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Governor Presents Legislative Limits Map

The Plan Was Introduced as a Joint Resolution to the General Assembly

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, MD (January, 2012) - In accordance with Article III, Section 5 of the Constitution of Maryland, Governor Martin O'Malley presented to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates his proposed map setting forth the boundaries of the legislative districts for electing members of the Senate and the House of Delegates. As required by the Constitution, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House introduced the Governor's plan as a joint resolution to the General Assembly.

The Governor's map submitted today enhances minority voting rights, pays exceptional attention to respecting natural and political boundaries, and results in districts that are compact, contiguous, and protects communities.

"The map submitted today directly reflects the demographics of the State and the population trends that have occurred over the past decade," said Governor O'Malley. "Equally important, the map reflects the extensive public comments that members of the committee and I heard from hundreds of

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Maryland General Assembly Convenes



Maryland Senate President Thomas V. Mike Mike Miller Jr. addresses the Senate chamber on the first day of the 2012 General Assembly session.

CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY ANA SEBESCEAN

Governor O'Malley Considers Tax Hikes as General Assembly Opens

By DAVE NYCZEPIR
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS - Maryland's 430th General Assembly session convened Wednesday, promising more than a few tough votes in the coming weeks as Gov. Martin O'Malley's agenda may call for raising the state's sales or gas taxes.

A tax increase would generate the revenue needed to fund many of O'Malley's job

creation initiatives and help address the \$1 billion budget deficit the legislature faces in its \$14 billion operating budget.

Controversial same-sex marriage and wind-farming bills are also on the General Assembly's agenda this session.

O'Malley is toying with the idea of raising the state sales tax by 1 cent to 7 cents, but will consult with General Assembly leaders before

deciding, said the governor during an interview with WEA 88.9 Wednesday morning.

Also on the table is the much talked about 15-cent increase to the gas tax.

"We'll be rolling these proposals out over the next few days," said O'Malley, of the possible revenue-raising alternatives.

While legislators braced for the proposed tax increases, some said they wouldn't be

well-received.

"I think it will be a year of cutting," Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. said at the WEA 88.9 taping.

Though O'Malley said finding money to renovate roads and fund school construction is essential for job creation, some legislators argue tax hikes are counterproductive.

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Edwards Re-election Path Clears; Ivey Quits

Challenger Was Unable to Raise Enough Money

By SARAH HOGUE
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON - The road to re-election for Rep. Donna Edwards cleared Wednesday with the withdrawal of Glenn Ivey, her chief rival in the 4th Congressional District Democratic primary.

Ivey, the former Prince George's County state's attorney, said he was quitting the race because he was unable to raise enough money to get his message out, particularly since the primary during a presidential election year is pushed up from September to April.

"Since this was going to be a short timeline," Ivey said, "you couldn't do your typical canvassing." Plus, he said, "A lot of my previous donors in Prince George's County have been hammered by the real estate collapse."

Donna Edwards could not be reached for comment.

Ivey, of Cheverly, announced his candidacy on Oct. 26, and the matchup in the heavily Democratic 4th District was expected to be tough. Ivey said he was able to raise about \$150,000, although his Federal Election Commission reports show no money was raised. Year-end campaign finance reports are not due to the FEC until the end of this month.

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More Than \$370 Millions in School Construction Funding

An Estimate of 11,650 Jobs Will Be Supported

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, MD (January, 2012) - Governor Martin O'Malley today joined by House Speaker Michael E. Busch, and surrounded by students, educators and other officials, announced that the O'Malley-Brown Administration will propose more than \$370 million in school construction funding and upgrades for Maryland public schools in the FY2013 budget to support an estimated 11,650 jobs with the local dollars these funds will leverage. The Governor is proposing more than \$350 million in capital funding for the Public School Construction Program (PSCP), the second highest single-year funding level

in State history, bringing the Administration's six-year school construction commitment to \$1.94 billion and creating an estimated 2,400 direct construction jobs each year over the last six years (including FY2013).

Additionally, the Administration will include \$15.3 million in the Qualified Zone Academy Bond Program (QZAB), under which the State sells bonds and allocates proceeds to public school systems for capital improvements at eligible public school buildings and \$6.1 million in the Aging Schools Program.

"It was only a few short years ago, when the Kopp Commission rightfully declared that we had a 'crisis in school construction in our State,'" said Governor O'Malley. "In



PHOTO BY OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

The new Germantown Elementary School

December 2005, Anthony Brown and I came to what was then Germantown Elementary's 43-year old building. We saw the temporary learning shacks, and began an honest dialogue with the people of our State about choices and priorities. Today, we're asking the General Assembly to invest \$372 million in FY2013 to create 11,650 jobs and recapitalize Maryland's future with new investment in

school construction because these investments we make together are literally the building blocks of greater job creation and opportunity."

The Governor made the announcement at Germantown Elementary School in Annapolis, where in December 2005, one day after announcing

See SCHOOL, Page A7

NAACP Leaders Call for Death Penalty Repeal

By PRESS OFFICER
NAACP

ANNAPOLIS, MD - The Maryland State Conference of the NAACP and Maryland civil rights leaders joined state legislators today to call for repeal of the death penalty, citing systemic flaws and racial disparities in the capital punishment system.

At a morning meeting National NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Jealous met with several community leaders in Annapolis to share with them that the time has come "to make the death penalty a part of Maryland and America's past."

Maryland is one of a handful of states in which the NAACP is currently focused on abolishing the death penalty.

The push by the NAACP and other organizations follows the September execution of Troy Davis in Georgia. The case, in which many key witnesses later recanted their testimony, galvanized support for ending the death penalty, and refocused attention on major flaws in the nation's capital punishment system.

"Troy Davis's tragic execution last September has renewed commitment to ending the death penalty throughout our country," said Mr. Jealous. "As Troy's case demonstrated, there are enormous flaws in how the death penalty is sought and racial disparities are rife in its application. The death penalty is a

See NAACP, Page A7

INSIDE

Indigenous Indian Tribes

Governor Martin O'Malley signed two historic Executive Orders recognizing Maryland Indian status of two groups indigenous to the State of Maryland. Governor O'Malley officially made the Piscataway Indian Nation and the Piscataway Conoy Confederacy the first state recognized tribes in Maryland history.
Community, Page A3

Child Poverty

As the new year's news cycles turn to presidential politics and primary contests, there is another story our leaders should be talking a lot about -- and acting to alleviate. For millions of families there was another story: how to provide enough food and shelter for their children.
Opinion, Page A4

Blueprint for U.S. Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) must be built to meet the evolving needs of a 21st century agricultural economy, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in presenting USDA's Blueprint for Stronger Service, a plan that helps producers continue to drive America's economy.
Business, Page A5

Movie Review

"The Iron Lady," a standard, surface-level biopic that's orderly and clean and offers only a cursory examination of what made Maggie tick. Though it's modestly engaging, the film is offering further evidence that Meryl Streep will deliver perfectly good performances even in movies that are unworthy of them.
Out on the Town, Page A6

Earth Talk

Dear EarthTalk:

Ever since the red dye #2 scare in the 1970s I've been wary of using food colorings or buying food that appears to contain them. Are there natural and healthy food colorings?
-- Nancy McFarlane,
Methuen, MA

Features, Page A7

Towns and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

Remembering a tragic day, 30 years ago Jan. 13

I remember driving home from registering for classes at Catholic University on Jan. 13, 1982. Snow, which had started as I left the campus, was coming down hard and it was a scary drive home. As I opened the front door at my house, the phone was ringing. It was my husband Jack telling me, "A plane just hit the 14th Street Bridge."

I switched on TV and sat glued to breaking news. Air Florida 90, which took off from Washington National bound for Fort Lauderdale, had clipped the bridge and was in the Potomac. Very difficult rescue operations were underway. The snow was still coming down and a few survivors were in that icy water.

Of the 78 who died, four were in cars crushed on the bridge. Among the dead was George Vernon Graham Jr., 37, nephew of my neighbor Dorothy Shanholtz. He was the proprietor of a nursery and tropical plant business in Vienna, Va., and was a passenger on the plane.

Buildup of ice and snow on the wings was later found to be the cause of the accident.

Even as Air Florida rescuing continued, Metro suffered its first fatal accident. A train derailed south of Federal Triangle, killing three and injuring 25. Among the dead was a young woman from Marlow Heights.

When Jan. 13 rolls around, I always remember those tragedies.

Skyline 3rd graders get a gift. Third-graders at Skyline Elementary School got an early Christmas present on Dec. 19 when each was given A Student's Dictionary & Gazetteer, funded and presented by the Skyline Citizens Association. COPS Officer Gonzalez was also on

hand to help distribute the dictionaries and chat with the students.

About 45 dictionaries were distributed to the class, teachers, principal and the library. Skyline Citizens President Stan Holmes, Ruby Holloway, Shirley Holmes and Mary McHale represented the Skyline Citizens.

Sarah Cavitt, of the Indian Head Highway Area Action Council, spearheaded the project, as she has in schools throughout the County since 2004. She also showed the children how to use the dictionary and directed them to the back of the book which has maps of the world, sign language, Roman numerals, The U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence, biographies of the Presidents, the planets, and the longest word—which has 1,909 letters.

Time to apply for Imagine Morningside's lottery

In September 2011 the shuttered Morningside School reopened as Imagine Foundations II Public Charter School, with grades kindergarten through 2nd. A class a year will be added until the school goes through 8th grade.

The school, as with all Prince George's County Imagine Schools, is tuition-free and open to all children living in the county. In order to enroll your child, you must apply through their online lottery process, which began Jan. 2 and runs through March 31. The lottery will be held April 6, 2012. For information about Imagine Morningside, go to www.imaginefoundations2.org.

Hope McGuire is principal of Imagine Morningside. Danielle Edelin is PTO president. Other officers are LaTanya Edwards, vice-president; Elaine White, treasurer; Carla Rupert, recording secretary; and Krystle

Roland, corresponding secretary. School hours are 8:30 a.m. to 2:40 p.m.

There are three other Imagine schools in Prince George's: at Joint Base Andrews, Upper Marlboro and Temple Hills.

May they rest in peace

Anna Talbert Mistretta, of Temple Hills, died Dec. 31. I'll pay tribute to this remarkable woman in next week's column.

Carolyn "Sue" Rye, 67, of Brandywine, died at home on Dec. 10. She was born in Washington on March 14, 1944, daughter of the late Ralph and Athula Sue (Tubekis) Bond. She served on the Class Reunion Committee at Gwynn Park High School and was a member of the Brandywine Volunteer Fire Department. She held several positions with the schools, retiring in 2004 from the Board of Education. Her husband, Donald Calvert Rye, and brother, Richard Lee Bond, predeceased her. Survivors include sons Michael and Donald, daughter Karon Sue Yeatman, brothers Ralph, Robert and Steven Bond, sister Charlotte Bond, nine grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Dwight Holloway Sr., Frank Binsted, Ronnie Ellis and Roc Wheeler, Jan. 13; Curtis DeMarco Knowles, my son Mike McHale, Kathleen Giroux and Joanie Mangum, Jan. 14; Dolly Wood, Jan. 16; Nikial M. Boston, Jan. 17; Dennis Seaman, Gus Steinhilber and Linda Cullinan, principal of St. Philip's school, Jan. 19.

Happy anniversary to Gary and Melody Barnes, Jan. 14; and Frank and Sharleen Kelly Cappella, their 57th anniversary on Jan. 15.

by Ruth Turner 301 888 2153

Brandywine-Aquasco

SHOW: HARRIET TUBMAN

Saturday, February 25, 2012 at 4:00 PM Surratt House Museum come out and enjoy Show: Harriet Tubman-Meet the Amazing Woman. Harriet Tubman the "The Moses of Her People" led slaves to freedom, served as both spy and scout for the Union during the Civil War, and was a nurse for fugitive slaves. Join Gwendolyn Briley-Strand as she discusses the life of this remarkable woman. The Surratt House museum address is 9118 Brandywine Road, Clinton, MD 20735.

MARYLAND CHEER & DANCE CUP-ALL STAR

The Maryland Cheer and Dance Cup-All Star event will be all day on Saturday, January 28, 2012 at Show Place Arena Upper Marlboro, MD 20772. Show Place Arena is located at 14900 Pennsylvania Avenue. Contact phone is 410-579-8668.

OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

The Maryland Madness Cheer and Dance Open Championship will be at Show Place Arena all day Saturday, February 11, 2012. Show Place Arena is located at 14900 Pennsylvania Avenue Upper

Marlboro, MD 20772. AVON WALK for BREAST CANCER

Join the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer as they celebrate a decade of life-changing advances and a decade of shared conviction. To register, volunteer or donate today at: AVONWALK.ORG/OPRAH 1.866.323.WALK. PRESERVING AGRICULTURE FARM and FOREST LAND

Your input is needed on Tuesday, January 24, 2012 at 7:00 PM in the County Administration Building First Floor Hearing Room. The address is 14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive Upper Marlboro, MD 20772. Doors will open at 6:00 PM for participants to view exhibits. Planning staff will be available to answer questions. Come and provide your feedback on the Prince George's County Preliminary Priority Preservation Area Functional Master Plan.

The hearing is important because the plan establishes policies that will help define the character, type, amount and location of future agricultural

practices in Prince George's County. Persons who wish to speak at the public hearing may register in advance or fill out a registration form available that night at the hearing site. To register in advance to speak, contact the Public Affairs office, M-NCPPC, at 301-952-4584/TTY 301-952-4366 or register online at www.pgplanning.org/Planning_Board/Testify_at_Hearings.html.

For additional information, please contact the M-NCPPC Countywide Planning at 301-952-3650 or e-mail the project manager, Fatimah Hasan, at presevefarms@ppd.mncppc.org or visit the project website at <http://www.pgplanning.org/priopitypreservation.htm>.

BRANDYWINE NORTH KEYS CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC

Meetings for the Association are on the third Wednesday of each month February through June, from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM in the Media Center at the Brandywine Elementary School. (Visitors are welcome to attend meetings).

Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards' Legislative Update

Congresswoman Edwards' Statement on December Jobs Report

Washington, D.C. — Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards (D-MD) released the following statement today regarding the Department of Labor's announcement that the economy added 200,000 jobs in December and the unemployment rate fell to 8.5 percent, a three-year low.

"Today's jobs report from the Department of Labor is the latest sign that our economy is headed in the right direction, but more work

remains to be done. The millions of Americans who remain out of work who are depending on savings, losing their homes, and having trouble making ends meet cannot wait any longer. Republicans are long overdue to work with Democrats to pass job creating legislation, provide additional certainty to 160 million workers by passing a long-term payroll tax cut extension, and renew unemployment insurance that is serving as a lifeline to millions of Americans. My Democratic colleagues and I



are ready to get to work and I urge Republicans to begin 2012 by joining us in this effort."

Neighborhood Events

Maryland Lawmakers, Organizations and Activists Call for an End to Corporate Political Spending

WHAT: On Thursday, Jan. 19 — days before the second anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission — Maryland lawmakers and activists will hold a press conference to announce the introduction of a state legislative resolution calling on the U.S. Congress to overturn the ruling and restore fair elections and constitutional rights to the people.

The Citizens United decision allowed corporations to spend unlimited sums from their treasuries to influence elections and opened the floodgates to corporate cash. In the 2010 election cycle, the first since the Supreme Court decision, outside groups spent nearly \$300 million nationwide.

The press conference is part of a nationwide week of action calling for the Citizens United decision to be overturned. From Massachusetts to California, events are planned to highlight the need for the federal government to enact meaningful campaign finance and constitutional reform.

To learn more, visit: www.DemocracyIsForPeople.org and www.United4thePeople.org.

WHERE: The Lawyers' Mall (next to the State Capitol Buildings), College Avenue and Rowe Boulevard, Annapolis, Md.

WHEN: 11 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 19

WHO: State Sen. Jamie Raskin (Montgomery County), and other lawmakers

Public Citizen
Common Cause
Maryland PIRG
Maryland United for Peace and Justice
Local democracy organizations and activists

STATEMENT FROM GOVERNOR MARTIN O'MALLEY ON MARYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS BEING NAMED NUMBER-ONE IN THE NATION FOR FOUR STRAIGHT YEARS

ANNAPOLIS, MD (January 12, 2012) — Governor Martin O'Malley, delivered a keynote address at the Education Week Quality Counts 2012 event, where Maryland's public schools were once again named the number-one public school system in the nation, now for four years in a row. The Governor released the following statement:

"I'd like to thank the students, parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and all of our advocates for continuing to achieve at unprecedented levels. Thanks to their tremendous work and dedication, we are able to say that Maryland's public schools have been ranked number-one in the nation for the fourth straight year.

"In Maryland, we believe in making the investments needed to build the nation's best public school system to help us create jobs, expand opportunity and move forward in this changing new economy. Together, we've made record investments in K-12 public schools, even during tough times, when we have cut record amounts of spending from virtually every other priority. In 2010, we proposed investing \$250 million in school construction every year for the next four. This year, we're asking our General Assembly to do \$100 million better — with a \$373 million investment which would support 11,650 jobs.

"To win, we have to recommit ourselves as a country to public education."

MARYLAND DEMOCRATIC PARTY MAINTAINS STRONG FUNDRAISING LEAD

ANNAPOLIS (January, 2012) — The

Maryland Democratic Party raised more than \$1 million in 2011, and will begin 2012 with more than \$700,000 in the bank. Maryland Democrats clearly have the momentum heading into a critical election year.

The Maryland Democratic Party will capitalize on our financial advantage and run a strong campaign to elect more Democrats across our state and do our part to reelect President Barack Obama this fall. The enthusiastic support we continue to receive is a compelling signal that Marylanders recognize our party remains in line with the principles of inclusion, diversity and opportunity that we all share, and our elected leaders work to advance.

Our fundraising momentum stands in stark contrast to the debt-ridden and out-of-touch Maryland GOP. The resources of Maryland Democrats completely overshadow the Maryland Republican Party, who is once again significantly in debt and has had to abandon their Annapolis headquarters.

CHAIR YVETTE LEWIS SALUTES MARYLAND'S #1 EDUCATION RANKING

ANNAPOLIS (January, 2012) — Maryland Democratic Party Chair Yvette Lewis issued the following statement after Education Week ranked Maryland first for the fourth straight year in their annual report card on American education. Education Week grades all 50 states and the District of Columbia in six areas related to policy and performance.

"Maryland's number one ranking among all 50 states for the fourth year in a row is a great tribute to Governor O'Malley and Maryland Democrats who have made significant reforms and record investments in public education. When it comes to opportunity, competitiveness, and jobs, nothing is more important than education. Thanks to Governor O'Malley, an outstanding education is within reach of every Maryland child. In these tough times, it is more important than ever to continue to protect investments in education and to ensure we never shortchange Maryland's children and our future."

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER OFFERS WINTER PET CARE TIPS

Guidelines will help keep your pet safe when the temperature drops

LARGO, MD — Baby, its cold outside for you and your pets! The Prince George's County Animal Shelter reminds all pet lovers that cold weather isn't hard on just people; it's hard on pets as well.

Here are a few tips to give your pets the extra care they need during the cold winter months:

If your dog stays outdoors in cold weather, the law requires you to provide:

- Dog house of proper size that is dry, draft free and raised off the ground;
 - wind flap that is attached to the doghouse to keep cold air out and warm air in;
 - Bedding that is non-absorbent such as straw or wood shavings to help keep the dog warm; and
 - Drinking water that is not frozen and is in a container secured to prevent tipping.
- Some other suggestions for winterizing your pet include:
- Keep cats, puppies under six months and small or short-haired dogs inside.
 - Increase the amount of their food; outdoor dogs need more calories in the winter to produce body heat.
 - Ice or chemicals used to melt snow on sidewalks can irritate your pet's paws -- wipe paws with a wet cloth after an outing.

Don't Keep it a Secret!

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COMMUNITY

Practical Money Skills

By Jason Alderman

Women and personal finances

By many measures, women's lives have changed substantially in recent decades. According to a comprehensive government report called "Women in America" (www.whitehouse.gov/data-on-women), although certain social and economic situations for women have improved, when it comes to personal finances, many women still face challenging hurdles.



Key report findings include:

Women live longer than men but are much more likely to experience critical health problems that hamper their ability to work – and to pass up needed care due to cost.

Although the earnings gap between women and men continues to narrow, it's still significant: Among full-time workers, women's weekly earnings as a percentage of men's have increased from 62 percent in 1979 to 80 percent in 2009.

More women than men now graduate high school and college, but far fewer earn degrees in engineering, computer sciences and other higher-paying fields.

Women increasingly marry later, have fewer children or remain childless, yet still are more likely to live in poverty, particularly single-mother families.

Women are less likely than men to work outside the home (61 percent vs. 75 percent in 2009) and are much more likely to work part-time and to take time off to raise children or care for aging relatives.

In a nutshell: Women generally earn less and live longer than men, so at retirement they often have less in savings, receive smaller retirement and Social Security benefits and must spread out their money longer. Clearly, women need to take charge of their financial wellbeing. Here are a few places to start:

Develop a budget to track income and expenses. Either download a budget spreadsheet template or investigate software packages and online account management services like Quicken (www.quicken.com), Mint.com (www.mint.com), Yodlee (www.yodlee.com) and MvLopes (www.mvlopes.com).

Plan for retirement. Time is your biggest ally when it comes to retirement savings, so get cracking. Start estimating your retirement needs:

Social Security's Retirement Estimator (www.ssa.gov/estimator), which automatically enters your earnings information from its records to estimate your projected Social Security benefits under different scenarios, such as age at retirement, future earnings projections, etc.

Check whether your 401(k) plan administrator's website has a calculator to estimate how much you will accumulate under various contribution and investment scenarios. If not, try the retirement calculators at Bankrate.com and AARP to determine your current financial status and what you'll need to save to meet your retirement needs.

Do your research. Many helpful personal financial education and management tools are available online, including:

The National Foundation of Credit Counseling's MyMoneyCheckUp™ program offers a step-by-step assessment of your overall financial health and behavior in four personal finance areas: budgeting and credit management, saving and investing, planning for retirement and managing home equity (www.mymoneycheckup.org).

Social Security's Website for Women provides information on retirement, disability and other issues. You can also order or download their informative, free publication, "What Every Woman Should Know" (www.ssa.gov/women).

The Women's Savings Initiative, a program jointly developed by Heinz Family Philanthropies, the Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER) and Visa Inc. (www.practical-moneyskills.com/womensave). This free program features an audio- and e-book called "What Women Need to Know About Retirement," which you can order on CD or download as a PDF or audio file from Practical Money Skills for Life, a free personal financial management program run by Visa (www.practicalmoneyskills.com/resources).

Jason Alderman directs Visa's financial education programs. To Follow Jason Alderman on Twitter: www.twitter.com/PracticalMoney

Governor O'Malley Signs Historic Executive Orders Recognizing Indigenous Indian Tribes

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, MD (January, 2012) – Governor Martin O'Malley signed two historic Executive Orders recognizing Maryland Indian status of two groups indigenous to the State of Maryland. With the signing of the Executive Orders, Governor O'Malley officially made the Piscataway Indian Nation and the Piscataway Conoy Confederacy the first state recognized tribes in Maryland history. The Piscataway Conoy petition for recognition includes the Piscataway Conoy Confederacy and subtribes, and the Cedarville Band of Piscataway.

"Within the heart of every individual, is a spirit that yearns to be recognized," said Governor O'Malley. "Today is a day of recognition 380 years in the making. These Executive Orders formally reclaim for all of our children, and for generations to come, the human dignity, the common humanity, and the unity of spirit that we lacked the loving capacity to fully recognize seven generations ago."

"I am of the belief that Governor O'Malley was our best hope to have the centuries of oppressive denial reversed. His values for civil and human rights, environmental recovery, cultural diversity, history, and community health are truly in accord with our perspectives," said Billy Redwing Tayac, chief of the Piscataway Indian Nation. "This is righteousness in action. I would like to congratulate the Governor and the citizens of Maryland as well for making the choice to acknowledge the



PHOTO BY MARK O'DELL

Governor Martin O'Malley presents a proclamation at a 2007 Indian Heritage Month Luncheon.

indigenous heritage and communities of our state."

Recognizing the important contributions made by American Indians, the Maryland General Assembly enacted a law establishing a process under which an American Indian tribe, band, or clan could be formally recognized by the State. Any tribe that wishes to receive State recognition must submit a petition to the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA). State law requires that petitioners must show through this documentation that the group has been iden-

tified as Native American from before 1790 until the present, part of a continuous Native American community from before 1790 until the present, and is indigenous to Maryland.

Through state recognition, over \$17 million in potential funding sources may now become available to the State of Maryland and the Piscataway. The funding will be available in the areas of education, minority business contracting, housing and public health. Also through recognition, the MCIA will be able to assist in the acquisition of

federal funding for the re-establishment of the Title VII Indian Education program in Southern Maryland.

"Gaining Maryland Indian Status has specific meaning to the Piscataway," said Mervin Savoy, tribal chair of the Piscataway Conoy Confederacy and Sub-tribes. "Central to motivating our young people is the sense of identity and pride that will encourage and provide motivation to achieve. Education is the key that unlocks doors that have served to bar progress for our people for decades. Our work now begins to insure this opportunity is infused in our students and our young adults looking to incubate a business and those looking to further their education to make a better life for their families."

According to 2010 U.S. Census data, there are 23,162 Native Americans living in Maryland and a total of 58,000 people who claim Native American ancestry and another ethnicity.

The MCIA coordinates programs and projects to further the cultural, educational, economic and social development of Maryland's diverse Indian communities. The Commission also works to promote public awareness and appreciation of the rich contributions American Indians have made to life in Maryland.

Copies of the Executive Orders can be found here:

<http://www.governor.maryland.gov/executive-orders/01.01.2012.01.pdf>

<http://www.governor.maryland.gov/executive-orders/01.01.2012.02.pdf>

Tax from A1

"The worst thing you can do is raise taxes," House Minority Leader Tony O'Donnell, R-Calvert, said. "That's a job killer."

In his brief speech before the House of Delegates on opening day, O'Malley praised Maryland for creating 27,000 new jobs last year.

The governor hopes to continue this trend by proposing more than \$370 million in school construction funding and renovations in the budget for fiscal 2013, which he said will create approximately 12,000 jobs.

With job creation being the governor's primary focus, Delegate Pat McDonough, R-Baltimore County, hopes to

ensure that these new jobs are unavailable to illegal immigrants with legislation requiring verification of citizenship upon hiring.

"I want those jobs, new jobs, to go to American citizens," McDonough said.

Legislators will also contend with two hot-button environmental issues this session - fracking and wind farming.

Hydraulic fracturing - or "fracking" - which involves extracting natural gas from rocks, is already in use in nearby states. An advisory commission released a set of recommendations Dec. 31.

Delegate Wendell Beitzel, R-Garrett, a fracking supporter, said he thought there would be a push to pass some sort of bill this year.

Wind farm supporters turned out for a rally in front of the State House an hour before the General Assembly's official opening.

Addressing the crowd, Sen. Paul Pinsky, D-Prince George's, a leading supporter of a wind farm bill that faltered last session, called for a "culture change" in the state's approach to energy production.

"It's time for Maryland to be in the forefront with wind energy," Pinsky said. "We have to change the old and move to the new in order to have a future."

With O'Malley expected to introduce a new same-sex marriage bill, delegates are organizing early to gain four or five votes to push the legislation through the House, where it stalled last session.

Last year, O'Malley said he would sign same-sex marriage legislation if it reached his desk. This year he has promised to actively fight for the legislation, giving supporters hope his influence could make the difference.

"It's having the governor and the [House] speaker have persuasive conversations, and, if necessary, a little strong-arming never hurt," said Delegate Heather Mizeur, D-Montgomery.

But opponents, including religious groups and others, are preparing to fight the bill again this year.

Capital News Service's Mike Bock, Elizabeth McLellan, Kelsey Miller, Ellen Stodola and Amanda Yeager contributed to this story.

Map from A1

Marylanders in public hearings across the State and in numerous written comments."

After accepting the unanimous recommendations of the GRAC on December 16, 2011, the Governor received public comment on the recommendations during a public hearing on December 22, 2011. GRAC based its work on the current legislative district map, drawn by the Maryland Court of Appeals in 2002. The Governor was guided by that work product, State and federal Constitutional and legal provisions, and by public input.

Specifically, the Governor's map:

Creates 12 districts that are majority African American – an increase from the 10 districts that the Court of Appeals drew in 2002. This reflects the growth

in African American population in the State, and provides a much stronger voice for the African American community. These districts are 10, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 47. The Governor's proposal increases the African American population in Districts 10, 22, 43 and 47 to enhance the voting strength of the African American voters in those communities.

In addition to the 12 majority African American districts, the map has 4 districts (20, 21, 28, 39) that are majority minority. The Governor's proposal increases the minority population in District 21.

For the first time in Maryland's history, creates a single-member Hispanic district in Prince George's County, District 47B, which is over 62% Hispanic. The Governor did not create 50% Hispanic single-member district in Montgomery County (18A) offered as an

option by GRAC because of concerns about the ability of the sub-district to elect a Hispanic candidate and the option would also make the remainder of the district (18B), 68% white, both of which may have the effect of limiting minority voting strength.

Increases African American voting strength on the Eastern Shore and Baltimore City by bringing District 37A on the Eastern Shore to over 50% African American voting age population, and increasing the African American population in District 46 by 5 percentage points.

Reduces the number of county crossings from 14 in the map drawn by the Court of Appeals in 2002 to 13 crossings. The Governor's review of the GRAC recommendations resolved minor instances of unintended splits of incorporated areas (such as Frederick, Riverdale Park,

and Greenbelt), which are corrected in his map.

Takes further steps to respond to community concerns about splits of unincorporated areas. While balancing minority voting rights, municipal boundaries, and county boundaries, the Governor's map takes steps to keep more of certain communities together. The Governor's plan reunites a Seabrook precinct in District 22; puts more of the Lake Arbor community together in District 24; reunites more of Woodmore in District 23; reunites more of Hillcrest Heights in District 26; and puts more of Severna Park back together in District 33.

Makes changes in Baltimore County to make Districts 7, 10 and 42 more compact, and makes changes in Baltimore City to increase the neighborhoods that remain in their current district in Districts 41 and 44A.

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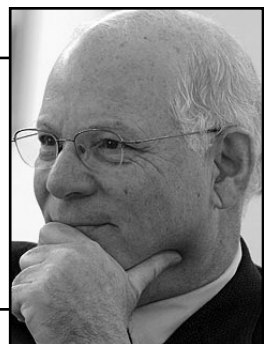
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COMMENTARY

Benjamin L. Cardin United States Senator for Maryland



Honoring the Life of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) issued the following statement honoring the life of the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which will be celebrated as a national holiday on Monday, January 16.

More than 25 years ago, the birthday of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. became a national holiday so that our nation -- and future generations -- would understand and appreciate Dr. King's fight for the equality of all Americans.

As a minister and as an activist, Dr. King believed in a world where all people were judged "not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." He was an iconic figure who galvanized our nation in the fight for civil rights.

His life was not an easy one -- he faced

threats, separation from his family, imprisonment -- but he remained committed to ending what was then the status quo of separate but inherently unequal. His life and his work changed the course, the conscience and the character of our nation.

Today, we are a nation of more than 300 million people; a nation in which one-out-of-three Americans is a member of a minority group. Dr. King is one of our country's most beloved and admired leaders because he had the courage to stand up against racism and hatred with non-violent activism.

As we celebrate and honor his life on January 16, we rededicate ourselves to his legacy of equality, fairness, and justice, and we pledge that all Americans will understand and remember the accomplishments of Dr. King.

To Be Equal Marc Morial, President and CEO National Urban League



Dr. King's Voting Rights Legacy Under Attack

"No nation can long continue to flourish or to find its way to a better society while it allows any one of its citizens...to be denied the right to participate in the most fundamental of all privileges of democracy -- the right to vote."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

On Monday, January 15th, America will celebrate what would have been the 83rd birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The day will be marked from coast-to-coast with parades, speeches, and pilgrimages to the new King Memorial on the National Mall. But in the midst of this outpouring of praise, there is a sinister movement afoot to undo one of Dr. King's hardest fought victories -- the removal of discriminatory barriers to voting and the passage of the Voting Rights Act signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965.

In Dr. King's day, billy clubs, cattle prods and guns kept African Americans away from the polls. Today, new voter restriction laws on the books or in the works in at least 34 states could deny the right to vote to more than 5 million Americans this year. These laws include new photo ID requirements, elimination of early voting, bans on voting by out-of-state college students, and roll-backs of voting rights for ex-felons who have paid their debts to society. Florida has even eliminated voting on the Sunday before Election Day which has traditionally been a day when African American churches organized "souls to the polls" drives for their congregations.

The mostly conservative proponents of these new laws claim they are meant to prevent widespread fraud -- the casting of ballots by people who are not legally eligible to vote. But both the Bush and Obama Justice Departments have

looked and not found significant voter fraud in American elections. So let's be clear -- the real reason behind this spate of new laws is to suppress the votes of people likely to support progressive candidates and issues -- African Americans, Latinos, young people, the elderly and people with disabilities. This is unconscionable. It is un-American. And it dishonors the sacrifices of generations of Americans who have fought and died to extend the right to vote to every citizen.

Fortunately, a growing number of Americans are fighting back. On December 10th, the National Urban League joined the NAACP and a coalition of civil rights groups at a "Stand for Freedom" march and rally at the United Nations to protest this blatant attack on voting rights. Attorney General Eric Holder has also expressed concern about the legality of some of these new laws. Recently, the Justice Department struck down a voter ID law in South Carolina and Holder promises to continue to monitor these attempts and stop them when they violate the law. But beating back these efforts will require citizen vigilance and action.

In a recent speech at the LBJ Library and Museum in Austin, Texas, Holder urged Americans to "Speak out. Raise awareness about what's at stake. Call on our political parties to resist the temptation to suppress certain votes in the hope of attaining electoral success and... urge policymakers at every level to reevaluate our election systems -- and to reform them in ways that encourage, not limit, participation."

We agree. We must not let the hard-won voting rights secured by Dr. King, John Lewis, LBJ and so many others slip away.

Cong. Chris Van Hollen House Democratic Minority Whip



Maryland Named #1 Public School System by Education Week

Rockville, MD -- Today Maryland Congressman Chris Van Hollen issued the following statement congratulating the State of Maryland on being named the #1 Public School System in the country by Education Week:

"Congratulations to the State of Maryland on being named the #1 Public School System for the fourth year in a row by Education Week, the nation's leading education newspaper. Our state's continued success is a result of dedicated and tal-

ented teachers, administrators, and school leaders. It is also thanks to Maryland's Thornton funding formula for schools, which prioritizes important investments in education, and the leaders who work to protect those investments. I will continue to work with Governor Martin O'Malley, Interim Superintendent of Schools Bernard Sadusky, and my colleagues in Congress to provide opportunities for all of our students to succeed."



Near the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, AL, the Museum and Institute offers America and the world the opportunity to learn the lessons from the past. Housed in this museum are exhibits that remind everyone of the struggle to secure the rights for all Americans to vote, regardless of race, education or wealth.

Child Watch

by Marion Wright Edelman



Poverty 2.0

As the new year's news cycles turn to presidential politics and primary contests, there is another story our leaders should be talking a lot about -- and acting to alleviate. End-of-year news stories about holiday spending happily reported on the unexpectedly high totals many Americans spent -- or put on credit -- this year. But for millions of families there was another story: how to provide enough food and shelter and keep alive the spirit, wonder, and joy of the season for their children when resources are scarce?

Darryl and Jeanna Barrett are both college graduates who together earned about \$60,000 a year. Blessed with three beautiful daughters, they survived Hurricane Katrina and bought a home in New Orleans, eager to help rebuild their city. According to Darryl, they were "on the road to the American dream." Then he became disabled and Jeanna lost her job. Their current income -- Darryl's Social Security disability and Jeanna's unemployment insurance -- places them just barely above the official poverty level for a family of five.

The family recently qualified for food stamps. The Barrett girls, Anjerrica, 15, Daryanna, 10, and Jaeda, 7, would go hungry without food stamps, free school lunches, and a local food pantry. Darryl has been going to the food pantry at the nearby Community Center of St. Bernard every week and can't say enough about how "tremendous" the center has been for them. "I called last year our \$36 Christmas. That's how much money we had in the bank. The center made sure we had a turkey. They got a sponsor who got the girls bikes. We went to their toy drive... if it hadn't been for them, we wouldn't have had any Christmas." Darryl recently told Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Julia Cass, on assignment in New Orleans for the Children's Defense Fund.

The economic rise and fall of the Barrett family mirrors what has happened to so many Americans who were moving up into the middle class but fell backwards in the past few years. The Barretts' hard times resulted from the double whammy of disability and recession. Darryl graduated from Loyola University with a degree in computer systems. He worked for a casino company linking up statewide games in casinos around the state. But when he injured his back and a disc in his neck while moving a heavy piece of furniture, pressure from the disc injury severely damaged the nerves in his arms. Two years of physical therapy and a surgery

failed to restore the use of his arms and he was approved for Social Security disability payments of \$1,550 per month.

Meanwhile, Jeanna graduated from Xavier University with a degree in chemistry. She worked as a pharmacy technician and science teacher in a Catholic school before going to work at a non-profit organization providing after-school and summer programs for low-income children in 2004. But she lost her job when the program lost state funding in 2010. In October 2011, Jeanna got what she calls a "part-time part-time" job -- working at a cell phone company two days a week, three hours a day at \$8 an hour. "Of all my applications, this was the only place that wanted to hire me," she says. But the Barretts know this job is not even a short-term solution to their tough financial problems.

Sadly, the Barrett children were in the majority this year. In November, the Census Bureau released its first report using a new way of measuring poverty in America -- the Supplemental Poverty Measure. This new measure won't replace the official poverty measure but it's an important tool to give us a more nuanced picture of poverty today.

The Supplemental Poverty Measure monitors common household expenses including food, clothing, shelter, and utilities and adjusts for regional differences. Income calculations include the value of federal nutrition programs, tax breaks like the earned-income tax credit, and housing subsidies, but subtract taxes paid, work and child care expenses, medical

expenses, and child support payments. These more detailed calculations yielded some surprising results.

The majority of children in America -- a stunning 56.7 percent -- are either poor or low-income with these calculations compared to 43.9 percent using the official measure. While there is a substantial rise in the number of children considered low-income, the child poverty rate itself was actually lower using the new measure. This is important because it shows the effectiveness of key programs in lifting children out of poverty especially child and family nutrition programs, housing subsidies, and the earned-income tax credit. These programs had the largest positive impact on children's lives.

Now that we know the majority of children in America are at risk -- including families like the Barretts -- and need a lot of help right now to stay afloat, we must act. The details the Supplemental Poverty Measure captures give us a fuller picture of poverty's reach during these perilous economic times and should serve as a road map to help our leaders and policymakers see what's helping and what's hurting. The proof of effectiveness of crucial safety net investments shows the wisdom of expanding refundable tax credits and nutrition programs to stave off widespread hunger. All of us must urge our legislators right now to make the right choices with our tax dollars and use them to benefit the majority of our children struggling to survive and thrive on too little rather than non-needy powerful special interests.

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BUSINESS

Agriculture Secretary Announces Blueprint for Stronger Service to Increase Efficiency in USDA

By PRESS OFFICER
USDA

*Streamlined, Modernized
Department Central to 21st
Century USDA*

WASHINGTON, Jan., 2011—The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) must be built to meet the evolving needs of a 21st century agricultural economy, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Monday in presenting USDA's Blueprint for Stronger Service, a plan that helps producers continue to drive America's economy by streamlining operations and cutting costs.

"The USDA, like families and businesses across the country, cannot continue to operate like we did 50 years ago," said Vilsack. "We must innovate, modernize, and be better stewards of the taxpayers' dollars. We must build on the record accomplishments of farm communities in 2011 with a stronger, more effective USDA in 2012 and beyond."

The Blueprint for Stronger Service is based on a Department-wide review of operations conducted as part of the Administration's Campaign to Cut Waste, launched by President Obama and Vice President Biden to make government work better and more efficiently for the American people. The agency took a hard look at all USDA operations, from headquarters to field offices. The end result is a plan that will create optimal use of USDA's employees, better results for USDA customers, and greater efficiencies for American taxpayers.

"As part of the Campaign to Cut Waste, the President and I asked all Cabinet Secretaries to make tough choices within their departments to save taxpayer money, eliminate government waste, and allow us to invest in the programs and services the American people need. This announcement by Secretary Vilsack is another example of how this can be done," said Vice President Biden. "By undertaking a thorough and thoughtful review of his Department, Secretary Vilsack has saved taxpayers millions in travel and printing costs and is consolidating more than 700 different cell phone contracts into about 10. What's more, the

Department is finding significant savings by consolidating more than 200 offices across the country while ensuring that the vital services they provide are not cut."

"In the past few decades, U.S. agriculture has become the second most productive sector of the American economy, thanks to farmers adopting technology, reducing debt, and effectively managing risk," said Vilsack. "These are lessons from which we can all learn. As we continue to invest in rural communities across the country, USDA has heard from producers about reducing red tape and the need to modernize its services. Today, we are answering the challenge by announcing a series of efforts to help us continue to streamline operations, make the best use of taxpayer resources, and provide the best possible service to the American people."

The USDA will close 259 domestic offices, facilities and labs across the country, as well as seven foreign offices. In some cases, offices are no longer staffed or have a very small staff of one or two people; many are within 20 miles of other USDA offices. In other cases, technology improvements, advanced service centers, and broadband service have reduced some need for brick and mortar facilities.

When fully implemented, these actions along with other recommended changes will provide efficiencies valued at about \$150 million annually—and eventually more based on future realignment of the workforce—and will ensure that USDA continues to provide optimal service to the American people within available funding levels. These actions and plans to close or consolidate facility, office and lab operations will impact USDA headquarters in Washington and in 46 states and 1 U.S. territory.

Farm Service Agency (FSA): Consolidate 131 county offices in 32 states; more than 2,100 FSA offices remain throughout the United States

Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS): Close 2 country offices; more than 95 FAS offices remain throughout the world

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS): Close 15 APHIS offices in 11 states and 5 APHIS offices in 5

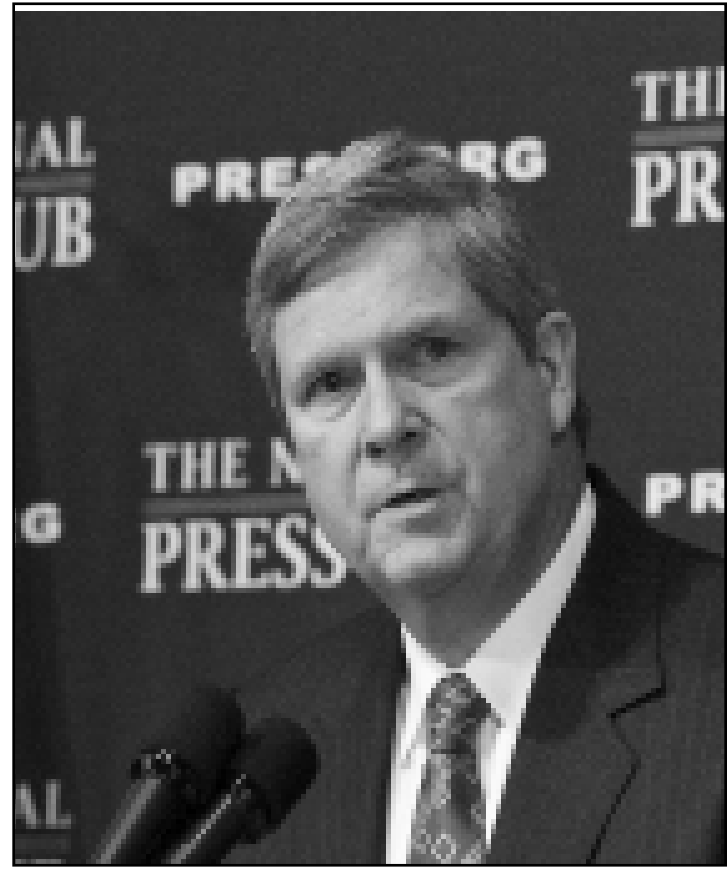


PHOTO BY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack spoke to journalists and national agriculture leaders about innovation in American agriculture, sustainable solutions to help feed the world at the National Press Club in Washington, DC,

foreign countries; more than 560 APHIS offices remain throughout the United States and 55 remain throughout the world

Rural Development (RD): Close 43 area and sub offices in 17 states and U.S. territories; approximately 450 RD offices remain throughout the United States.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): Close 24 soil survey offices in 21 states; more than 2,800 NRCS offices remain throughout the United States

Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS): Close 5 district offices in 5 states; 10 district offices remain throughout the United States

Agricultural Research Service (ARS): Close 12 programs at 10 locations; more than 240 programs remain throughout the United States

Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services (FNCS): Close 31 field offices in 28 states; 32 FNCS offices will remain throughout the United States

In addition, USDA is implementing a series of other changes that will save taxpayers' money while eliminating redundancies and inefficiencies. The Blueprint for Stronger

Service details 133 recommendations that affirm processes already in place, as well as 27 initial improvements, and other, longer-term improvements. The initial improvements include the following:

Consolidate more than 700 cell phone plans into about 10; Standardize civil rights training and purchases of cyber security products; and

Ensure more efficient and effective service to our employees by moving toward more centralized civil rights, human resource, procurement, and property management functions, creating millions of dollars in efficiencies without sacrificing the quality of our work.

The Secretary detailed the changes in a speech at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 93rd Annual Meeting, where he also highlighted the impressive achievements of American agriculture over the past three years. Currently, U.S. agriculture is experiencing its most productive period in history thanks to the resiliency, resourcefulness, and efficiency of American producers. The Blueprint for Stronger Service will allow USDA to continue the investments that help to make this possible.

Business Exchange

by William Reed



What are Blacks to do about Ron Paul?

Republican presidential candidate Congressman Ron Paul (R-Texas) has come under fire over allegations that a newsletter he edited years ago contained racist commentary. To charge Paul with "racism" is misleading. The old geezer is being punk'd by people Black voters really should be leery of instead of quoting. Publicizing of comments published in the 1980s and 1990s reeks as the latest agenda to mis-educate Black voters.

Ron Paul is far from being a foe of Black Americans. He is to be admired as a man of principles and a comrade in foiling American imperialists and the war crowd that probably were sources of the racial commentaries in the first place. If Blacks look a little closer they'd see that Paul's political positions are in line with those preached and practiced by Martin Luther King, Jr. MLK's position on foreign policy was vastly more similar to Paul's than it is to any other 2012 presidential candidate.

Paul is hardly the racist that the mainstream media would have Blacks believe him to be. Blacks have more in common with Paul's opposition to America's penchant for imperialistic wars, and absurd rationalities behind them like "Manifest Destiny" and "American Exceptionalism," than with President Obama.

Think about it, Paul has been on the national scene for 30 years. He has been labeled "conservative", "Constitutionalist" and "libertarian", but never called "racist." Much of Paul's opposition comes from fear in some pro-Israel circles that Paul reflects an ascendant faction that has little use for a foreign policy so tilted toward Israel. Paul is not "a mainstream man" and the only candidate seeking to change America's "status quo." A medical doctor, Paul advocates ending the drug war and fixing a biased court system that unfairly targets and punishes minorities.

Paul may have made enough people mad enough to punk him, but Blacks have to be discerning in knowing what his actual views toward us are. Over the years Paul's positions have remained clear and transparent. He hasn't wavered in his voting or policy

ideals. What candidate can you name that is more serious on fiscal matters? Paul wants to get rid of many federal agencies and would like to audit and perhaps abolish the Federal Reserve Bank. Paul advocates an end to the death penalty and, as president, plans to bring all military troops home.

People tied to the military/industrial complex loathe Paul the most. He labels their banter against Iran "warmongering" and states: "In all wars minorities suffer the most. So I hope that they join me in this position ... against the war in Iraq... and the war on drugs." What other candidates will stand up and say "I will pardon ... everybody convicted for non-violent drug acts and drug crimes. This is where the real discrimination is ... the judicial system ... that I'm attacking."

Paul brings a breath of honesty and accountability to the 2012 presidential races. Blacks of all political stripes would benefit from the honest debate during this season about campaign finance reform, military spending, torture of enemy combatants, immigration, the Federal Reserve, free trade agreements, federal debt resolution and unfair prison sentences for drug use Paul's candidacy brings about. In his opposition to American imperialism, Paul provides a certain appeal to people who see through the lies fuelling the Bush/Obama foreign policy: using the American military on behalf of the banks and multinationals. An unbridled military industrial complex is against the interest of any thinking American, and many voters are starting to rethink America's foreign policy. For these views, Paul has growing appeal among Americans and is being "played"; as he's portrayed as a racist on racist mediums.

As the primaries play out, look at Paul for practical political positions that help our nation. Black voters should move beyond the newsletters in judging Paul. Try judging his efforts to end a "war on drugs" that has contributed to the mass incarceration of the poor and people of color, you'll find him far from racist and quite progressive.

Edwards from A1

Edwards' FEC reports show she has collected \$231,967, before year-end reports are released.

The withdrawal came just a few hours before the deadline to file for candidacy with the Maryland State Board of Elections. Also running on the Democratic side, according to the board's website, are Ian Garner and George McDermott. On the Republican side, Randy Gearhart, Greg Holmes and Charles Shepherd have filed as candidates.

"That's just a sigh of relief," for Edwards, said Todd Eberly,

professor of political science at St. Mary's College of Maryland. "Ivey would've been a serious challenger."

Eberly said money likely wasn't the only reason that Ivey dropped out. Edwards, of Fort Washington, had the support of the other Democrats in the state's congressional delegation.

"Parties work hard to make sure incumbents don't face challenges," he said. "There's every incentive for party incumbents to have an advantage."

Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Maryland, endorsed Edwards last week, and House Minority

Whip Steny Hoyer, D-Mechanicsville, told The Washington Post in November that he would support the incumbent.

Edwards won a tough primary fight to gain her seat in Congress, defeating eight-term Rep. Al Wynn in 2008, and causing Wynn to resign his seat early. She went on to win a special election and claim her seat in Congress. In that race she had significant financial support from the Service Employees International Union and MoveOn.org.

"Ivey wouldn't have been as well connected or had a coalition of support," said Eberly,

explaining that Ivey would have been a new congressman in a reconfigured district, making the seat more vulnerable to a Republican challenge on the next go-round.

In the redrawing of congressional districts this year, Edwards lost some of Montgomery County's Democrats to a redrawn Rep. Roscoe Bartlett's Sixth Congressional District, and picked up a less-reliably Democratic part of Anne Arundel County.

Ivey said he will continue to practice law at the Washington firm of Venable LLP and work to re-elect President Obama.

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OUT ON THE TOWN

ERIC D. SNIDER'S
IN THE DARK

Movie Review

"The Iron Lady,"

"THE IRON LADY"
(limited release) B-
Rated PG-13 for brief vio-
lent images and fleeting partial
nudity.
1 hr., 45 min.

As the first female prime minister of the United Kingdom and a key player in 1980s world politics, Margaret Thatcher deserves a tough-but-fair biopic shedding light on her strengths and weaknesses as a person and as a leader. Until such a movie arrives, we have "The Iron Lady," a standard, surface-level biopic that's orderly and clean and offers only a cursory examination of what made Maggie tick. Though it's modestly engaging as a shiny biography, the film's primary accomplishment is offering further evidence that Meryl Streep will deliver perfectly good performances even in movies that are unworthy of them. And we already knew that.

The "present" is sometime in the last several years, after Thatcher's husband, Denis, has died and Margaret's mind has begun to go. Even buried under the usual layers of old-age makeup, Streep conveys the former prime minister's intelligence and spark that manifest themselves during moments of lucidity. When her daughter, Carol (Olivia Colman), and other caretakers are not around, she sees and speaks to her dead husband, whom she misses terribly and cannot let go. He's played by Jim Broadbent, dotty and darling as ever. I'm sure I'm not alone in thinking that a movie of Streep and Broadbent doing nothing but toddle around the house saying affectionate British things to each other

would be magnificent.

The bulk of this movie, however, is told through that venerable tool of the biopic, the flashback. Wearing less makeup but equipped with appropriate dental costumery, Streep plays Thatcher during her rise to prominence in the 1970s, followed by the surprising run at the prime ministership that put her in office for all of the 1980s. Working from a by-the-numbers screenplay by Abi Morgan ("Shame") and directed by Phyllida Lloyd ("Mamma Mia"), Streep's version of Margaret is unyielding, uncompromising, and usually convinced of the rightness of her position, morally and politically. In her early years in Parliament, the lone female among dozens of harrumphing coots, she comes across as a powerhouse, a force to be reckoned with. She is smart, she has ideas, and she deserves to be taken seriously. In her later years, this evolves into browbeating staffers like a schoolmarm.

Thatcher's determined resilience is the only thing that drives her, as far as the movie is concerned. Scenes from her younger days (in which she's played by Alexandra Roach, with Harry Lloyd as Denis) show her as steadfast as ever. There's a brief suggestion that her commitment to public service has caused her to neglect her family, but that line of thought doesn't go anywhere. Every now and then her anti-union, pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps conservative rhetoric makes you think there might be insightful parallels to be drawn between this and the current political climate, but the movie



PHOTO COURTESY ROTTENTOMATOES

The Iron Lady is a surprising and intimate portrait of Margaret Thatcher (Meryl Streep), the first and only female Prime Minister of The United Kingdom. One of the 20th century's most famous and influential women, Thatcher came from nowhere to smash through barriers of gender and class to be heard in a male dominated world. -- (C) Weinstein

isn't interested in them. Like that other recent biopic about a controversial conservative government figure, "J. Edgar," "The Iron Lady" doesn't want to take a firm position on anything.

What it wants to do instead is to be a nice, inoffensive political biography that could be shown to high school students on days when the teacher doesn't have a lesson plan. On those

terms, it's not bad. Streep and Broadbent are entirely watchable, and Thatcher's story, even in its vague and watered-down state, is inherently interesting. Thatcher's detractors will be furious that the film isn't more of a hit piece, while her admirers will probably find it shallow. So who's it for? People who don't already have an opinion on Margaret Thatcher -- my fellow Americans, most likely.

PGFD PROFILE

Dr. Tracy Timmons - Road Doctor to Medical Scholar

When Tracy Alane Timmons showed up on Monday, February 8, 1993, for her first day of Career Recruit School (CRS) #25, not even she fathomed that she would one day give new meaning to the term "road doctor."

In June 1993, Tracy Timmons graduated from the Prince George's County Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department CRS #25 and began her career as a firefighter.

After being with the Department for one year, Fire Fighter Timmons cross-trained and became a paramedic. "I realized that I hated not having enough knowledge about what was going on with the patients I was transporting via ambulance. I wanted to know what the paramedics knew," she said.

During her tenure with the Fire/EMS Department, Fire Fighter/Paramedic Timmons was assigned to Landover Hills Fire/EMS Station 830; Chillum-Adelphi Fire/EMS Station 834; and Glenn Dale Fire/EMS Station 818. She was also a member of the Special Tactical Unit at Tuxedo-Cheverly Fire/EMS Station 822. Always one who desired to help others, she derived fulfillment from her dual status of firefighter and paramedic. However, after a while, she was no longer satisfied with just "knowing what the paramedics knew." Tracy now wanted to know what those to

whom she transported patients—the ER doctors—knew. In December 1995, she acquired a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Maryland. After 7 years with the Fire/EMS Department, Fire Fighter/Paramedic Timmons left to pursue her dream of becoming a doctor. She received her Doctor of Medicine degree in 2004, from the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine in Richmond.

Dr. Timmons' resume boasts of an extensive list of accomplishments, ranging from Chief Resident of General Surgery with the Virginia Commonwealth University Health Systems to Surgical Critical Care Fellowship with R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center (STC), University of Maryland Medical Center. In 2010, she was appointed Assistant Professor of Surgery at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, where she presently serves. Her clinical activities include: Trauma Surgeon, Surgical Intensivist at R Adams Cowley STC and General Surgeon on emergency surgery at Baltimore Veteran's Administration Medical Center. Impressively, her publications peer-reviewed journal articles include 1). Lin M, Mohammed H, Brazio P, Lavien G, Lumpkins K, Tammons T. "Sacral osteomyelitis: an unusual complication form foreign

body ingestion" (AM Surgeon); and 2). Timmons, T and Menaker, J. "Traumatic brain injury in the elderly" (Clinical Geriatrics 2010; 18:20-24).

A typical work schedule for Dr. Timmons consists of 21-35 consecutive days, followed by a week off. Two out of every 7 days, she works a 24 hour shift. While speaking of her extremely demanding schedule, she jokingly referenced her Fire/EMS Department days, saying, "24/72 was certainly a better schedule! Nevertheless, I love what I do."

Growing up, for as long as she could remember, Tracy wanted to be a soldier. Her dad was an active service member, and her goal was to follow in his footsteps. She never once thought about a career in medicine until she became a paramedic. She attributes her success as a doctor to the training she received as a paramedic in the Fire/EMS Department. "Being a paramedic was invaluable to becoming a doctor. Because of that, I went into medical school with some life experience."

"Another reward of being a paramedic," according to Dr. Timmons, "is when you're 911, folk are happy to see you show up. As a doctor, the level of gratitude is not the same. Folk have unreal expectations of what doctors know or can do." Asked if there is any part of being a doctor that she finds difficult, she responded, "I experience great



PHOTO BY MARK E. BRADY
Dr. Tracy A. Timmons

difficulty in dealing with family, as it relates to accepting the reality of the patient's condition. Another thing that's difficult for me is losing a patient, as I sometimes do. In those times, I walk away questioning whether there was something I could have done better or differently to change the outcome."

Describing her special interests and hobbies, 43-year-old Dr. Timmons said she is greatly interested in neurotrauma, which is injury to a nerve, especially part of the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord). As far as hobbies go, she plays the guitar and is fond of live music—mostly blues and folk. "I also like keeping fit, which I do by walking on the treadmill and weight training. Unfortunately, I don't have much time to do many of the things I enjoy. I obviously would also love to spend more time at home," she says.

Dr. Tracy Timmons, her wife and 8 year-old stepson reside in Timonium, Maryland

The Edge of Sports

by DAVE ZIRIN

Tim Tebow: Praising the Player. Hating the Game

Last Friday, I wrote a column stating that Denver Broncos quarterback Tim Tebow deserved our pity. Statistically, over his previous three games, all losses, he had been beyond terrible. I pointed out that on Sunday, he would be facing the league's number-one defense, a Pittsburgh Steelers squad so mean, to use an old saying, that they'd cry over Tebow's mangled body just to get salt in his wounds. I thought Tebow and his awkward hand grenade throwing motion was headed for a long, sad offseason. I was dead wrong.

The Broncos won 29-23 in overtime, and Tebow threw for over 300 yards including an eighty-yard touchdown pass to win the game. Even more impressively, he only completed ten passes, for an unreal thirty-one yards per completion. Pity this sportswriter, because I've been bombarded by Tebow Tee-hadists telling me that I don't know my ass from my elbow. And on this day they're right. I was wrong on Tebow, and that's not all I was wrong about.

My central Xs and Os mistake in predicting a Pittsburgh blowout was ignoring the injuries that had ravaged the Steelers. Their quarterback, Ben Roethlisberger, had one working leg, with his other ankle swollen to badly he had to wear a larger shoe. Their Pro Bowl center Maurkice Pouncey and starting running back Rashard Mendenhall were both out with injuries. Their safety Ryan Clark also couldn't play with a serious blood disorder. It was certainly ignorant of me to ignore that long list. But I made an even bigger mistake than that.

I made the cardinal error of applying the laws of politics to sports. In the last two weeks, two Republican primary also-rans—Michele Bachmann and Rick Perry—involed the name of Tim "Focus on the Family" Tebow to inspire their flagging Christianist base. To put it mildly, the gambit failed to work for either candidate. I was over-eager to see Tebow then fail in their footsteps.

In what is not news to my regular readers, I abhor the kinds of politics that Bachmann, Perry and, yes, Tebow, represent. I consider it repellent when politicians crush the hard-won freedoms of others in the name of their version of Jesus Christ. To see LGBT people and women's reproductive rights demonized, and have that be accepted as mainstream political discourse, demands a vigorous response.

I further can't stand that Tim Tebow gets a media pass for his extremist politics—the politics of Christianist hegemony—while so many athletes over the years have had their livelihoods destroyed for daring to speak out for the outnumbered and oppressed. I can't stand the way we all know but don't say that if Tebow was a devout Muslim, the media narrative about his "faith" would be profoundly different.

If the Bachmann/Perry duo fell short, then surely Tebow would also falter, right? Wouldn't that be the karmic trifecta?

That didn't happen, nor should it have happened. But that's also the great thing about sports, the thing that makes it superior to Beltway elephant/jackass politics. The game is decided on the field, transparently and in full view. There are no Super Pacts to hide behind once the opening whistle sounds. As former NBA player Rasheed Wallace famously said, "Ball don't lie." When it counted, against the Steelers in the playoffs, Tim Tebow was the truth. As a sportswriter, I forgot that the game plays by its own rules, and they're rules governed by heart, skill and coaching. Tebow and the Broncos won on every count. I have lost the debate on Tim Tebow's skill as a quarterback. But I'll still challenge Tim Tebow's politics for as long as necessary. And in that battle, the fight continues.

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Calendar of Events

January 19 - January 25, 2012

Basketball League Registration: Boys or Girls - Select Teams

Date & Time: Ongoing through February 9, 2012
Description: Boys & Girls ages are invited to register teams for a competitive basketball league. Competition is open to all teams including AAU, Boys & Girls Club, CYO, M-NCPPC Community Center, County and Non-County teams. The schedule will consist of 8 regular season games and playoff games.
Ages: Ages groups: Girls: 18 & under; 15 & under; 12 & under; 9 & under; 5-7; Boys: 18 & under; 15 & under; 12 & under; 9 & under; 5-7
Fee: \$600/team. Please no individual registrations.
Information: Byron Thompson at 301-446-6818 or Paul Hall at 301-446-6811.

Inter-Center Basketball League Registration

Date & Time: Ongoing registration through January 20, 2012
Description: This popular county-wide league gives kids a chance to enjoy learning and participating in the game of basketball. Everybody plays!
 This league is open to Prince George's County residents only and all participants must register in person at a community center.
Ages: 5-7; 8-9; 10-12 and 13-17
Fee: \$50/person with valid M-NCPPC Youth ID
Information: Byron thompson at 301-446-6818 or Paul Hall at 301-446-6811

Tiny Tots Thursday: Native Voices

Date and Time: Thursday, January 19, 9:30 am & 11 am
Event Description: Story-teller Dovie Thomason presents traditional Indian stories told to her by her grandmother. Dovie's animated style and many voices for characters like the talkative turtle and bossy buffalo keep the young audience spellbound while learning about the diverse cultures of North America's First Nations.
Ages: Recommended for grades pre-K-2
Fee: \$3/person
Location: *Publick Playhouse*
 5445 Landover Road, Cheverly 20784
Information: 301-277-1710; TTY: 301-277-1312

Nature Center Puppet Show

Date & Time: Thursday, January 19, 1 pm
Description: Enjoy a seasonal puppet show and meet a live animal. Reservations required.
Cost: Resident \$2/person; Non-Resident \$3/person
Ages: 2-10
Location: *Watkins Nature Center*
 301 Watkins Park Drive, Upper Marlboro 20774
Contact: 301-218-6702; TTY 301-699-2544

Black History Month 2012 Exhibit: "Reading, 'Riting and Race Revisited: Rosenwald Schools in Prince George's and Surrounding Counties"

Date and Time: Monday, January 23-Saturday, March 17;
Public Reception: Sunday, February 5, 2-4 pm
Event Description: This year's exhibit will profile African American schools built with assistance from the Rosenwald Fund. Through historic photos and artifacts, the exhibit highlights a list of Rosenwald schools that were featured in "America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places" by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2002. The exhibit's centerpiece includes the recently renovated Ridgeley Rosenwald School, which is considered to be one of the county's best examples of this type of educational facility.

Ages: All ages **Fee:** FREE
Location: *Arts/Harmony Hall Regional Center*
 10701 Livingston Road, Ft. Washington 20744
Information: 301-203-6070; TTY 301-203-3803

PUBLICLK PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES 2012-2012 DANCE SEASON

CHEVERLY, MD—The Publick Playhouse 2012-2012 season: Saturday, February 4 at 8 pm, Nimbaya! Women Master Drummers and Dancers of Guinea make the Playhouse the only Washington area stop on their first American tour in several years. Formerly called "Amazones", these exciting, energetic artists are celebrated throughout Africa for breaking social barriers to women's independence by performing the dances and playing the instruments that for centuries were restricted to men.

In April, Dallas Black Dance Theatre returns for their annual Playhouse residency with a new program of feisty, fearless and fiery modern dance performances on Friday and Saturday, April 27 and 28 at 8 pm and Sunday, April 29 at 4 pm. Tickets to each of the four dance companies in this series are \$20, or \$15/seniors, students, DancePass, and groups of 15 or more. There's also an advance ticket savings of half price for one dance company when buying all four prior to November 18.

Area dancers are also part of the season. On Sunday, February 26, at 4 pm, the annual liturgical dance festival PRAISE! features gospel singer Cora Harvey Armstrong of Richmond and exceptional dance troupes from area churches. Saturday, March 17 at 8 pm, the 10th annual World Dance Showcase highlights the broad cultural richness and talent found in our nation's capitol. Tickets for each of these programs are \$12; \$10/seniors and students.

Young dancers are on stage at Bust a Move with Café Groove on Friday, March 2 from 7-10pm, when teens battle for cash prizes and the title of "Prince George's Best Dance Crew", with teen-only admission for \$3. And Sunday, March 4, at 4 pm, the Love 2 Dance Teen Showcase presents hot talent from area schools and studios. Tickets: \$12; \$10/seniors and students
 Dance Classes with visiting artists include Nimbaya! workshops on Saturday, February 4, with a Drum Workshop at 10 am and an African Dance Workshop at 12 noon for drummers and dancers age 13 and up; fee: \$15/class.
The Playhouse is a facility of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George's County Department of Recreation, Arts and Cultural Heritage Division. For more information, call 301-277-1710 or visit arts.pgpc.com

EARTH TALK ... "How safe is food coloring?"

Dear EarthTalk:

Ever since the red dye #2 scare in the 1970s I've been wary of using food colorings or buying food that appears to contain them. Are there natural and healthy food colorings?

-- Nancy McFarlane, Methuen, MA

Many of us are still wary of food dyes because of reports about links between red dye #2 and cancer in the 1970s. While red dye #2 was subsequently banned from products sold in the United States, many health-conscious consumers continue to avoid foods with other artificial colors or dyes—even though the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) still considers them safe for human consumption.

But a 2010 analysis of past research on links between food dyes and health by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) found compelling evidence that ingestion of artificial dyes can contribute to hyperactivity, restlessness and attention problems in some children—particularly those with ADHD. "What's more, the studies suggested that removing dyes from those children's diet was a quarter to half as effective in reducing those symptoms as giving the kids Ritalin or other stimulants," reports Nancy Cordes, CBS News' Consumer Safety Correspondent. "In other words, certain kids with ADHD might not need drugs if the artificial dyes were removed from

their diets." Several commonly used artificial food dyes are suspected carcinogens as well.

While it might be impossible to prevent your children from eating anything with artificial dye, you can do your part by shopping at Whole Foods or Trader Joe's—both chains have banned products that use artificial dyes and carry all-natural food coloring for home cooking and baking projects.

One brand to look for is India Tree, which makes a line of food coloring derived from vegetable colorants. The company's "Nature's Colors Natural Decorating Colors" contain no corn syrup or synthetic dyes, and are highly recommended for coloring icing in rich jewel tones or soft pastels.

Another company specializing in natural (as well as organic) food colors is Nature's Flavors, whose products are widely used commercially in ice cream, baked goods, frosting, dairy products, syrups, sauces, beverages and even hair colors. The company recently began to sell their products to consumers, as well, through retail stores. They use a variety of plant materials, including beets, turmeric root, annatto seeds, purple carrot, purple cabbage, gardenia flowers, hibiscus flowers and grape skin. "Our natural food colors are made from plants and contain powerful antioxidants, which help the body repair itself from the effects of oxidation," claims Nature's Flavors. "Using natural or organic food colors may actually help the brain and slow down the effects of aging."



CREDIT: HEMERA COLLECTION

The Center for Science in the Public Interest found compelling evidence that ingestion of artificial food dyes can contribute to hyperactivity, restlessness and attention problems in some children, especially those with ADHD. Fortunately, there are now natural alternatives available, made primarily from vegetable colorants.

Another leading maker of all-natural food coloring is Chefmaster, whose products can be found at Whole Foods and other natural and high end food retailers, as well as on amazon.com and elsewhere online.

CSPI would like the FDA to ban eight of the most common artificial dyes, or at least affix a warning label to products that contain them: "Warning: The artificial coloring in this food causes hyperactivity and behavioral problems in some children." In the meantime, concerned eaters should stick with products, stores and restaurants that use natural ingredients.

CONTACTS: India Tree, www.indiatree.com; Nature's Flavors, www.naturesflavors.com; CSPI's "Food Dyes: A Rainbow of Risks," www.cspinet.org/new/pdf/food-dyes-rainbow-of-risks.pdf.

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NAACP from A1

wasteful, ineffective tool, and no longer has a place in Maryland or anywhere in this country."

The Maryland Commission on Capital Punishment identified several problems with the state's death penalty system in 2008 and called for ending capital punishment. Among its findings, the commission concluded that racial disparities exist in Maryland's capital punishment system. It also cited the high cost of applying the death penalty and the

School from A1

the official O'Malley-Brown ticket, he and Lt. Governor Brown joined by Speaker Busch declared their commitment to investing in school construction, and released a comprehensive plan to accept the recommendations of the Kopp Commission, which in 2004 provided an unprecedented statewide assessment of the condition of Maryland's public schools as a "crisis in school construction."

The Kopp Commission noted:

- Students in poor buildings perform less well than students in functional buildings.
- Most researchers found students in poor buildings scored between 5 to 10 percentile rank points lower than students in functional buildings, after controlling for socioeconomic status.
- The difference in scores for students in poor buildings can be as high as 17 percentile rank points.

In order to move children out of crowded classrooms, crumbling school buildings and portable trailers, and position Maryland as a global leader in education, the Kopp Commission recommended that the State adopt a \$250 million annual minimum for public school construction in order to reach the \$2 billion investment that Maryland schools required.

"There is no better time to increase support for school construction than now when there is such a need for more and better schools and for jobs in Maryland," said Treasurer Nancy Kopp. "As the State's Chief Investment Officer, I salute the Governor for taking advantage of this 'perfect

moment' of low interest rates and lower costs of construction and materials and a real need for new jobs. I am delighted to join Governor O'Malley at the new Germantown Elementary School today - six years after the O'Malley-Brown team pledge, at this very spot, - to build on our shared vision of strong schools for every student."

In 2010, during his campaign for re-election, Governor O'Malley stood once again at Germantown Elementary to declare the Administration's commitment to school construction as a new school was being built to replace the old one. The Governor promised to secure \$1 billion more funds for school construction.

Today, the Governor stood at Germantown Elementary -now completely rebuilt as a brand new, modern school building—to announce yet another year of record investment for school construction in Maryland, continuing the Administration's unwavering commitment to rebuilding classrooms and giving children the tools they need to build a better future. These record investments, with the help of the Maryland General Assembly, have enabled schools across Maryland to open the doors to facilities featuring state-of-the-art smart boards, technology labs, naturally-lit classrooms and green building features that provide a positive learning environment for children.

"Our focus this session is making strategic investments to stimulate private sector job creation," said Speaker Busch. "Government spending on capital projects like school construction is one of the best investments we can

families of murder victims. The system remains broken and it's time for Maryland to end capital punishment and re-focus its resources on crime prevention and helping victims cope with violent crime."

Maryland's death penalty is among the most racially infected in the country. A 2003 study by a University of Maryland researcher found that when the death penalty is sought, blacks who kill whites are 2.5 times more likely to be sentenced to death than whites who kill whites, and 3.5 times more likely than blacks who kill

blacks. The five prisoners currently on death row and the five prisoners executed since the death penalty was reinstated in Maryland in 1978 were all convicted of killing white Marylanders. Yet every year, three quarters of Maryland murder victims are black.

"Racial bias continues to infect the Maryland death penalty system," said Gerald Stansbury, president of the NAACP Maryland State Conference. "This cannot be tolerated in a state committed to equal justice for all."

Washington DC Building Trades VANCE Ayres.

Since taking office, the O'Malley-Brown Administration has continued its commitment to quality public education, making strategic and record investments in K-12 education even while cutting a record \$6.8 billion from the state budget over five years. For three years in a row, Maryland's public schools have been certified as number-one in the nation by Education Week magazine. In August 2010, Maryland became one of 12 states and jurisdictions to receive a federal Race to the Top grant award. The State was highlighted in the 2011 Quality Counts report that examines states' responses to the new economic realities for providing funding protections for K-12, not waiving funding protections, not loosening regulations on class size, or relaxing rules on time in school. For three years in a row, Maryland has also led the nation in the percentage of graduating seniors that had taken and passed an AP exam according to the College Board. For four years in a row, the Administration froze tuition at public colleges and universities, and has since held tuition increases to just three percent, making the dream of a college education more affordable for more families. In an unprecedented effort, Maryland is bringing together new players from business, government, and research communities to open doors for STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) careers for college graduates, and provide opportunities for high school and college students to gain practical STEM experience outside the classroom.

It is clear from infrastructure investments like this that the O'Malley Brown Administration understands the impact the projects will have on jobs and our economy, particularly for the construction industry that has been one of the hardest hit during the recession," said Executive Secretary/Treasurer of the

Washington DC Building Trades VANCE Ayres. Since taking office, the O'Malley-Brown Administration has continued its commitment to quality public education, making strategic and record investments in K-12 education even while cutting a record \$6.8 billion from the state budget over five years. For three years in a row, Maryland's public schools have been certified as number-one in the nation by Education Week magazine. In August 2010, Maryland became one of 12 states and jurisdictions to receive a federal Race to the Top grant award. The State was highlighted in the 2011 Quality Counts report that examines states' responses to the new economic realities for providing funding protections for K-12, not waiving funding protections, not loosening regulations on class size, or relaxing rules on time in school. For three years in a row, Maryland has also led the nation in the percentage of graduating seniors that had taken and passed an AP exam according to the College Board. For four years in a row, the Administration froze tuition at public colleges and universities, and has since held tuition increases to just three percent, making the dream of a college education more affordable for more families. In an unprecedented effort, Maryland is bringing together new players from business, government, and research communities to open doors for STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) careers for college graduates, and provide opportunities for high school and college students to gain practical STEM experience outside the classroom.