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Health and Government
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Chair, Health Occupations and Long
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Dear Neighbor,

Thank you for the privilege of representing you as your District 16 Delegate to Maryland's General Assembly. It has been a busy but productive session. I am proud of the progress we made to advance a strong economy, secure a healthy environment, and keep our schools safe and successful.

This year, I served as a Subcommittee Chair on the Health and Government Operations Committee and Chair of the Health Occupations & Long Term Care Subcommittee. I also served as President of the Women Legislators of Maryland, the bipartisan group of sixty women in both the House and Senate. We had an incredibly successful year passing 10 pieces of priority legislation. In addition, I served as House Chair of the Joint Committee on Children, Youth and Families where we finally saw a significant investment in our state child care subsidy program. And lastly, I served as Chair of the Montgomery County Economic Development Committee in which we made great strides promoting economic opportunity in Montgomery County.

Here is an overview of the recently concluded 2018 legislative session:

The State Budget

The Maryland General Assembly overwhelmingly passed a balanced budget that adequately funds our education formulas and includes an additional \$200 million in a reserve fund for new education programs. My colleagues and I blocked Governor Hogan's proposed cuts to support services for people who are disabled and to behavioral health services, and fully funded the State Retirement and Pension System by requiring an additional payment of \$75 million. Maryland maintained its AAA Bond rating, making our state one of only eleven states with this coveted endorsement.

Our budget includes a \$500,000 grant for **A Wider Circle** so they can renovate their Community Service Center in Bethesda, and final investments in the construction of the Biomedical Sciences and Engineering Education Building at the Universities at Shady Grove. Together with Senator Lee, Delegate Korman, and Delegate Frick, we obtained money for various District 16 local programs. Among these projects were \$75,000 for the **National Center for Children and Families**, \$75,000 for security upgrades at the **Bender Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington**, and \$200,000 for North Bethesda's **Josiah Henson Park**.

For eight years, I have worked to strengthen Maryland's child care subsidy program. **HB 430: Education - Child Care Subsidies - Mandatory Funding Levels**, is the work product of three years of hearings by the Joint Committee on Children, Youth and Families, which I chair. It helps achieve

our goals by requiring annual funding for the child care subsidy program every year. At approximately \$14,000 per year, Maryland's child care costs are the fifth highest in the country, and this bill will improve access to child care for hardworking families and parents.

Education

The *Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education* has been meeting since late 2016. The Commission published recommendations including updating Maryland's education funding, ensuring universal access to public and private preschool, providing financial incentives for well-performing students to become teachers, new plans and pathways for Maryland students, and establishing an independent organization to implement the proposals. The result of some of these recommendations was **HB 1415: *Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education***, which includes several pilot programs to better our education system.

This session I was proud to reintroduce **HB 251: *Education - Family Life and Human Sexuality Curriculum - Boundaries and Consent***, legislation providing that age-appropriate instruction on consent and personal boundaries be taught in our schools' sex education classes. Education about consent is a method of sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention. After hearing heartfelt testimony from numerous middle and high school student leaders about the importance of consent education, this bill passed, making Maryland a national leader.

In 2008, when the State approved casino gambling, the State's share of gambling revenue was promised to our students to improve our schools; however, it was never required by law. This session, I was happy to co-sponsor **HB 1697: *Education - Commercial Gaming Revenues - Constitutional Amendment***, which amends Maryland's Constitution to ensure that the state's share of gambling revenue is used for our public schools. This bill, unanimously passed by the Senate and approved by the House, will provide \$500 million for our schools, and put us on the path to ensuring all students have a great public school no matter where they live.

In this legislative session we have had great success with **HB 679: *Public Schools - School Year - Completion Date***. This bill, which I proudly co-sponsored, changes the requirement for all Maryland public schools to complete their school year on or before the third Friday of June, instead of June 15. This gives Montgomery County and other jurisdictions more flexibility with their school calendars.

Gun Violence Prevention

In the wake of the Parkland school shooting and the ensuing grassroots movement in support of commonsense gun safety legislation, we passed a number of important pieces of legislation to help reduce gun violence. **HB 1646: *Criminal Procedure - Firearms - Transfer***, which establishes a procedure for ensuring that **convicted domestic abusers must turn in their guns**, passed overwhelmingly through the House and Senate. I was pleased to support this legislation and will continue fighting to make sure domestic violence survivors are protected from gun violence.

After the Las Vegas shooting, the federal government failed to pass any meaningful legislation. Thankfully, here in Maryland, we enacted **HB 888: *Criminal Law - Firearm Crimes - Rapid Fire Trigger Activator***, legislation **banning** rapid fire trigger activators such as **bump stocks**. These devices are intended to rapidly increase the firing of semiautomatic weapons and to injure and kill

large numbers of people. The tragic shooting in Las Vegas is an example of the carnage that these weapons can inflict; they have no place on our streets.

Additionally, I supported **HB 819: *Public Safety – Handgun Permit Review Board – Appeals***, which will repeal the Handgun Permit Review Board, a Board made of several political appointees which determines whether to overrule the Maryland State Police when they deny gun-carrying permits. Many have worried over the Board members' greater interest in their own pro-gun philosophies, rather than enforcing Maryland's existing laws and statutes. Repealing this board will allow competent judges to evaluate these cases.

Finally the Assembly passed **HB 1302: *Public Safety - Extreme Risk Prevention Orders***. This bill allows certain individuals to petition for extreme risk prevention orders in the courts, and for courts to grant them after careful consideration. **People who have been determined to be an extreme risk and subject to these orders must surrender any guns in their possession.** Numerous gun violence survivors have testified that laws like this could have prevented mass shootings. I support keeping guns out of the hands of those who pose a danger to themselves and to others.

Public Health & Working Families

This year I sponsored **HB 1312: *Health Insurance - Medicaid Buy-in Task Force***. As health care costs in Maryland continue to rise and the federal health care laws remain unstable, it is vital that we explore all possible options to provide affordable health care coverage for Marylanders. Health insurance premiums in the individual market are increasing at an alarming rate, making it difficult for those who do not qualify for subsidized premiums to remain insured. One potential solution would be to offer an option for individuals and families to purchase a plan within our existing Medicaid program. The Task Force will provide valuable information on the feasibility of this project. This important legislation was included in the larger **HB 1782: *Maryland Health Care Access Act of 2018***.

I have written to you many times about my work in Annapolis pursuing Paid Family and Medical Leave. In December, as Chair of the Task Force to Study Family and Medical Leave Insurance, we published recommendations on how Maryland can implement and manage a state-run, employee-funded insurance fund. This session, Senator Bill Ferguson and I sponsored **SB 859/HB 775: *State Employees - Parental Leave***, which will provide state employees 12 weeks of paid parental leave. Maryland will lead by example as an employer as we continue to push for paid family and medical leave for all Marylanders.

This year I introduced legislation for Planned Parenthood to help prevent unintended pregnancies. **HB 1283: *Health Insurance - Prescription Contraceptives - Coverage for Single Dispensing***, legislation I sponsored, expands my 2016 **Contraceptive Equity Act** to require insurance to allow women to receive up to 12 months of birth control pills at a time. The research shows that when women have a full year's supply of birth control, unintended pregnancy rates drop by 30%.

To protect our disabled working constituents, **HB 1280: *Maryland Department of Health – Enrollees in the Employed Individuals With Disabilities Program – Demonstration Program*** was introduced by my team members Senator Susan Lee and Delegate Marc Korman. The bill will allow folks enrolled in the Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program, who would otherwise qualify

for the Rare and Expensive Case Management Program, to receive private nursing care while holding outside employment.

Environment & Transportation

During this session, there were many proposals aimed at cleaning up our environment and strengthening Maryland's environmental protections. The Forest Conservation Act could be one of Maryland's best tools for protecting our state's forests, but as currently written, it is not strong enough. **SB 610: *Task Force on the Forest Conservation Act Offset Policy***, establishes a task force to study the impact of development on forest lands and make recommendations for legislation to preserve forest land and offset forest loss.

Many of you wrote to me over the session about promoting clean energy in Maryland. Two bills were introduced into the Maryland Legislature this session. **HB 1453: *Clean Energy Jobs Act of 2018***, introduced by my seatmate Delegate Bill Frick, would have increased Maryland's renewable energy portfolio standards (the amount of energy required to come from renewable energy sources) to 50% by 2030, and the **HB 878: *100% Clean Renewable Energy Equity Act of 2018***, which would have required 100% clean energy by 2035. Unfortunately both bills were unfavorably reported by the House Economic Matters Committee and did not reach the House floor. I look forward to working on renewable energy legislation next year.

In combating the Trump Administration's attacks on our environment, Maryland took steps to make sure, on the state level, we are still making progress. **HB 3: *Environment - U.S. Climate Alliance - Membership*** requires the Governor to include Maryland as a member of the U.S. Climate Alliance, which was formed by a bipartisan group of Governors and pledges support for the Paris Climate Accord. **HB 1456: *Offshore Drilling Liability Act***, makes companies drilling for oil and gas off Maryland's coast liable for any offshore spills.

On Metro funding, this legislative session saw great accomplishments. My teammate Delegate Marc Korman introduced **HB 372: *Maryland Metro/Transit Funding Act***, and worked tirelessly for its passage through both the House and Senate. The bill establishes a permanent, dedicated funding stream of \$167 million for Metro from the Maryland Transportation Trust Fund, which will be used to perform maintenance, improve service, and upgrade the transit system. I was very pleased to support the bill and work by his side.

Civil Rights & Justice

This session as President of the Women's Caucus, I introduced and we passed landmark legislation addressing sexual harassment. In February, we issued a report with recommendations seeking to strengthen accountability mechanisms, create culture change, and make our reporting process more accessible and confidential. **HB 1342: *State Government - Harassment and Discrimination*** enacts the Women's Caucus recommendations including requiring the use of an independent investigator when sexual harassment or retaliation complaints are made against a legislator, prohibiting a lobbyist from engaging in sexual harassment, and banning the use of state funds for sexual harassment settlements. The legislation also includes comprehensive data tracking and another piece of legislation which I also sponsored, **HB 1228: *Equal Employment Opportunity Program - Sexual Harassment Reporting*** ensures greater detail in reporting from State agencies.

We also finally passed **HB 301: Repeat Sexual Predator Prevention Act** which allows, in some cases, prior sexual predatory behavior to be used in criminal prosecutions of alleged sex offenders. After 15 years, we will join 37 other states in allowing this kind of evidence.

I was pleased to have had the opportunity to cast my vote in favor of **SB 1028: Youth Mental Health Protection Act**, which prohibits the practice of conversion therapy for minors who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, or transgender. Conversion therapy is a pseudoscience that tries to change an individual's sexual orientation and gender identity, usually through harmful and abusive methods. It has no basis in actual therapy or medicine, and existing medical and mental health professionals condemn it. These practices do nothing but harm young LGBTQ people, negatively impact their health, and promote depression, drug and alcohol abuse, psychological harm, and even suicidal behavior. No one should be subjected to this practice, least of all minors.

One exciting piece of legislation that passed this session, **HB 797: Correctional Services - Inmates - Menstrual Hygiene Products**, requires that correctional facilities provide free sanitary products for inmates. I was a proud cosponsor and voted in favor of this bill. This bill is about dignity; no woman deserves to go without the essential products she needs.

This session, I also voted for **SB 1048: Secure and Accessible Registration Act**, which was approved by both chambers and allows individuals to register to vote at their polling places on Election Day. This proposed amendment to the Maryland Constitution will promote higher voter turnout and greater participation in our democracy. The constitutional amendment must be approved by the voters before it will go into effect, and I hope that Marylanders will endorse this measure.

While it was a very productive session, I look forward to continuing this work during the summer. Once again, thank you for putting your trust in me to be your voice in Annapolis. I appreciate each phone call and email you send throughout the year. If you have any questions about the legislation I mentioned, other policy ideas, or my legislative scholarship, please do not hesitate to call my office at (301) 858-3642 or email me at ariana.kelly@house.state.md.us.

Have a wonderful spring and summer.

All the best,



Delegate Ariana Kelly
District 16