and I look forward to partnering with him

and the Board of Education to chart a positive path forward,” Braveboy said. “This is a pivotal moment for the school system and it’s an opportunity to reimagine what’s possible for our students and families. With Dr. Joseph’s seasoned leadership and the Board’s unwavering commitment, PGCPS can improve outcomes in student achievement, strengthen employee relations, and enhance the overall educational experience.”

She added: “This is the right leadership team at the right time to usher in a new era of excellence.”

Effective immediately, the PGCPS Board of Education—led by Chairman Brannndon Jackson—will initiate contract talks to formalize Joseph’s appointment as interim superintendent.

“The Board appreciates County Executive-elect Braveboy’s leadership and commitment to public education, and we look forward to working with Dr. Joseph to improve outcomes for all students,” Jackson said. “In the coming days, we’ll work diligently to formalize Dr. Joseph’s appointment and then collaborate with him to set meaningful and transparent goals and objectives for the future.”

Braveboy and Jackson lauded Joseph’s institutional knowledge of PGCPS as well as his distinguished career as an educator, scholar, and advocate for student-focused equity in public education.

In addition to working with Howard University and the Urban Superintendents Academy, Joseph is a leader in the NSBA/Howard School Board Governance Academy and he is a senior associate with HYA, a national network of education experts who assist pub-

lic-school districts in recruiting and developing great leaders. He previously served as superintendent for the Seaford (Del.) School District and Metro Nashville (Tenn.) Public Schools. Earlier in his career, Joseph spent 16 years as a classroom teacher, assistant principal, principal, and district administrator in Montgomery County (Md.) Public Schools.

Joseph holds a doctoral degree in educational administration and policy studies from George Washington University, a master’s degree in reading education from Johns Hopkins University, and a bachelor’s degree in English education from Lincoln University, the nation’s first degree-granting HBCU.

“I’m honored by this appointment from County Executive-elect Braveboy and I look forward to working with the PGCPS Board of Education to ensure that every student—no matter their zip code—has access to a world-class education,” Joseph said. “Working with Prince George’s County’s dedicated educators and staff, I’m eager to build on the district’s commitment to collaboration and excellence. This is a moment of real possibilities, and I’m ready to get to work.”

Prince George’s County leaders voiced support for Joseph’s appointment as interim superintendent.

“Dr. Joseph returns to PGCPS with a unique leadership perspective as well as a clear understanding of the school system’s strengths and challenges,” said County Council Chair Edward Burroughs III, a former member of the PGCPS Board of Education. “The Council looks forward to working with Dr. Joseph and the Board as we finalize the new county budget and look ahead to future conversations about how we best optimize resources to support our schools.”

Mark J. Smith Elected New WSSC Water Commission Chair for Fiscal Year 2026

Jonathan W. Powell Elected Vice Chair

By PRESS OFFICER
WSSC Water

LAUREL, Md. (June 18, 2025)—Mark J. Smith was unanimously elected WSSC Water Commission Chair at today’s monthly Commission Meeting. Smith was appointed as a Commissioner representing Prince George’s County in October 2022, most recently serving as

Vice Chair.

Smith has an extensive background in disaster relief and rural development, including more than two decades with the American Red Cross. He currently serves as the Executive Director for Community Engagement and Partnerships. Smith began his career with Africare, the largest minority-led development organization focused on rural

development in Africa.

“It is my honor and privilege to serve as Chair of the WSSC Water Board of Commissioners and I express my heartfelt gratitude to my fellow commissioners and leadership from Prince George’s and Montgomery counties for their ongoing support,” said Smith. “As I take on this role, I’m energized by the opportunities ahead and focused on our fi-

duciary responsibility in service to our customers and Team H2O. I am committed to working with my fellow colleagues and our leadership team to focus on expanding financial assistance opportunities, enhancing customer service, ensuring safety remains mission critical and delivering infrastructure projects that protect public health.”

The commissioners also unanimously voted Jonathan W. Powell as Vice Chair. Powell, a resident of Gaithersburg, is currently a project manager with the U.S. Navy. He was appointed Commissioner representing Montgomery County in September 2024.

Six Commissioners govern WSSC Water, which has an annual \$1.8 billion operating and capital budget. Three Commissioners are Montgomery County residents, and three are Prince George’s County residents. Appointed by their respective county executives to four-year terms, the Commissioners are confirmed by their county councils.

WSSC Water is the proud provider of safe, seamless and satisfying water services, making the essential possible every day for our neighbors in Montgomery and Prince George’s counties. We work to deliver our best because it’s what our customers expect and deserve.

Around the County

New Summer Youth Leadership Program for Ages 13–17, Upper Marlboro, Free Tuition

The Community Impact Office of Prince George’s County is hosting a tuition-free summer one-week youth leadership program for ages 13–17. Two sessions will be held in July, July 7–11 and July 14–18.

The application deadline is June 29, 2025. Visit www.communityimpactoffice.org to submit a request for an application. Must be a Prince George’s County resident.

This unique, engaged learning program will educate and engage students with the various leadership roles in the community, from government to small business to education to marketing and outreach.

Two retired PGCPs educators are coordinating the program for the Community Impact Office. The program is made possible by a grant from Wala Blegay, District 6, County Council. The location is 11425 Old Marlboro Pike, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772.

Vital Records Office Relocating to Cheverly Health Center

Please be advised that the Vital Records Office Brightseat Road location will be permanently closed starting June, 23 2025.

All services will resume on Monday, June 30, 2025, at our new location at the Cheverly Health Center. This includes all services previously provided at our former location, including death certificates, birth certificates, and other vital records.

- Cheverly Health Center, 3003 Hospital Drive, Cheverly, MD 20785
- Hours of Operation: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday—8 a.m. to 12 p.m.; Wednesday CLOSED
- If you have questions, please email us at PGCVitalRecords@co.pg.md.us.

2025 PGCPs Summer Meals Program Announced

16 open meal sites across the County to provide free meals to children 18 and younger beginning in July

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (June 17, 2025)—Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) Department of Food and Nutrition Services will launch its annual Summer Food Service Program on Monday, June 23, providing free meals at 165 school sites for students enrolled in summer programs.

Beginning Monday, July 7, all children 18 and younger can receive meals at 16 open sites—eight schools and eight community locations—regardless of enrollment.

Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. No registration or ID is required.

Meals are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Operation dates are as follows:

- July 7–July 31:** Breakfast and lunch available to all children at school open sites. Hot meals will be served.
- July 7–August 8:** Lunch available to all children at community open sites. Bagged meals will be served.

Families should note that only the 16 open sites offer drop-in meals; all other sites serve only students enrolled in on-site summer programs.

View a complete list of sites and service times here: <https://www.pgcp.org/offices/food-and-nutrition/summer-meals>. Additional free meals locations can be found on the Maryland Summer Meals website: https://mars.msde.maryland.gov/mars_sitesearch/.

NCRTV Celebrates Annual Gala on September 13, 2025

Event Honors Broadcast Leader Diane Rehm

The National Capital Radio and Television Museum (NCRTV) invites all to join us for our Annual Gala, on September 13, 2025, at the Bowie Comfort Inn. NCRTV will honor Diane Rehm, a leader in the local broadcasting community with the Ed Walker Lifetime Achievement Award in Broadcasting. Named for long-time local on-air personality and first NCRTV president Ed Walker, the Lifetime Achievement in Broadcasting award recognizes the impact that local radio and television communicators have had on the local citizens. Walker received the NCRTV Award in 2015.

Proceeds from the event will assist NCRTV in preserving the history of radio and television for future generations. The evening will include dinner, dancing, a silent auction and more! Tickets are \$130 per person for members & \$160 per person for non-members. Tickets can be purchased at <https://ncrtv.org/gala/>.

About Diane Rehm

Diane Rehm is one of the most respected radio personalities in the Washington Metropolitan area. She hosted the Diane Rehm show on WAMU from 1979 to 2016 during which time she interviewed thousands of national and local business, political and cultural figures. She hosted a podcast “On My Mind” on WAMU that is distributed nationally, and a monthly book club. Born and raised in Washington, DC, she is the author of three books and recipient of many awards.

She will soon be adding one more to her impressive collection: the NCRTV Ed Walker Lifetime Achievement Award in Broadcasting! In May 2025 she officially retired from WAMU.

The National Capital Radio & Television Museum is dedicated to teaching about the development of radio and television. Visitors can explore radio from Marconi’s earliest wireless telegraph to the primitive crystal sets of the 1920s, from Depression-era cathedral radios and post-War plastic portables to vintage televisions to some of today’s modern communications electronics. The Museum is located at 2608 Mitchellville Rd. Bowie, Maryland, 20716. The museum is open Fridays 9 a.m.–4 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 12–4 p.m. info@ncrtv.org

COMMUNITY

Former Prince George’s County Chapter Top Teen, Kyndal Truesdale Is Named Organizer and Founding President of the NCNW Collegiate Section at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore

By MARIA CAMPBELL

Ms. Kyndal Truesdale, a rising senior at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) formed a Collegiate Section of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW). Ms. Truesdale is a former member of Prince George’s County’s Top Teens of America (TTA) Chapter of Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc. (TLOD), where she served as Youth Chair of the NCNW Committee for two years. She is also a National Life member of NCNW, and former Youth Member of the Prince George’s County Section.

Ms. Truesdale was named Organizer and Founding President during a virtual ceremony on Saturday, May 24, 2025. National Chair, Dr. A. Lois Keith presided over the ceremony and formally installed the Executive Board members.

The new Section currently has forty-two collegiate members. Creation of the collegiate section encourages the involvement of young adults to extend the legacy of NCNW Founder, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune to improve the lives of women, children and families in need. Congratulations to Former Teen Kyndal and members of UMES NCNW Collegiate Section.

University of Maryland Eastern Shore Charter Member List
Kyndal Truesdale, Ryane Curtis, Mar’Shay Robinson, Tayonna Johnson, Laila Dent, Aniya Hood, Angel Leach, Kaneijah Dorsey-Gwynn, Alaynah Martin, Alexa Barnett, Alexus Butler, Amanda Exantus, Amaya Wade, Aniyah Carter, Aurelia Keels, Brionna Farrar, Charley Weng, Chesney Martinez, Christ-Love Talabert, DeAnna Frazier, Jade Rollerson, Kamille Trammell, Kayla Baker,



COURTESY PHOTO

Kyndal Truesdale, Organizer and Founding President

Kendall Artis, Khamara Logan, Kimani Stephens, Kiyae Carter, Logan Forrest, London Harris, Minaya Humphries, Morgan Gaddy, Mya Holland, Mya Lawson, Myesha Palmer, Na’Zyia Edmonds, Niesha Jacobs, Samara Tinch, Shemiah James, Syliah Harris, Tirzah Bailey, Tylanah Teasley, Wasileh Diamant.

Students Reunite With Their Teacher and Classmates

By DELORES WALLS

Sojourner Truth Elem. School Reunion Committee

The alumni of Sojourner Truth Elem. School came together on Saturday, June 14, 2025 at 2 p.m. for the 1st Reunion Picnic at the Boniwood Rec. Center in Clinton, MD. From 1931 to 1962 Sojourner Truth Elem. School stood as a beacon for Black families in Oxon Hill and beyond. It closed in 1962. The Oxon Hill Public Library was later built in its place. A committee of eight planned this event with lots of enthusiasm and a desire to see classmates they hadn’t seen since elementary school.

A flyer was designed and distributed throughout Oxon Hill and the nearby communities to advertise the reunion picnic. The students were asked to bring their own food and drinks. The DJ was awesome and he entertained us with some fantastic music.

Some students’ parents had attended the school too. The students now range from 68–91 years old. We were fortunate to have three students who were 88, 89, and 91 years old attend the reunion picnic. Mr. Arthur Dock, who was a 6th grade teacher at the school is the only living teacher. He was invited to attend. He turned 94 years old on June 19.



COURTESY PHOTO

Mr. Arthur Dock



COURTESY PHOTO

The Sojourner Truth Elem. School Reunion Committee

Once everyone had mingled and introduced themselves to each other, Delores Butler Walls started the program. She welcomed everyone and introduced her committee. Then she asked the students to share their memories of elementary school. Many students shared lots of interesting and funny memories. Then came the moment everyone had been waiting for. Our guest of honor, Mr. Dock, arrived looking just as handsome as ever. Everyone stood and applauded as he walked into the room. Ruth Mason Lewis introduced him. He asked her to read his prepared speech. Then she presented

him with a card with money in it from the committee.

Nadine Savoy Pickeral thanked everyone for coming and she presented Mr. Dock with a card with monetary donations from the students who were there. Mr. Dock was overwhelmed with all of the students coming up to him to thank him for being a great teacher.

This was a very successful reunion. We had about 75 people attend with their spouse or significant other. The committee was asked to have another reunion next year.

Patroller from A1

AAA School Safety Patrol has been the world’s largest school-based safety program. Patrollers around the world provide school-aged children an extra sense of safety and security during the school day’s busiest times: arrival and dismissal. As a peer-to-peer leadership development program, Safety Patrols are trained to recognize safety hazards to ensure a safer school environment. The presence of a AAA School Safety Patroller wearing the familiar belt and badge is a nationally recognized symbol representing nearly 680,000 children throughout the country who participate in the program each year.

“It’s the dedication and leadership of students like Tori and countless others that have made the AAA School Safety Patrol program so impactful for decades,” said Crystal Smalls, Retail Manager at AAA Laurel Car Care, Insurance and Travel Center.

Created to make school children safer while walking to school, the program has grown-up and matured with the times while remaining steadfast to its mission to provide a safer environment and leadership opportunities for millions of school children. The training that patrollers receive instills a sense of safety beyond street crossings, including bus and car drop-offs, monitoring hallway congestion, and teaching patrollers invaluable leadership skills.

“AAA is proud to support this important safety program in Prince George’s County and at schools across Maryland,” Smalls added. “We provide these young people with training tools to help make their school safer. We are impressed with their leadership and initiative in implementing safety changes and improvements at their schools.”

The leadership values and safety awareness have inspired many former patrollers to pursue admirable careers, including Presidents of the United States, astronauts, governors, Members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, Olympic medalists, and authors, like Diary of a Wimpy Kid author, Jeff Kinney. Many patrollers now serve as educators, executives, and community leaders.

Since 1920, AAA has been providing various equipment and education materials to patrollers, including reflective belts, patrol badges and training resources. The AAA model has been adopted in at least 30 other countries, including England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and New Zealand.

AAA provides automotive, travel, and insurance services to more than 65.2 million members nationwide and over 80,000 members in Washington, D.C. AAA advocates for the safety and mobility of its members and has been committed to outstanding road service for more than 100 years. AAA is a non-stock, membership corporation working on behalf of motorists, who can map a route, find local gas prices and electric vehicle charging stations, discover discounts, book a hotel, and track their roadside assistance service with the AAA Mobile app (AAA.com/mobile) for iPhone, iPad and Android. For more information on joining or renewing a Membership, visit www.AAA.com.

Eighteen Maryland Students Awarded at Nationwide Competition

Prince George’s County winner is selected for Documentary Showcase at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Humanities

BALTIMORE (June 13, 2025)—Maryland Humanities congratulates eighteen Maryland students for their accomplishments at the National History Day Contest. Franka Hebisch of Montgomery County won a Gold Medal for her performance on the Match Girls Strike of 1888. Tirzah Chan, Annabelle Wu, and Surie Zhang of Howard County received a Bronze Medal for their group performance on corporate responsibility. Fourteen other Maryland students earned Special Prizes, a spot in a showcase at a Smithsonian Institution museum, or another form of special recognition at this year’s national competition.

Held June 8–12, 2025 at the University of Maryland, College Park, a total of 67 students from Maryland competed at this year’s national competition. The honorees hailed from Frederick and Prince George’s County, in addition to Montgomery and Howard Counties.

The National History Day competition welcomed an estimated 3,000 students to the final stage. Over a half-million students participated at the school, district, state, and national levels. Competitors from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, American Samoa, and international schools in China, Korea, and South Asia traveled to College Park, Maryland to compete.

Students who advance to National History Day won first or second place at the Maryland History Day State Contest, a culmination of the year-long Maryland History Day program presented by Maryland Humanities. For Maryland History Day, an affiliate of National History Day, students create original documentaries, exhibits, performances, papers, or websites exploring a historical topic of their choice based on the annual theme. This year’s theme was “Rights and Responsibilities in History.”

The following students received honors: Laila Asamoah of Frederick County; Sravya Annappareddy, Tirzah Chan, Hemant Kantheti, Shiven Trambadia, Justin Wang, Annabelle Wu, and Surie Zhang of Howard County; Chloe Chang, Jacob Frias, Lydia Garside, Emmanuel Getahun, Franka Hebisch, Genevieve Lichtenberger, Maya Mourshed, Nikhil Pandey, Numaaiman Tewfik of Montgomery County; and **Christopher Hill of Prince George’s County.**

Learn more about the Maryland History Day program here: <https://www.mdhumanities.org/programs/maryland-history-day/>.

Maryland Winners at National History Day 2025

Prince George’s County
Student: **Christopher Hill**
Honor: Selected for Documentary Showcase at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture
Category: Senior Individual Documentary
Title: The Fight for The Right of Flight: The Tuskegee Airmen
School: Oxon Hill High School
Teacher: Adam Thomas

Maryland History Day is supported by Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), National History Day®, Thalheimer-Eurich Charitable Fund, Baltimore County Commission on the Arts & Sciences, James T. and Virginia M. Drescher Center for the Humanities at UMBC, and Wright, Constable & Skeen, LLP.

Maryland Humanities creates and supports bold experiences that explore and elevate our shared stories to connect people, enhance lives, and enrich 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; corporations; small businesses; and individual donors. Connect with Maryland Humanities on Facebook, Instagram, Threads, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Maryland History Day is an affiliate of National History Day and a year-long educational program of Maryland Humanities. More than 26,000 middle and high school students create original projects that explore a historical topic of their choice on an annual theme. Professional development for teachers is offered through online courses and platforms, summer teacher institutes, workshops, and classroom outreach. Maryland Humanities produces Maryland History Day. For more information, visit www.MDHistoryDay.org. Connect with Maryland History Day on Facebook.

National History Day® (NHD) is a non-profit organization based in College Park, Maryland, that seeks to improve the teaching and learning of history. The National History Day Contest was established in 1974 and currently engages more than half a million students every year in conducting original research on historical topics of interest. Students present their research as a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website. Projects compete first at the local and affiliate levels, where the top entries are invited to the National Contest at the University of Maryland at College Park. NHD is sponsored in part by HISTORY®, the National Endowment for the Humanities, Patricia Behring Foundation, Diana Davis Spencer Foundation, World Education Foundation, the National Park Service, the 400 Years of African-American History Commission, the Better Angels Society, The Dr. Scholl Foundation, and individual donors. For more information, visit nhd.org.

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Department of Defense’s Retreat to Confederate Names Is a Betrayal of American Values

“Why wouldn’t we want to name it after the great heroes that we do have in the U.S. Army? They reflect the best of America. Inspirational people with inspirational stories.”

—Brigadier General Ty Seidule (Ret.), former vice chairman of the Naming Commission

In 2020, as the nation reckoned with systemic racism in the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder, the U.S. Department of Defense took a long-overdue step: initiating the process to rename military bases that bore the names of Confederate generals—men who fought to preserve slavery and divide the Union.

This was not a symbolic gesture. It was a deliberate act to honor the values of unity, equality, and democratic service over the legacy of white supremacy. That progress is now under threat.

Reports that the Department of Defense is considering—or being pressured into—reverting to Confederate names is more than a policy shift. It is a moral failure, a capitulation to revisionist history and the weaponization of nostalgia.

These bases, from Fort Bragg (now Fort Liberty) to Fort Hood (now Fort Cavazos), were renamed not to erase history, but to correct the record. These installations train and house a multiracial, multiethnic force of patriots. To ask them to salute the names of men who waged war against the United States—who fought and died to preserve human bondage—is not just offensive. It is indefensible.

Let’s be clear: Confederate names do not reflect “Southern heritage.” They reflect a legacy of racial terror, of rebellion against the United States Constitution, and of treason cloaked in mythology. Keeping those names is not about honoring history. It is about choosing which history to honor.

This retreat fits into a disturbing pattern. From

school boards banning books about race to corporations quietly walking back diversity commitments, there’s a coordinated effort to roll back even the most modest steps toward racial equity. And this rollback is rarely framed honestly. It hides behind rhetoric about “tradition,” “neutrality,” or “not being divisive”—as if honoring Black service members and rejecting white supremacy is somehow controversial.

The National Urban League calls on the administration and the Department of Defense to stand firm. Do not reverse course. Do not dishonor the generations of Black, Latino, Native, and Asian American troops who have served under the American flag—not the Confederate one.

This is not a fringe issue. It’s a frontline battle in the struggle for truth, equity, and a truly unified nation.

We’ve already seen how quickly progress can be unraveled. But we’ve also seen what happens when communities, advocates, and leaders refuse to accept silence and backsliding as the status quo.

History will remember what we chose to honor in this moment.

—June 20, 2025

The Washington Post Names Educational Systems FCU a 2025 Top Washington-Area Workplace

By PRESS OFFICER
Educational Systems Federal Credit Union

GREENBELT, Md. (June 23, 2025)—Educational Systems Federal Credit Union has been named one of The Washington Post’s 2025 Top Workplaces in the Washington, D.C. area. Selection is based solely on Ambassador feedback gathered through an anonymous third-party survey administered by research partner Energage, LLC, which measured several aspects of workplace culture, including alignment, execution and connection. This year’s honorees include technology companies,

real estate firms and financial service providers.

“For 12 years, The Washington Post’s Top Workplaces list has served as an essential resource for D.C.-area professionals, equipping them with unparalleled insight into the best local companies to work for, as heard directly from their employees,” said Bronwen Latimer, the editor for Special Initiatives at The Washington Post. “This year we have highlighted 250 companies who are making a difference in business and in our communities.”

Educational Systems Federal Credit Union is proud to be recognized as one of The Washington Post’s 2025 Top Workplaces

in the Washington, D.C. area. This prestigious honor is especially meaningful as it reflects the voices of Credit Union Ambassadors and confirms the strength of our workplace culture. “We’re thrilled to be named a 2025 Top Workplace by The Washington Post! This honor is a direct reflection of our amazing Ambassadors, who bring passion, purpose and heart to everything they do,” said Girado Smith, President/CEO of Educational Systems FCU. “We call our employees Ambassadors because they represent so much more than a role—they embody our values and champion our mission every day. Thank you to

our Ambassadors for making our Credit Union a place where people thrive and where we truly make a difference for our members and our community.” As we stand alongside some of the region’s most respected employers, we remain focused on continuing to build a workplace that inspires excellence and purpose.

The Washington Post hosted an awards ceremony on Wednesday, June 18, to recognize the top-ranked companies. For more about The Washington Post’s Top Workplaces and to see the full list of this year’s honorees, visit [washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2025/top-workplaces-2025](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2025/top-workplaces-2025).

and enlighten, its trustworthy reporting, in-depth analysis and engaging opinions are consumed daily by millions of readers around the world.

Making the world a better place to work together.™ Energage is an HR technology company committed to building and promoting award-winning, people-first cultures. As the research firm powering the Top Workplaces employer recognition program, Energage leverages employee survey insights to identify and celebrate exceptional organizations at regional, national and industry levels. Our all-in-one platform equips companies to attract top talent, unlock potential and keep employees engaged—driving culture, growth and performance. Learn more at energage.com and topworkplaces.com.

Apps from AI

The chatbot helps individualize care, Friis said. “Whether that’s solving a conflict through compromise or acing a test or any of those daily challenges, the AI lets us make it really personal to you,” Friis said.

Are they effective?

But do apps such as Alongside really work? Some studies have shown mental health apps are moderately effective in addressing some mental health conditions.

A review published in the Journal of Counseling & Development in 2024 found when users of mental health apps are compared to those who received no treatment, the apps moderately reduced depression. In addition, the review—which examined 46 studies—found apps used for more than eight weeks were most effective.

In addition, Horwitz and other University of Michigan Medical School researchers published a study in 2024 that examined three different digital mental health interventions:

- The mindfulness app Headspace.
- The platform SilverCloud, which incorporates cognitive behavior therapy to help users identify and address negative thought patterns.
- The customized version of MyDataHelps, which informed participants of their sleep, activity and mood, and provided ways in which participants could improve them.

The study found all three moderately reduced anxiety, depression and suicide risk, without much difference among them.

Sometimes, however, the effectiveness of an app can be up to individual preferences, Horwitz said.

And not all apps work for everyone, said Catherine Gray, deputy director and clinical director at the Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency.

“It’s not a one size fits all,” Gray said. “It’s really got to fit you.”

For Lena LaJoy, a 19-year-old Finch user, the app’s daily affirmations help her self-esteem. Like Mann, sending her virtual bird on an adventure is a motivator to complete tasks.

“It’s a good way to get you excited about doing your tasks instead of being worried about it or feeling overwhelmed,” said LaJoy, a freshman at the University of Maryland this past academic year.

LaJoy said she thinks the app is also a good way for people to learn more about their own mental health issues and get professional help if needed.

Aroosa Bhatti, a 24-year-old Howard County native, uses I am, a daily affirmation app that provides users with positive statements to dissuade negative thoughts and increase self-esteem.

Before she used the app, Bhatti said she often had negative thoughts. After using the app, her self-confidence increased, said Bhatti, who now lives in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

“I was just able to look at the affirmation and it would help me with the rest of my day,” Bhatti said.

Jillian Alston, a Howard Community College student in her 20s, had been using the Calm app on and off for several years after her therapist recommended it, often using it during her work breaks, or before and after starting her shifts at the Burlington department store.

The app has features like meditation and stories users can use to help fall asleep.

Alston said the app helped her with her attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and to develop coping strategies for her anxiety

and depression.

Jan Guszynski, the Prosper project lead for NAMI Maryland, also said these apps can help young people gain an understanding of their mental health and seek help.

“It is a good first step, and it’s a no-pressure step and it could lead to them, you know, telling adults in their life how they’ve been feeling,” Guszynski said.

Privacy concerns

However, these online tools can raise privacy concerns.

The apps aren’t always subject to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, according to the American Civil Liberties Union, and are only covered if conventional health care providers use or produce them. The act, known as HIPAA, regulates the disclosure of patient health information.

Some apps’ privacy policies don’t explicitly say they won’t use user information for advertising, said Erika Solis, an incoming assistant professor of communication and public speaking at Alfred State College in Western New York.

Solis also said an app’s use of AI chatbots could endanger a user’s privacy.

“Obviously, when you’re using AI on an app like this, or rather on applications like this, you’re hoping that it will tailor to you, but it’s still storing that data somewhere,” Solis said.

Alongside uses an AI chatbot, but Friis said the app is fully compliant with two federal privacy acts—one which requires parental consent to collect and share information for children under 13, and another that governs the sharing of “personally identifiable” information in student records.

The platform only shares information when a student is in immediate risk of harm, Friis said. Students can also elect to share information with their counselors.

Frederick County Public Schools no longer allows the Prosper app to be used on school Wi-Fi. That’s in part because of concerns over the collection of student information and students being able to access the app without parental consent, said Ann Workmeister, the system’s supervisor of mental health services

Sullivan said information provided to the Prosper app is kept in fully encrypted cloud storage. The app also collects minimal information and does not collect names, he said.

In addition, many mental health apps have not yet proven to be effective, Horwitz said. In part, that’s because many apps on the market may not have undergone scientific study.

“It’s a somewhat wild, wild west sort of thing with respect to how it gets put out there,” Horwitz said.

Apps also don’t hold people accountable in the same way therapy does, he said. A lot of people don’t use mental health apps for a long time, Horwitz added.

The apps can send users notifications, but ultimately users have to hold themselves accountable, unlike a therapy session where there’s an expectation the patient will show up, he said.

“At the end of the day, they are self-guided, and so if someone doesn’t have that motivation on their own to follow through, that can be a challenge,” Horwitz said.

For Mann, a key limitation of the Finch app is the questions the app asks about her emotions can be basic, while during her therapy sessions she can explore multiple aspects of her emotions.

The app is not a substitute for therapy but is useful as a supplement to that treatment, Mann said.

Emily Pasco, a mental health coordinator for Prince George’s

County Public Schools, which has worked with Prosper since 2024, said when a student is experiencing more serious issues such as depression, the Prosper app should not be a substitute for therapy and other care.

The school system also recently started using the Alongside platform in a couple of schools.

Then there is the issue of cellphone overuse. Supreet Mann, the director of research at Common Sense Media—a nonprofit which helps educate kids, families and educators about technology and media, according to the organization’s website—said while cellphone overuse is a problem, it’s difficult to say whether mental health apps are contributing to that.

Accessibility

Still, some say there’s a place for mental health apps at a time when the need for mental health care outstrips its availability and accessibility.

Horwitz said mental health apps could make care more accessible for those without access to therapy or who are waiting.

Apps could also reduce waiting lines for therapy by helping those with more moderate issues, allowing those with more severe conditions to access necessary services earlier, Horwitz said.

“People might be able to move up more quickly, who really do need that ... face-to-face care,” Horwitz said.

Meanwhile, LaJoy, the UMD freshman, said the Finch app can make taking care of one’s mental health easier, and make users feel more comfortable about expressing their feelings.

“I think if someone’s like, wanting to get help but worried about talking to someone, I think it’s a good way to do that,” LaJoy said.

The Prince George’s Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

District 7 Business Roundtable Expo

Calling all entrepreneurs and business owners in Prince George’s County!

Join Council Member Krystal Oriadha for the Business Roundtable Expo—an exciting opportunity to connect, learn, and grow your business with expert advice, valuable resources, and powerful networking.

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Location: 1301 McCormick Drive, Rm 2027, Largo, MD 20774

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Let’s build a stronger business community together!

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

What About Non-career Veterans and Their VA Healthcare?

By RUSSELL GLOOR,
National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation,
the non-profit arm of the **Association of Mature American Citizens**

Dear Rusty: In your answer to the retired U.S. Navy veteran about why he is forced to enroll in Medicare, you focused on military TriCare’s requirement for the member to enroll in Medicare. But you said nothing about regular VA health care. If a non-career veteran is eligible for VA health care, couldn’t that be used in place of Medicare? **Signed: Veteran Advocate**

Dear Veteran Advocate: Thank you for your feedback. FYI, I have previously explained numerous times that veterans who rely on the VA for 100% of their healthcare can, indeed, disenroll from Medicare Part B (thus saving the monthly Part B premium). I don’t personally recommend it because of my personal experience, but it certainly is possible to do so.

Personally, I use the VA for some of my healthcare needs—usually an annual checkup and optometry services—at my local VA clinic which is only a mile away from where I live. But for any extensive treatment needs (medical tests, etc.) I must travel about 40 miles to the nearest VA hospital facility. For contrast, I have numerous private healthcare services, specialists, and hospitals very near where I live, but to use them under the VA I must get VA preapproval and use only certain VA-approved providers, which is inconvenient for me. Personally, I prefer the freedom to go to any healthcare service provider I choose, without restriction, at any time I need to. So, I use my VA coverage when it is convenient for me but rely also on non-VA, Medicare-approved specialists who I can choose to use (or not) at will. For me, it’s a matter of convenience and the freedom to use whichever healthcare provider I want. That said, I fully understand that some veterans rely exclusively on the VA for their healthcare needs, and I have explained to many who have written to me that they have that option. I have also published several public articles about this as well. Here is one such article:

<https://socialsecurityreport.org/ask-rusty-why-should-a-veteran-pay-for-medicare/>

So, please rest assured that we regularly advise our veterans about their healthcare options under Medicare, including the ability to decline Medicare Part B coverage if they have full VA healthcare coverage. FYI, free Medicare Part A (inpatient hospitalization coverage) is mandatory to collect Social Security after age 65, but Medicare Part B coverage is always optional because there is a premium associated with Part B. A veteran can decline Medicare Part B coverage and save that monthly premium, but they would need to contact Social Security to do so. Social Security will want to interview the veteran to ensure they are aware of the potential financial consequences of not having Medicare Part B. And they may need to file form CMS-1763 (Request for Termination) But a non-career veteran can opt out of Medicare Part B if they get all of their healthcare services through the Veterans Administration.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation’s staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisior@amacfoundation.org.

The 2.4 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.

Maryland Publishes Nation’s First Statewide Tenants’ Bill of Rights

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

NEW CARROLLTON, Md. (June 16, 2025)—Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Jake Day today announced that the State of Maryland has published the first statewide Tenants’ Bill of Rights in the nation. The department’s Office of Tenant and Landlord Affairs has published the first version of the Maryland Tenants’ Bill of Rights as required by the passage of the Renters Rights and Stabilization Act of 2024. Secretary Day also announced the appointment of Alyce Thompson as the first director of the Office of Tenant and Landlord Affairs.

“While we work to tackle Maryland’s housing shortage, we still need to protect vulnerable tenants in a challenging rental market. Therefore, Governor Moore worked with the Maryland General Assembly to pass the Renters Rights and Stabilization Act in 2024 to establish the Office of Tenant and Landlord Affairs, which, with the appointment of Alyce Thompson as its first director, is now fully staffed and ready to serve Maryland renters,” said Secretary Day. “The Act also mandated the creation of the Maryland Tenants’ Bill of Rights, a new document that must be included with every lease to inform renters of their rights and protections, and I’m proud that Maryland is the first state in the nation to create and require such a lease attachment.”

The Maryland Tenants’ Bill of Rights must be included with all residential rental leases beginning July 1, 2025. Annually,



PHOTO COURTESY MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Alyce Thompson

the Office of Tenant and Landlord Affairs will update and release a new Tenants’ Bill of Rights by September 1, with an effective date of October 1. This annual release will include any major changes to federal or state renter laws, as well as updates based on feedback from tenants and housing partners.

In addition to serving tenants, the Office of Tenant and Landlord Affairs staff are available to train landlords, property managers, realtors, and other housing industry professionals on requirements for the Tenants’ Bill of Rights and Right of First Refusal law, which gives tenants of certain rental properties the first opportunity to purchase their home when an owner moves to sell the property.

Governor Moore Announces First Road to Careers Funding Recipients to Promote High-Skill Workforce Development

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (June 17, 2025)—Governor Wes Moore today announced the first round of Road to Careers grant recipients. The six-year, \$24 million investment will expand the pipeline of highly-skilled workers to build the state’s critical transportation infrastructure. The \$4 million in grants awarded today will provide nearly 1,200 Marylanders with in-demand training for skilled jobs in construction and maintenance.

“To grow our economy, we need to keep building new avenues to work, wages, and wealth for all Marylanders—no matter their path,” said Gov. Moore. “This is a continuation of our multi-year push to expand apprenticeships, and the entire state is going to benefit. Together, we are closing the racial wealth gap and expanding access to opportunity for all.”

Road to Careers is a joint initiative between the Maryland Department of Labor and Maryland Department of Transportation designed to strengthen Maryland’s talent pipeline for jobs in the transportation and construction sectors. The program expands access to pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship opportunities, meeting critical industry demand while creating career pathways for Marylanders who have historically faced systemic barriers to employment including low-income individuals, justice-involved individuals, and English language learners.

Road to Careers helps participants access high-quality, family-sustaining careers while supporting employers in building a more inclusive, skilled workforce. To ensure more equitable access to

high-skill employment, the program offers wraparound support services that address common barriers to employment, including transportation, childcare, and mental health needs, all of which are contributing factors to the state’s racial wealth gap.

“These investments will help prepare the next generation of workers for good jobs that support the development of a world-class transportation system,” said Maryland Department of Labor Secretary Portia Wu. “Thanks to Secretary Wiedefeld and MDOT for their partnership to support innovative strategies to grow our state’s workforce and economy at a critical moment.”

Grantees will connect participants to proven training models and offer holistic support to guide participants from enrollment through job placement and beyond. Supporting communities across Maryland, the following organizations received \$500,000 grants through the inaugural round of funding:

- Chesapeake College: Caroline County, Dorchester County, Kent County, Queen Anne’s County, Talbot County
- Civic Works: Baltimore City
- **Construction Trades Workforce Initiative: Prince George’s County**, Baltimore County, Baltimore City
- Hagerstown Community College: Washington County
- HER Resiliency Center: Baltimore City
- **Ironworkers Local Union #5 Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee: Prince George’s County**
- Mayor’s Office of Employment Development: Baltimore City
- Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland: Calvert County, Charles County, St. Mary’s County

Leading the annual revisions to the Tenants’ Bill of Rights and the other activities of the Office of Tenant and Landlord Affairs will be Alyce Thompson, who will serve as the office’s first director. Before becoming director, Thompson served 12 years with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, where she supervised a team of attorneys who advised housing and community development grant programs that funded states, local governments, tribes, and nonprofit organizations. She also played a key role in supporting the launch of multiple programs, including the Tribal Housing and Urban Development - Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing demonstration program for Native American veterans experiencing homelessness and the agency’s COVID-19 response programs. Originally from Decatur, GA, Alyce received her law degree and a master’s degree in urban planning from the University of Michigan and an undergraduate degree in urban studies and sociology from Barnard College.

“Making sure tenants and landlords alike are well informed about their rights and responsibilities under state and federal law will go a long way towards helping families maintain stable housing, in turn strengthening communities across Maryland,” said Thompson. “I’m excited to be here at the inception of the Office of Tenant and Landlord Affairs to work with partners across the state to achieve this vision for Maryland’s future.”

For more information about the Office of Tenant and Landlord Affairs or the Maryland Tenants’ Bill of Rights, visit: <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Tenant-Landlord-Affairs/pages/default.aspx>.

Defends from A1

precise delivery of missiles. The Columbia-class SSBN will be the largest, most capable and most advanced submarine produced by the U.S.—replacing the current Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarines to ensure continuous sea-based strategic deterrence into the 2080s.

Guided-missile submarines provide the Navy with unprece-

ded strike and special operation mission capabilities from a stealthy, clandestine platform. Each SSGN is capable of carrying 154 Tomahawk cruise missiles, plus a complement of heavyweight torpedoes to be fired through four torpedo tubes.

Strategic deterrence is the nation’s ultimate insurance program, according to Navy officials. As a member of the

submarine force, Morton serves aboard a platform capable of bringing the fight to enemies in defense of America and its allies.

The U.S. Navy is celebrating its 250th birthday this year.

According to Navy officials, “America is a maritime nation and for 250 years, America’s Warfighting Navy has sailed the globe in defense of freedom.”

With 90% of global commerce

traveling by sea and access to the internet relying on the security of undersea fiber optic cables, Navy officials continue to emphasize that the prosperity of the United States is directly linked to recruiting and retaining talented people from across the rich fabric of America.

Morton has many opportunities to achieve accomplishments during military service.

“My proudest accomplish-

ment is completing the nuclear pipeline,” Morton said. “It was two years of countless tests and endless hours of studying. Everything about it was a lot, and being able to experience and complete that is a great accomplishment.”

Morton serves a Navy that operates far forward, around the world and around the clock, promoting the nation’s prosperity and security.

“To me, serving means trust,” Morton said. “Regardless of anyone’s background, when the going gets rough, the person next to me has my back, and I have theirs.”

Morton is grateful to others for helping make a Navy career possible.

“I want to thank my family,” Morton added. “My family has supported me throughout my entire journey.”

EarthTalk® Oil & Gas Companies Thwarting Efforts Q&A by Climate Activists

By Daniel Choi | June 12, 2025

Dear EarthTalk:
How do oil and gas companies foil efforts by climate activists?
—J.L., via email

In recent years, many climate activists have protested against oil and gas companies for their role in exacerbating climate change and more. Recent examples include the ubiquitous “Just Stop Oil” protests, which have shown up from the Louvre Museum to Easter Island. Oil and gas companies defend their actions as necessary for energy security, but critics accuse them of undermining climate progress.

One way energy companies fight climate activists is lobbying. According to Open Secrets, more than \$2 billion has been spent on lobbying in the U.S. since 2000, which highlights the huge role lobbying plays and how often policy changes. In this regard, many fossil fuel lobbyists coordinate with lawmakers to push laws that disincentivize climate activism, with some anti-protesting laws carrying 10-year penalties.

Another way energy companies fight climate activism is by funding research to shape the public narrative. For decades, people have known the detrimental effects that energy companies have on the environment. In attempts to delay action, ExxonMobil and others have spread misinformation like “climate has changed naturally in the past, so today’s climate change must be natural.” In another example, the Heartland Institute, a free-market think tank, sent pack-

ages to 25,000 science teachers every week. The package contained a book written by the organization titled “Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming,” and a DVD that would play a video rejecting the role of humans in the climate crisis.

These companies also use lawsuits and legal strategies to intimidate detractors. One instance involved Chevron when in 2011, it was found guilty of knowingly discharging cancer-inducing waste and chemicals into the northern Ecuadorian Amazon. Despite the initial win for the indigenous and Amazonians, the decision was overruled seven years later at an arbitration court, where many believed Chevron used its financial dominance to its advantage. Today, Chevron has still not paid back Ecuador for the irreparable damage done years ago. While the company seems to have been let off the hook, there are still people who demand justice from Chevron.

With growing environmental sentiment across the globe, more people are joining movements to uncover the ugly truth about oil and gas companies. Next time you fill up your gas from a station, consider where this gas came from. What story hides behind the multimillion-dollar facade that companies keep up to ensure a lucrative business? Cases like the Heartland Institute highlight the lengths to the industry will go to maintain their operations, and it is imperative to stay informed as citizens and customers.

CONTACTS: These Fossil Fuel Industry Tactics Are Fueling Democratic Backsliding, americanprogress.org/article/these-fossil-



PHOTO CREDIT: PEXELS.COM.

Oil and gas companies are working hard to thwart efforts by climate activists to raise awareness about the risks of too many emissions.

fuel-industry-tactics-are-fueling-democratic-backsliding/; Chevron’s Environmental Crimes: 13 Years of Evasion and Escalation, amazon-watch.org/news/2024/0214-chevrons-environmental-crimes-13-years-of-evasion-and-escalation

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