



IN REACH, INC.

2017 ACTIVISM TOOLKIT

A Guide on How to Use Your Voice
in Prince George's County, Maryland

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ABOUT IN REACH, INC.



Preparing Students for College, Work & Life

Founded in December 1999, **IN REACH** is a youth-driven, community-focused 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit organization positioned to respond to the unmet developmental and academic needs of children and youth living in Prince George's County, Maryland.

Mission: **IN REACH** believes that students should always be in reach of a quality education, opportunities in their communities for development and, ultimately, their dreams. In order for **IN REACH** to be successful at helping students reach this goal, it prepares them for college, work and life.

Vision: **IN REACH** envisions healthy, productive and prepared young adults in every family.

IN REACH fulfills its mission through a combination of efforts organized in three core strategic areas—advocacy, outreach, and public engagement; direct services; and special initiatives—to:

- Engage students in academic-based programs and opportunities,
- Advocate for the improvement of all systems affecting children and youth particularly public education, and
- Create forums for interested parties serving children, youth and their families, to share in the exchange of ideas and information.

Guiding Principles

- Caring adults who value children and youth
- Safe places for youth to learn and live, gather and socialize
- A healthy start for all children with appropriate supports into young adulthood
- Meaningful educational experiences
- Opportunities to help others through service learning

Key Strategies

Strategy I: Outreach/Public Engagement. **IN REACH** is committed to raising awareness and engaging stakeholders in the issues that currently challenge its mission. We advocate by creating, collecting and disseminating information and uniting voices to speak on behalf of children, youth and their families.

Strategy II: Direct Services. **IN REACH's** direct services are at the heart of everything we do. **IN REACH** programs engage youth in opportunities that will prepare them for college, work and life.

Strategy III: Special Initiatives. **IN REACH** values collaboration and engages in and initiates special projects to advance its mission and fulfill its vision.

Call to Action

This Activism toolkit is intended to empower you to become a citizen advocate in your community. This guide offers advice for communicating with policymakers, making your voice heard, and ensuring your advocacy is effective and efficient. Use the resources to support your efforts and make the most of your time as an advocate. The more legislators hear from their constituents, the better able they are to recognize the need to prioritize issues.

The toolkit is divided into five sections. In Section II, various types of advocacy are briefly described. The remainder of the manual focuses on advocacy. Section III describes the voting process, Prince George's County Legislature, the Government structure of Maryland, committees, and the process of "How a Bill Becomes a Law in Maryland". In Section IV, advocates can learn how to most successfully affect the legislative process. Then, in Section V, specific guidelines describe the best practices to use when communicating with elected officials. Tips for writing letters to elected officials and visits to public office are given in great detail as well as tips for utilizing the media and writing letters to the editor. Finally, the appendix includes advocacy resources such as other organizations that can help you become a citizen advocate.

After reading this toolkit, you will hopefully feel more comfortable meeting and interacting with your councilmember and other local public officials. Getting started is the hardest part! Once you become an active citizen advocate, you will soon realize how approachable legislators are and how easy it can be to affect change!

Section I: Understanding Advocacy



WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

- ADVOCACY IS WHEN ONE PERSON HELPS ANOTHER TO HAVE THEIR VIEWS, OPINIONS AND CONCERNS HEARD BY OTHERS.
- ADVOCACY IS FOR PEOPLE WHO FIND IT DIFFICULT TO GET THEIR OPINIONS ABOUT THEMSELVES AND THEIR ISSUES LISTENED TO.
- ADVOCACY IS ABOUT GIVING YOU REAL CONTROL OVER YOUR LIFE TO HELP YOU MAKE YOUR OWN CHOICES AND INFORMED DECISIONS.

Making the connection!

Advocacy is a huge basket that can be filled with many fruits. Before you can begin your journey in working to provide positive change within your community, you must first understand how the machine works. The elements of advocacy can range from issues of health and education to economics and public budgeting; from matters of family to those of public concern. The easiest way to explore them is to view them through these three forms.

Personal

Personal advocacy is made up of 2 parts; advocacy for yourself and advocacy for your loved ones.

Self-advocacy involves people speaking out for themselves to express their own needs and representing their own interests.

Family/friend advocacy allows a person's family member(s) or friend(s) to play a part in advocating on their behalf. Say for instance you or someone close to you suffered from a particular illness or life changing situation.

Most of us have used or provided this support, at some time in our lives, whether we realize it or not.

Public

Public advocacy gives you the opportunity to use your personal knowledge and experience to help educate the general public about the overall needs of community/society. This is where people come together to represent shared interests or goals by offering mutual support, skill development and a common call for change with the intention of developing or changing services.

Public Policy

Public Policy is likely to be the most well-known type of advocacy because it deals with changing systems; essentially, the way things are structured. Instead of focusing on the immediate needs of an individual party, you work together with others in your community for long term social change that will benefit numerous individuals. Most of this toolkit is focused on equipping you with the information you need to become an effective public policy advocate.

Section II: Understanding Government

In order to be involved in effective public policy advocacy, it is important to grasp the workings of your Local, State, and National government. Knowing the structure and processes of the government will allow you to know where your work fits into the bigger picture. Below you will find information on how and when to vote for representatives, contact information for your local and state representatives, and an introduction to the Maryland legislative process.

Power of Voice: Voting, Registration and the Electoral Process

Voting in any type of election, from local to presidential, is the simplest way for you to voice your opinion in politics. Familiarizing yourself with policies and candidates also helps you to nurture your future by electing representatives who will fight for issues you find important.

Voting Eligibility Checklist for Residents of Maryland

In order to register, you must:

- ✓ Be a U.S. citizen
- ✓ Be a Maryland resident
- ✓ Be at least 16 years old*
- ✓ **NOT** be disqualified to vote by a court (due to mental incompetency)
- ✓ **NOT** have been convicted of buying or selling votes
- ✓ **NOT** have been convicted of a felony, or if you have, you have completed serving a court ordered sentence of imprisonment, including any term of parole or probation for the conviction



***You may register to vote if you are at least 16 years old but cannot vote unless you will be at least 18 years old by the next general election.**

Where Can I Register?

You may complete a voter registration application in person at:

- Your local board of elections
- The State Board of Elections
- The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- The Department of Social Services
- The Motor Vehicle Administration
- Offices on Aging
- The MTA ParaTransit Certification Office
- All public institutions of higher education
- Recruitment offices of the U.S. Armed Forces
- Marriage License offices
- Offices for students with disabilities at all Maryland colleges and universities

Registration through the Mail

If you wish to register through the mail, you may print a voter registration application from http://www.elections.state.md.us/voter_registration/application.html or contact your local board of elections or the State Board of Elections to request an application.

Prince George's County Board of Elections	Maryland State Board of Elections
1100 Mercantile Lane, Suite 115A Largo, MD 20774 Alisha Alexander, Election Director 301-341-7300 301-341-7391 (Fax) http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/sites/elections Email: election@co.pg.md.us	151 West Street, Suite 200 Annapolis, MD 21401 <i>Office hours: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.</i> Mailing Address: P.O. Box 6486 Annapolis, MD 21401-0486 Phone: 410-269-2840 Toll Free: 800-222-8683 Fax: 410-974-2019, 410-974-5415, 410-974-5126 http://www.elections.state.md.us/about/feedback.html Email: info.sbe@maryland.gov

What Information will I need to bring?

In addition to basic identifying information, federal law requires that you must provide a Maryland driver's license or MVA ID Card number or, if you do not have a driver's license number, at least the last four digits of your social security number on your voter registration application. Your application will **NOT** be processed unless you provide this information or affirm, under penalty of perjury, that you do not have a driver's license or social security number.

How do I affiliate with a political party?

You have the option to register with any of Maryland's recognized political parties. If you do not choose to register with a party, you will be considered as "Unaffiliated." If registered as unaffiliated, you will generally not be able to vote in primary elections, but you will be able to vote in any nonpartisan primary election held in your jurisdiction, such as a primary election to select nominees for the board of education. The recognized political parties in Maryland are the Democratic, Republican, Green, and Libertarian parties.

How do I verify my registration?

You are considered a registered voter when you receive your Voter Notification Card from your local board of elections. If you do not receive your card three weeks after you submit an application, you should contact your local board of elections. Registration is permanent as long as you continue to live in Maryland and keep your name and address current with your local board of elections. You do not have to re-register when you move within the State, but you must keep your address current.

How do I update my voter registration?

You must notify the local board of elections where you currently live if your voter registration information has changed. If you complete a change of address form at the MVA, this information will be sent to your local board of elections for processing, unless you indicate that you do not want to change your voter registration information. You can also send changes on a voter registration application or on any other signed written notice. If you do not receive a Voter Notification Card with your updated information three weeks after you submit information, you should contact the local board of elections where you now live to ensure that your records are up-to-date.



When to vote: Statewide & county elections

- **Primary Elections**

Next primary election: June 26, 2018.

In Presidential Election years: held on 4th Tuesday in April (2020, 2024)

In Gubernatorial Election years: held on last Tuesday in June (2018, 2022)

- **General Elections**

Next General Election: November 8, 2016.

In even-numbered years: held on the Tuesday after 1st Monday in November (2016, 2018)

Offices to appear on Ballot November 2016:

Federal Offices

President/ Vice President of the United States

Representatives in Congress

- One seat in congress,
- 8 seats in the House of Representatives (one per district)

State Offices

4 Judges of the 7th Circuit Court in Prince George's County

3 Judges of the Court of Special Appeals - For retention in office. Only on General Election Ballot

2 Judges of the Court of Appeals - For retention in office. Only on General Election Ballot

County Offices

5 seats on The Prince George's County Board of Education

Proposed amendment: The amendment must be approved by a majority of voters to be approved.

Amendment	Description
Maryland Appointments and Special Elections to Fill a Vacancy	Establishes criteria and requirements for filling a vacancy for the offices of U.S. senator, attorney general, and comptroller

Who's Who in Prince George's County

County Council

The Legislative Branch on the county level exists in the form of the County Council. All legislative powers of the County are vested in the County Council. In addition, the County Council sits as the District Council on zoning and land use matters, and as the Board of Health on health policy matters. The County Council meets as a legislative body at 10:00 a.m. every Tuesday in the Council Hearing Room on the main floor of the County Administration Building in Upper Marlboro. For more information, visit <http://pgccouncil.us/>

All County Council sessions are open to the public, and citizens are encouraged to attend.

Use the chart below to find your county council representative based on where you live. Call or email him or her to introduce yourself.

District	Constituent Areas	Council Member	Contact
1	Adelphi, Beltsville, Calverton, College Park, Laurel, Montpelier, South Laurel, Vansville, West Laurel	Mary A. Lehman	Phone: 301.952.3887 Fax: 301.952.4801 Email: councildistrict1@co.pg.md.us
2	Adelphi, Avondale, Brentwood, Carole Highlands, Chillum, Green Meadows, Hyattsville, Langley Park, Lewisdale, Mount Rainier, North Brentwood	Deni Taveras	Phone: 301.952.4436 Fax: 301.952.5554 Email: dltaveras@co.pg.md.us
3	Beacon Heights, Berwyn Heights, College Heights Estates, College Park, East Pines, Glenn Dale, Glenridge, Landover Hills, Lanham, New Carrollton, Riverdale Heights and Hills, Riverdale Park, Seabrook, Templeton Knolls, University Park, West Lanham Hills, Woodlawn	Dannielle M. Glaros, <i>Chair</i>	Phone: 301.952.3060 Fax: 301.952.4904 Email: dmglaros@co.pg.md.us
4	Bowie, Glenn Dale, Greenbelt, Westchester Park, parts of Lanham-Seabrook, Upper Marlboro	Todd M. Turner, Esq. <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Phone: 301.952.3094 Fax: 301.952.4910 Email: tmtturner@co.pg.md.us, district4@co.pg.md.us
5	Bladensburg, Cheverly, Edmonston, Fairmount Heights, Glenarden, Landover, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, Mitchellville	Andrea Harrison	Phone: 301.952.3864 Fax: 301.952.5885 Email: councildistrict5@co.pg.md.us
6	South Bowie, Capitol Heights, District Heights, Forestville, Kettering, Largo, Mitchellville, Upper Marlboro	Derrick Leon Davis	Phone: 301. 952.3426 Fax: 301.952.4351 Email:

District	Constituent Areas	Council Member	Contact
			councildistrict6@co.pg.md.us
7	Capitol Heights, District Heights, Hillcrest Heights, Marlow Heights, Seat Pleasant, Suitland, Temple Hills and portions of Forestville and Oxon Hill	Karen R. Toles	Phone: 301.952.3690 Email: KRToles@co.pg.md.us
8	Camp Springs, Clinton, Forest Heights, Fort Washington, Glass Manor, Marlow Heights, Oxon Hill, Temple Hills	Obie Patterson	Phone: 301.952.3860 Fax: 301.952.4821 Email: councildistrict8@co.pg.md.us
9	Accokeek, Andrews Air Force Base, Aquasco, Baden, Brandywine, Camp Springs, Cheltenham, Clinton, Croom, Eagle Harbor, Fort Washington, Piscataway, Upper Marlboro	Mel Franklin	Tel: 301.952.3820 Fax: 301.952.5275 Email: mfranklin@co.pg.md.us

*** All councilmembers can be reached at the following address:**

14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
County Council, 2nd Floor
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

STANDING COMMITTEES

Appointed by County Council Chair

Health, Education & Human Services Committee

Sandra A. Eubanks, *Director* (301) 952-5353; e-mail: saeubanks@co.pg.md.us

Karen R. Toles, *Chair (1-year term)*

Deni L. Taveras, *Vice-Chair*

Derrick Leon Davis; Jamel R. (Mel) Franklin; Dannielle M. Glaros.

Planning, Zoning & Economic Development Committee

Jacqueline W. Brown, *Director* (301) 952-3718; e-mail: jwbrown@co.pg.md.us

Andrea C. Harrison, *Chair (1-year term)*

Dannielle M. Glaros, *Vice-Chair*

Jamel R. (Mel) Franklin; Deni L. Taveras; Karen R. Toles.

Public Safety & Fiscal Management Committee

Howard W. Stone, *Director* (301) 952-3695; e-mail: hwstone@co.pg.md.us

Jamel R. (Mel) Franklin, *Chair (1-year term)*

Obie Patterson, *Vice-Chair*

Andrea C. Harrison; Mary A. Lehman; Todd M. Turner.

Rules & General Assembly Committee

Jennifer A. Jenkins, *Director* (301) 952-3463; e-mail: jajenkins@co.pg.md.us

Dannielle M. Glaros, *Chair* (1-year term)

Andrea C. Harrison, *Vice-Chair*

Obie Patterson; Karen R. Toles; Todd M. Turner.

Transportation, Housing & The Environment Committee

Hawi Sanu, *Director* (301) 952-3698; e-mail: hsanu@co.pg.md.us

Todd M. Turner, *Chair* (1-year term)

Deni L. Taveras, *Vice-Chair*

Derrick Leon Davis; Mary A. Lehman; Obie Patterson.

Commissions and Boards:

Prince George's County has fifty commissions and boards charged with various responsibilities in specific areas. Below are a few commissions relevant to youth and education. Consider getting involved with a board or commission by attending meetings and contacting members to make a difference in your community. For more information and for information on the dozens of other boards and commissions in Prince George's County, visit <http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/456/Boards-Commissions>.

Commission for Children, Youth and Families	Mission: to enhance the quality of life for children, youth, and families in Prince George's County, Maryland. This encompasses planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating a comprehensive, integrated human service delivery system for children, youth, and families in Prince George's County, Maryland and building on their capacity to be self-sufficient, safe, and healthy. Website: http://www.pgclmb.org/
Commission for Education Excellence	Charged with the evaluation of innovative programs, policies, and initiatives targeted towards improving the educational achievement of all County students; the engagement of the community to enhance the image of Prince George's County Public Schools; and the alignment of County resources to improve support for school system needs. Website: http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/657/Commission-for-Education-Excellence
Park & Recreation Advisory Board	Makes recommendations to the County Executive, the County Council, and the Prince George's County Planning Board, relative to planning and conducting a diversified park and recreation program in Prince George's County.
Social Services	Advises the local director and the State Board as to the local application of State policies or procedures. It is the goal of this board to be well informed on local departmental activities and to communicate comprehensive information as to the objectives, policies, programs and problems of local social services and public assistance administration to the residents of the County.
Commission for Individuals With Disabilities	Mission: to bring together businesses, citizens, and the government of Prince George's County to discuss and resolve disability issues in the County. Website: http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/698/Commission-for-Individuals-With-Disabili

Prince George's County Board of Education

Address: 14201 School Lane, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Phone: 301.952.6115

Fax: 301.952.6114

The local school board is a critical public link to public schools. In Prince George's county, School board members are elected. You can have a voice in your child's education by electing school board members that you feel will serve your community and your child best. School board members serve their communities in several important ways:

- School boards focus on education at the local district level, designed to represent the public's voice in public education in communities and schools
- The board sets the standard for achievement in your district, making decisions about what students should know and be able to do at each grade level
- In compliance with state and federal laws, school boards establish policies and regulations by which their local schools are governed.
- School boards are accessible to the public and accountable for the performance of their schools.

Public Participation in Board Meetings and Hearings

The Board of Education welcomes members of the public to speak at its public board meetings and hearings regarding meeting agenda items and on education in general. The Board of Education allows 45 minutes for Public Comment at each regularly scheduled Board of Education Meeting. Members of the public may provide public comment in one of three ways:

1. Sign up to speak in person online registration form at https://docs.google.com/a/pgcps.org/forms/d/1H6IXNOo8mVG2wX_5hzHik2Pf_5JBR34Lapqd-dPLjDo/viewform?c=0&w=1
2. Call the Board Members' Office at (301) 952-6115 and register to speak in person.
3. Email your comments to testimony@pgcps.org.

You must register to speak (either online or via telephone) at least 2 and 1/2 hours prior to the scheduled meeting start time. You will have exactly 3 minutes to address the Board and you may not yield your time to another party. Attending board meetings shows the board members that you care about the work they do for your child's academic achievement and also holds them accountable.

You can also watch board of education meetings live online at <http://www1.pgcps.org/Board-of-Education/Board-of-Education-TV/> to get an idea of how meetings are run. It is useful to watch agenda meetings before you testify to be sure that you are testifying on a relevant topic.

Below is a list of board of education members. Feel free to contact your district board member regarding issues related to school policy.

Position	Member	Email
Chair	Segun C. Eubanks, Ed.D.	segun.eubanks@pgcps.org
District 1 Member	Zabrina Epps, M.P.M	zabrina.epps@pgcps.org
District 1 Schools: Beltsville Academy, Bond Mill Elementary, Buck Lodge Middle, Calverton Elementary, Catherine T. Reed Elementary, Cherokee Lane Elementary, Chesapeake Math & IT PC – Elementary, Chesapeake Math and IT PC – North, Deerfield Run Elementary, DuVal High, Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle, High Point High, James E. Duckworth Regional, James H. Harrison Elementary, Laurel Elementary, Laurel High, Martin Luther King Jr. Middle, Montpelier Elementary, Oaklands Elementary, Robert Goddard Montessori, Scotchtown Hills Elementary, Vansville Elementary		
District 2 Member	Lupi Quinteros-Grady	lupi.grady@pgcps.org
District 2 Schools: Berwyn Heights Elementary, Carrollton Elementary, Charles Carroll Middle, College Park Academy, Dora Kennedy French Immersion, Eleanor Roosevelt High, Greenbelt Elementary, Greenbelt Middle, Hollywood Elementary, Junior Achievement® Finance Park, Lamont Elementary, Magnolia Elementary, Margaret Brent Regional, Paint Branch Elementary, Parkdale High, Riverdale Elementary, Robert Frost Elementary, Springhill Lake Elementary, Turning Point Academy Public Charter, William Wirt Middle		
District 3 Member	Dinora A. Hernandez, Esq.	dinora.hernandez@pgcps.org
District 3 Schools: Adelphi Elementary, Carole Highlands Elementary, César Chávez Dual Spanish Immersion, Chillum Elementary, Cool Spring Elementary, Crossland Evening High, Edward M. Felegy Elementary, Hyattsville Elementary, Hyattsville Middle, International High School at Langley Park, Langley Park-McCormick Elementary, Lewisdale Elementary, Mary Harris Mother Jones Elementary, Mt. Rainier Elementary, Nicholas Orem Middle, Northwestern Evening High, Northwestern High, Ridgecrest Elementary, Rosa L. Parks Elementary, Thomas S. Stone Elementary, University Park Elementary		
District 4 Member	Patricia Eubanks	patricia.eubanks@pgcps.org
District 4 Schools: Annapolis Road Academy Alternative High, Ardmore Elementary, Beacon Heights Elementary, Bladensburg Elementary, Bladensburg High, Charles H. Flowers High, Columbia Park Elementary, Community Based Classroom, Cooper Lane Elementary, Dodge Park Elementary, EXCEL Academy Public Charter, Fairmont Heights High, Gaywood Elementary, Gladys Noon Spellman Elementary, Glenarden Woods Elementary @ Robert Goddard, Glenn Dale Elementary, Glenridge Elementary, James McHenry Elementary, Judge Sylvania W. Woods Elementary, Kenmoor Middle, Port Towns Elementary, Robert R. Gray Elementary, Rogers Heights Elementary, Seabrook Elementary, Templeton Elementary, Thomas Johnson Middle, Woodridge Elementary		
District 5 Member	Verjeana M. Jacobs	verjeana.jacobs@pgcps.org
District 5 Schools: Benjamin Tasker Middle, Bowie High, C. Elizabeth Rieg Regional, Heather Hills Elementary, High Bridge Elementary, Imagine Foundations at Leeland Public Charter School, Kenilworth Elementary, Kingsford Elementary, Northview Elementary, Patuxent Elementary, Pointer Ridge Elementary, Rockledge Elementary, Samuel Ogle Middle, Tall Oaks High, Tulip Grove Elementary @ Meadowbrook, Whitehall Elementary, Woodmore Elementary, Yorktown Elementary		
District 6, Vice-Chair	Carolyn M. Boston	carolyn.boston@pgcps.org

District 6 Schools: Academy of Health Sciences at Prince George's Community College, Capitol Heights Elementary, Carmody Hills Elementary, Central High, Concord Elementary, Cora L. Rice Elementary, Doswell E. Brooks Elementary, Ernest Everett Just Middle, Francis Scott Key Elementary, G. James Gholson Middle, H. Winship Wheatley Early Childhood Center, Highland Park Elementary, International High School at Largo, John H. Bayne Elementary, Judith P. Hoyer Montessori, Kettering Elementary, Kettering Middle, Lake Arbor Elementary, Largo High, Perrywood Elementary, Phyllis E. Williams Spanish Immersion, Seat Pleasant Elementary, Thomas G. Pullen K-8 Creative and Performing Arts School, Walker Mill Middle, William Paca Elementary, William W. Hall Academy		
District 7 Member	K. Alexander Wallace	kalexander.wallace@pgcps.org
District 7 Schools : Andrew Jackson Academy, Arrowhead Elementary, Barack Obama Elementary, Benjamin Foulis Creative and Performing Arts K-8, Benjamin Stoddert Middle, Bradbury Heights Elementary, District Heights Elementary, Dr. Henry A. Wise Jr. High, Drew-Freeman Middle, Imagine Foundations at Morningside Public Charter School, Imagine Lincoln Public Charter, Longfields Elementary, North Forestville Elementary, Overlook Spanish Immersion, Princeton Elementary, Samuel P. Massie Academy, Suitland Elementary, Suitland High, William Beanes Elementary		
District 8 Member	Edward Burroughs III	Edward3.Burroughs@pgcps.org
District 8 Schools: Allenwood Elementary, Apple Grove Elementary, Avalon Elementary, Barnaby Manor Elementary, Crossland High, Flintstone Elementary, Forest Heights Elementary, Fort Foote Elementary, Friendly High, Glassmanor Elementary, Green Valley Academy at Edgar Allan Poe, Hillcrest Heights Elementary, Indian Queen Elementary, Isaac J. Gourdine Middle, J. Frank Dent Elementary, James Ryder Randall Elementary, John Hanson Montessori, Maya Angelou French Immersion, Oxon Hill Elementary, Oxon Hill High, Oxon Hill Middle, Panorama Elementary, Potomac High, Rose Valley Elementary, Samuel Chase Elementary, Tayac Elementary, Thurgood G. Marshall Middle, Valley View Elementary		
District 9 Member	Sonya Williams	sonya3.williams@pgcps.org
District 9 Schools: Accokeek Academy, Baden Elementary, Brandywine Elementary, Chesapeake Math & IT PC – South, Clinton Grove Elementary, Croom High, Fort Washington Forest Elementary, Francis T. Evans Elementary, Frederick Douglass High, Gwynn Park High, Gwynn Park Middle, Imagine Andrews Public Charter, James Madison Middle, Marlton Elementary, Mattaponi Elementary, Melwood Elementary, Potomac Landing Elementary, Rosaryville Elementary, Stephen Decatur Middle, Surrattsville High, Tanglewood Regional, Waldon Woods Elementary, William S. Schmidt Outdoor Education Center		
Board Member	Beverly Anderson, Ph.D.	beverly.anderson@pgcps.org
Board Member	Mary Kingston Roche	mary.roche@pgcps.org
Board Member	Curtis Valentine, M.P.P	curtis.valentine@pgcps.org
Student Board Member	Ava Perry	ava.perry@pgcps.org

Overview: An Introduction to Maryland State Government

Maryland Executive Branch

The Executive branch implements and enforces Maryland's laws and provides executive direction to government. Its chief officer is the Governor. Maryland's Constitution gives the Governor broad powers

to organize and run state government and requires the Governor to submit each year to the General Assembly a balanced budget for state proceedings.

The current Governor of Maryland, Larry Hogan, was elected in November 2014. Maryland's Lt. Governor is Boyd K. Rutherford. For more information, visit <http://governor.maryland.gov/>

The Maryland General Assembly (Legislative Branch)

The Maryland General Assembly has served nearly continuously from Maryland's founding in 1634. For over 370 years, the Maryland General Assembly has consisted of citizen legislators – part-time elected officials who live and work in their communities. The General Assembly makes laws for the state, may levy taxes, and may reduce or restrict the budget proposed each year by the Governor. For more information, visit <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frm1st.aspx?tab=home>

Marylanders are typically represented by four legislators in the General Assembly – three members of the House of Delegates and one State Senator. You are invited to get to know your legislators by reading about them, calling, emailing, or visiting their offices to introduce yourself. Below are the state representatives of Prince George's county.

Visit <http://mdelect.net/> to find your specific representative based on your address.

District	Representatives	Address	Contact
21	Sen. James C. Rosapepe (D)	James Senate Office Building, Room 314 11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3141, 301.858.3141 jim.rosapepe@senate.state.md.us
	Del. Benjamin S. Barnes (D)	House Office Building, Room 151 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3046, 301.858.3046 ben.barnes@house.state.md.us
	Del. Barbara A. Frush (D)	House Office Building, Room 364 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3114, 301.858.3114 barbara.frush@house.state.md.us
	Del. Joseline Pena-Melnyk (D)	House Office Building, Room 425 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3502, 301.858.3502 joseline.pena.melnyk@house.state.md.us
22	Sen. Paul G. Pinsky (D)	James Senate Office Building, Room 220 11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3155, 301.858.3155 paul.pinsky@senate.state.md.us
	Del. Tawanna P. Gaines (D)	House Office Building, Room 121 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3058, 301.858.3058 tawanna.gaines@house.state.md.us
	Del. Anne Healey (D)	House Office Building, Room 361 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3961, 301.858.3961 anne.healey@house.state.md.us
	Del. Alonzo T. Washington (D)	House Office Building, Room 205 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3652, 301.858.3652

District	Representatives	Address	Contact
23	Sen. Douglas J. J. Peters (D)	James Senate Office Building, Room 120 11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3631, 301.858.3631 douglas.peters@senate.state.md.us
	Del. Geraldine Valentino-Smith (D)	House Office Building, Room 427 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3101, 301.858.3101 geraldine.valentino@house.state.md.us
	Del. Marvin E. Holmes, Jr. (D)	House Office Building, Room 313 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3310, 301.858.3310 marvin.holmes@house.state.md.us
	Del. Joseph F. Vallario, Jr. (D)	House Office Building, Room 101 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3488, 301.858.3488 joseph.vallario@house.state.md.us
24	Sen. Joanne C. Benson (D)	James Senate Office Building, Room 214 11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3148, 301.858.3148 joanne.benson@senate.state.md.us
	Del. Erik L. Barron (D)	House Office Building, Room 216 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3692, 301.858.3692 erik.barron@house.state.md.us
	Del. Carolyn J. B. Howard (D)	House Office Building, Room 301 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3919, 301.858.3919 carolyn.howard@house.state.md.us
	Del. Michael L. Vaughn (D)	House Office Building, Room 423 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3691, 301.858.3691 michael.vaughn@house.state.md.us
25	Sen. Ulysses Currie (D)	Miller Senate Office Building, Room 201 11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3127, 301.858.3127 ulysses.currie@senate.state.md.us
	Del. Angela M. Angel (D)	House Office Building, Room 216 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3707, 301.858.3707 angela.angel@house.state.md.us
	Del. Darryl Barnes (D)	House Office Building, Room 206 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3557, 301.858.3557 darryl.barnes@house.state.md.us
	Del. Dereck E. Davis (D)	House Office Building, Room 231 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3519, 301.858.3519 dereck.davis@house.state.md.us
26	Sen. C. Anthony Muse (D)	Miller Senate Office Building, Room 420 11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3092, 301.858-3092 anthony.muse@senate.state.md.us
	Del. Tony Knotts (D)	House Office Building, Room 204 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3212, 301.858.3212 tony.knotts@house.state.md.us
	Del. Kriselda Valderrama (D)	House Office Building, Room 205 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3210, 301.858.3210 kris.valderrama@house.state.md.us
	Del. Jay Walker (D)	House Office Building, Room 207 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3581, 301.858.3581 e-mail: jay.walker@house.state.md.us
27	Sen. Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. (D)	State House, H-107, Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3700, 301.858.3700 thomas.v.mike.miller@senate.state.md.us

District	Representatives	Address	Contact
			.us
	Del. Elizabeth G. (Susie) Proctor (D)	House Office Building, Room 207 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3083, 301.858.3083 susie.proctor@house.state.md.us
	Del. Michael A. Jackson (D)	House Office Building, Room 204 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3103, 301.858.3103 michael.jackson@house.state.md.us
47	Sen. Victor R. Ramirez (D)	James Senate Office Building, Room 303 11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3745, 301.858.3745 victor.ramirez@senate.state.md.us
	Del. Diana M. Fennell (D)	House Office Building, Room 209 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3478, 301.858.3478 diana.fennell@house.state.md.us
	Del. Jimmy Tarlau (D)	House Office Building, Room 209 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3326, 301.858.3326 jimmy.tarlau@house.state.md.us
	Del. Carlo Sanchez (D)	House Office Building, Room 206 6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401	410.841.3340, 301.858.3340 e-mail: carlo.sanchez@house.state.md.us

Committees

When a bill is introduced in either the Senate or the House, it is sent to a standing committee for study and to receive public comment. The committee makes an initial determination if the proposal should go forward in the legislature. If it votes to do so, the committee can suggest amendments to the bill, approve it for further action by the full Senate or House, or disapprove it. Citizens are encouraged to contact or attend committee meetings and provide their views on proposed bills.

Committees of the Senate

Budget and Taxation Committee considers legislation relating to State operating and capital budgets, including revenues, expenditures, and supplementary appropriations; legislative budgetary procedures; State and county bond authorizations; taxation and property assessments; education financing; and pension and retirement matters.

Chair: Edward J. Kasemeyer (410) 841-3653, (301) 858-3653

Vice Chair: Richard S. Madaleno, Jr. (410) 841-3137, (301) 858-3137

- **Subcommittees:** Capital Budget Subcommittee; Health and Human Resources Subcommittee; Education, Business and Administration Subcommittee; Pensions Subcommittee; Public Safety, Transportation, and Environment Subcommittee.

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee reviews legislation relating to agriculture and land preservation; alcoholic beverages; licensing and regulation of businesses and labor, including business, health and related occupations and professions; education policy; elections; energy; environment; ethics; fire prevention; local government; natural resources; procurement; State government organization, procedures, and administrative law; and veterans affairs.

Chair: Joan Carter Conway (410) 841-3145, (301) 858-3145

Vice Chair: Paul G. Pinsky (410) 841-3155, (301) 858-3155

- **Subcommittees:** Comptroller Issues Subcommittee; Education Subcommittee; Environment Subcommittee; and Health Subcommittee.

Executive Nominations Committee reviews and interviews gubernatorial appointees for all appointments made by the Governor which require Senate advice and consent. The Committee then reports its recommendations on those nominations to the Senate.

Chair: Jamin B. (Jamie) Raskin (410) 841-3634, (301) 858-3634

Vice Chair: Delores G. Kelley (410) 841-3606, (301) 858-3606

Finance Committee reviews legislation relating to banking and financial institutions; credit regulation and consumer financing; economic and community development; and health and welfare matters, as well as bills concerned with horse racing and lotteries; insurance; labor and employment; State personnel issues; social programs; transportation; unemployment insurance; utility regulation; and workers' compensation.

Chair: Thomas M. Middleton (410) 841-3616, (301) 858-3616

Vice Chair: John C. Astle (410) 841-3578, (301) 858-3578

- **Subcommittees:** Health Subcommittee; Property and Casualty Subcommittee and Transportation Subcommittee

Judicial Proceedings Committee is assigned legislation relating to the Administrative Procedures Act; commercial code; constitutional amendments; corrections; criminal and civil laws, penalties, and procedures; equal rights and opportunities; ethics; family law; judicial administration and court structure; juvenile justice; landlord and tenant laws; law enforcement organizations; legal profession; legal rights and immunities; public safety; real property; trusts and estates; and vehicle laws.

Chair: Robert A. Zirkin (410) 841-3131, (301) 858-3131

Vice Chair: Delores G. Kelley (410) 841-3606, (301) 858-3606

Rules Committee considers proposals regarding rules, organization, and procedures of the Senate or the General Assembly. The Committee reviews proposed legislation introduced after the bill introduction deadline in a regular session and determines which of those bills it will refer to standing committees.

Chair: Katherine Klausmeier (410) 841-3593, (301) 858-3593

Vice Chair: James E. DeGrange, Sr. (410) 841-3700, (301) 858-3700

Committees of the House

Appropriations Committee is the House budget committee. It reviews legislation relating to State operating and capital budgets, including supplementary appropriations; State and county bond authorizations; collective bargaining; fiscal procedures; higher education; State personnel and pension matters; and social services.

Chair: Maggie McIntosh (410) 841-3407, (301) 858-3407

Vice Chair: Tawanna P. Gaines (410) 841-3058, (301) 858-3058

- **Subcommittees:** Capital Budget Subcommittee, Education and Economic Development Subcommittee, Health and Human Resources Subcommittee, Public Safety and Administration

Subcommittee, Transportation and the Environment Subcommittee, Oversight Committee on Pensions, and Oversight Committee on Personnel.

Economic Matters Committee considers legislation relating to alcoholic beverages; banks and other financial institutions; commercial law; corporations and associations; economic development; electronic commerce; licensing and regulation of businesses, including related occupations and professions; labor and employment; property and casualty insurance; unemployment insurance; utilities, including electric, gas, and telecommunications; and workers' compensation.

Chair: Dereck E. Davis (410) 841-3519, (301) 858-3519

Vice Chair: Sally Y. Jameson (410) 841-3337, (301) 858-3337

- **Subcommittees:** Alcoholic Beverages Subcommittee; Banking, Economic Development, Science and Technology Subcommittee; Business Regulation Subcommittee; Consumer Protection and Commercial Law Subcommittee; Property and Casualty Insurance Subcommittee; Public Utilities Subcommittee; Unemployment Insurance Subcommittee; and Worker's Compensation Subcommittee.

Environment and Transportation Committee is assigned legislation relating to agriculture; bi-county agencies; environmental matters, including agricultural land preservation, Program Open Space, and vehicle emissions; ethics; local government; motor vehicles; natural resources; real property and housing; and transportation (non-revenue related).

Chair: Kumar P. Barve (410) 841-3990, (301) 858-3990

Vice Chair: Dana M Stein (410) 841-3527, (301) 858-3527

- **Subcommittee:** Natural Resources, Agriculture and Open Space Subcommittees; Environment Subcommittee; Housing and Real Property Subcommittees; Land Use and Ethics Subcommittee; Local Government and Bi-County Agencies Subcommittee; Motor Vehicles and Transportation Subcommittees.

Health and Government Operations Committee considers legislation relating to child and elder healthcare; civil rights; emergency medical services; health and life insurance; health policy and planning, including facilities, occupations and public health; long-term care; and State government organization, procedures, and administrative law, including procurement.

Chair: Peter A. Hammen (410) 841-3772, (301) 858-3772

Vice Chair: Shane E. Pendergrass (410) 841-3139, (301) 858-3139

- **Subcommittee:** Government Operations and Long Term Care Subcommittee; Health Facilities, and Occupations Subcommittee; Insurance Subcommittee; Estates and Trust Subcommittee; Public Health and Minority Health Disparities Subcommittee.

Judiciary Committee considers legislation relating to courts and judicial proceedings. It also is concerned with administrative law; corrections; criminal and civil laws, penalties, and procedures; drunk and drugged driving; estates and trusts; family law; juvenile cases; the legal profession; legal rights and immunities; and jailable motor vehicle offenses.

Chair: Joseph F. Vallario, Jr. (410) 841-3488, (301) 858-3488

Vice Chair: Kathleen M. Dumais (410) 841-3052, (301) 858-3052

- **Subcommittees:** Civil Law and Procedure Subcommittee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; Family Law Subcommittee; and Juvenile Law Subcommittee.

Ways and Means Committee is responsible for legislation relating to children, youth, and families; education financing, including primary and secondary education, community colleges, and scholarships and financial aid; election law; gaming and horseracing; State and local taxes; and transportation funding and revenues.

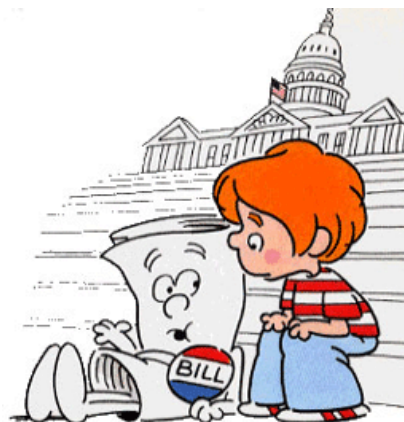
Chair: Sheila E. Hixson (410) 841-3469, (301) 858-3469

Vice Chair: Frank S. Turner (410) 841-3246, (301) 858-3246

- **Subcommittees:** Education Subcommittee; Election Law Subcommittee; Finance Resources Subcommittee; Revenues Subcommittee; and Vice Chair's Subcommittee

How a Bill Becomes a Law in Maryland

The legislative process, the mechanism through which the laws of Maryland are enacted, is dynamic and complex. One hundred and eighty-eight men and women are elected every four years to serve in the State's legislative branch to enact laws that protect the interest of Marylanders. Legislation introduced in the General Assembly is a legislator's response to the needs or desires of his or her constituency. In Maryland, an idea or concept must pass through many processes before it becomes law. **Citizens of Maryland must approach their legislators to introduce a bill.** If the legislator agrees to sponsor the legislation, the bill is drafted by the Department of Legislative Services, reviewed by the legislator, and prepared for introduction. Bills or resolutions may be introduced in advance of regular sessions.



During the session

1. **First Reading:** When the session convenes, the Reading Clerk reads the numbers and titles of the bills being introduced and indicates the committee to which they have been referred by the presiding officer.
2. **Referral to Committee:** The committees meet daily during the session to receive testimony and take action on bills referred to the committee. Since the legislature is instrumental in integrating public demands with public policy, **citizens are encouraged to present their views on the proposed bills by mail or by personal appearance.** Lobbyists representing organized interest groups, officials from State agencies, local government representatives, and other interested citizens speak at these hearings, to either oppose or support the proposed legislation. The Department of Legislative Services prepares a fiscal analysis for each bill, and these fiscal notes are considered during the committee deliberations.
3. **Second Reading and Floor Consideration:** The bill is reported back to the floor by the committee with its recommendation (favorable, unfavorable, favorable with amendment, or rarely, no recommendation). If the bill is amended by the committee, a vote is taken on the amendment, and if passed, another vote is taken on the bill as amended. Committee action may be reversed, but this is infrequent. Amendments can then be offered from the floor by any member. After all

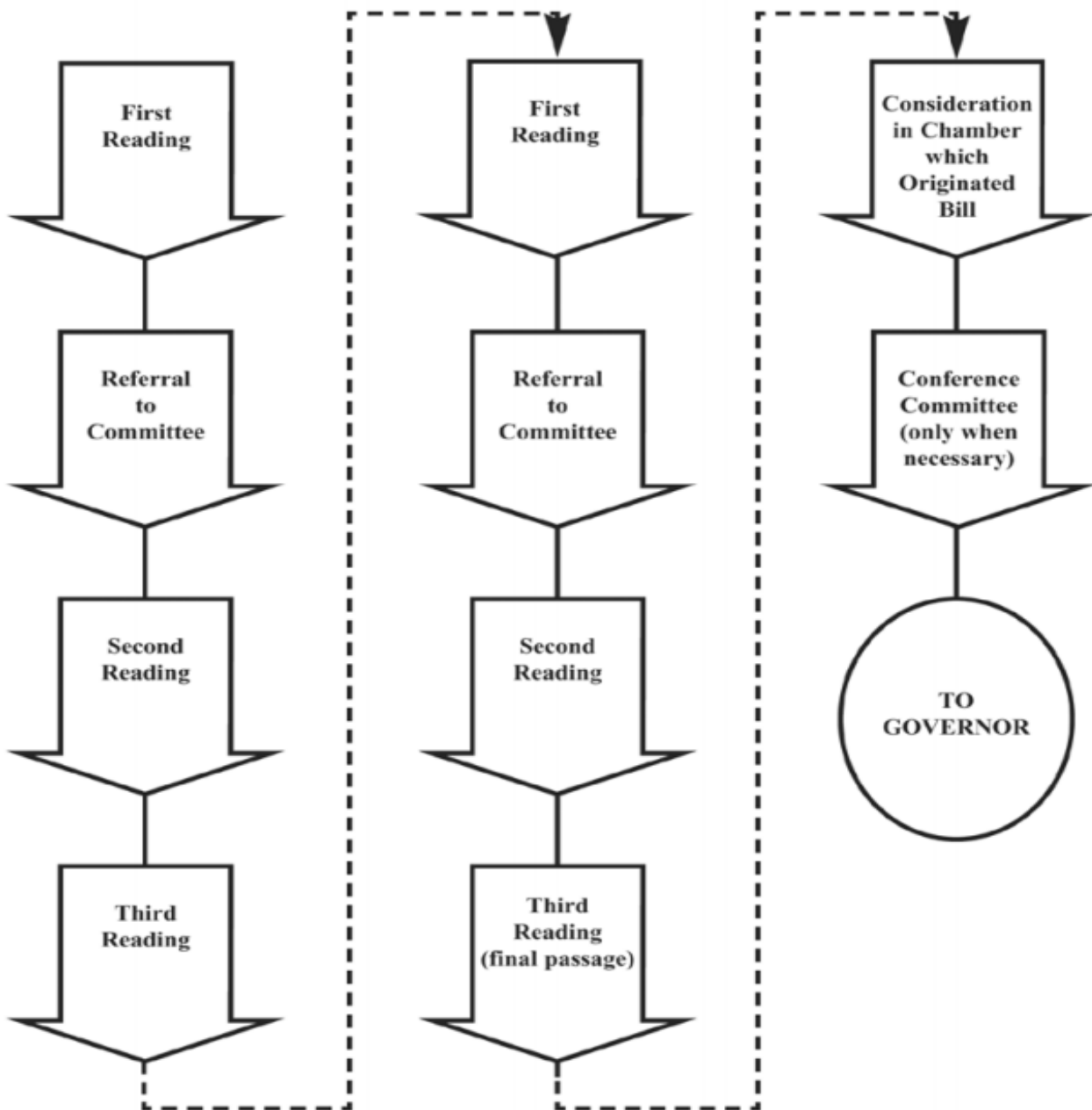
amendments are considered, the presiding officer orders the bill to be printed for its third and final reading.

4. **Third Reading:** The bill must be printed in its final version with all amendments included for third reading. No amendments may be presented on third reading in the bill's chamber of origin, and the bill must be passed by a majority of the elected membership.
5. **Second Chamber:** The procedure follows a pattern identical to that of the chamber in which the bill originated, except amendments may be proposed during third reading, as well as during second reading. If not amended in the second chamber, final passage may occur without reprinting.
6. **Consideration of Bills Originating in One Chamber and Amended in the Second Chamber:** If amended in the second chamber, the bill is returned to the chamber of origin where a vote is taken on a motion to concur or reject the amendments. If concurrence is voted, a final vote is taken on the bill as amended, and action is complete. The bill is reprinted, or enrolled, to include the added amendments before it is presented to the Governor. If the amendments are rejected, two courses of action are possible: 1) the amending chamber may be requested to withdraw its amendments or 2) upon refusal to withdraw the amendments, either chamber may request a conference committee to resolve the differences between the two chambers
7. **Conference Committee:** Three members from each chamber are appointed to a conference committee by the presiding officers to reach a settlement on the proposed legislation. A report of a conference committee goes back to both chambers to be adopted or rejected without amendment. If the conference committee report is adopted, the bill is voted upon for final passage in each house. If the conference committee report is rejected by either house, the conference committee may be directed to reconvene, new members may be appointed, or the bill fails.
8. **Presentation of Bills to Governor:** Except for constitutional amendments and the budget bill, presentation of all bills to the Governor is mandatory. The budget bill becomes law upon its final passage and cannot be vetoed. Bills must be presented to the Governor within twenty days after adjournment of a session, and in the case of such bills, the Governor may veto within thirty days after presentation. If the Governor does not veto a bill, it becomes law. The Governor may not veto a constitutional amendment
9. **Veto Power:** The power to override a veto rests with the legislature. If a bill is vetoed during a regular session, the veto message is considered immediately. If a bill presented after the session is vetoed, the veto message must be considered immediately at the next regular or special session of the legislature, except that the legislature during the first year of a new term may not override a veto. A three-fifths vote of the elected membership in each house is necessary to override a veto.

The Progress of a Bill

FIRST CHAMBER

SECOND CHAMBER



Section III: Where Do Advocates Fit Into the Legislative Process?

You can advocate for a cause that you believe in by forming a relationship with your representatives at the local, state, and federal levels. You can make a difference by communicating with your representatives about issues that affect you or people you care about.

10 Tips for Advocates



1. **Identify fellow advocates and partners** who are interested in the same topics you are. Finding common ground on an issue sometimes brings together unlikely partners, but makes for a stronger voice. Encourage and strengthen relationships with partners. Work with policymakers who are flexible and tend to keep an open mind.
2. **Get to know policymakers.** Familiarize yourself with their wards and constituencies (voters, population), voting records, personal schedules, expertise, and interests. Be sure to have a good understanding of the policymaker and his or her concerns, priorities, and viewpoints.
3. **Establish a relationship** by contacting your policymaker before you need an issue solved. Grab the interest of the policymaker in the issue so that later, it will be easy to get the policymaker's attention when you have a need.
4. **Get to know the staff members** of the policymakers with whom you will be working. These people are key sources of information for the policymaker and can have great influence on the progress of policy.
5. **Learn the legislative process** and understand it well. Keep on top of issues of concern to you and be aware of current legislation.
6. **Be open to negotiation.** Identify the groups and other policymakers with whom you may need to negotiate for policy changes.
7. **Be polite, remember names and thank those who help you** both in the advocacy community and in the legislature.
8. **Be honest, straightforward and realistic** when working with policymakers and their staff. Do not make promises you cannot keep. Never lie to mislead a policymaker about the importance of an issue, the other side's position or strength or other matters.
9. **Timing is everything** for successful input in any process for change. The earlier in the process that you involve yourself (committee meetings) the better chance you have at influencing the outcome of a policy proposal.
10. **Be sure to follow up** with policymakers and their staff. Send a thank you letter. Be a reliable resource for them today and in the future.

Section IV: Communicating with Elected Officials

Public policy advocacy involves letting your needs and the needs of others be known to your elected representatives. Policymakers want to hear from you and other citizens in order to represent you best. There are many ways you can make your case known to your representatives, and each is an effective form of advocacy. This section will equip you with the tools you need to communicate to your representatives with confidence.

Writing to Legislators and Policy Makers

You can send a letter to your elected official by regular mail, by e-mail or by fax. Because safety precautions have delayed regular mail, it is generally better to e-mail or fax your letter if you want your opinion to be registered right away. If it is not urgent, a letter by mail can be very effective and more personal. While it is always better to handwrite your own letter or to personalize a form letter when possible, a form letter is better than nothing.



Tips for Writing to your Elected Official

1. **State your name** and who you are. Identify yourself as a constituent.
2. **State your reason** for writing the name and number of the relevant bill. Keep each letter to one issue. Make sure to relate the impact of the legislation on your local area.
3. **Pick your three strongest talking points**, use examples and statistics to support your position.
4. **Avoid abbreviations and jargon**
5. **Keep it as short as possible**—one page is best!
6. **Send a copy** of your letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine if it's relevant.
7. **Provide your contact information** on both your letter and your envelope to receive a reply and to confirm you are a constituent.
8. **Sign your letter.**
9. **Follow up** with a phone call, a visit or another letter at the appropriate time.
10. **Consider holding a letter writing party** or invite others to write with you. The more people involved, the stronger the message.

Calling your representative

Telephoning your legislator's office is a useful way to communicate your opinions, especially on issues where an action is pending, such as a vote. It is important to let them know **why you are calling** and **what issue you are calling about**. You will sometimes be able to speak directly to your representative, but more often you will speak to a staff person in the member's office. This person keeps track of how many people called and their positions on issues, and provides a summary to the



member. Be assured that your call does count, even if you are not able to speak directly to your senator or representative.

It is usually most effective to call your own senators and representatives, as each is primarily concerned with residents from his or her district. However, you may occasionally find it useful to call other members, if they are on a certain committee or in a particular position to help get a bill passed.

Tips for calling your representative:

1. **Let them know that you are a constituent.** Elected officials are most interested in your opinions if you are their constituent, so be sure to say the city and state you are from.
2. **Know your facts.** Be sure you have the basic information about your topic in front of you when you call. You should be able to specifically describe the topic about which you are calling and state your opinion on what your legislator should do.
3. **Note your expertise.** If you have professional experience on the issue on which you are calling, be sure to mention it. It will help to establish your credibility on the issue and may even prompt the aide to ask you for some guidance on the issue.
4. **Be brief.** Legislators receive a high volume of phone calls every day, so keep your call short.
5. **Be timely.** Timeliness is especially important when you are phoning. If the vote on your issue is imminent, the aide is much more likely to pay attention to what you say.
6. **Be relevant.** If your concern is with a local issue, contact your local county representatives. If it is relevant to the state, call your state representatives, and call U.S. senators or U.S. representatives for national issues

Visiting your representative

One of the most effective ways to develop a relationship with your legislator is through face-to-face visits.

Some basic tips

- Be positive and non-partisan! Legislators are turned off by threatening or argumentative advocacy.
- Be persistent and patient! Building a relationship with your legislator takes time.
- Relax! Advocacy is easy. You do not need to be an expert; you just need to share your concerns and values. You can always leave or enclose written materials.
- Never give inaccurate information! It is far better to tell a legislator, "I don't know, but I will find out and get back to you." Your credibility (and the legislator's if they use your information) is at stake. Be sure to follow up with the complete information.
- Stay on message! Don't be distracted if the legislator changes the subject.



Recommendations for face-to-face visits

1. Call ahead and schedule an appointment with the legislator (or a staff person if the legislator is unavailable)
2. It is helpful to visit in small groups, two to three constituents is ideal. Make sure the legislator knows whom they will be meeting with before the visit.

3. Develop an agenda and share it with others attending the meeting with you. This will help you keep on track.
4. Bring a one-paged typed statement detailing your position. The fact sheet can explain the issue and why he/she should support your viewpoint.
5. Be brief and concise. Try to focus on one or two issues.
6. Describe why the issue is important to you; the more personal, the more he/she will pay attention.
7. Be clear regarding the reason for your visit. Be upfront if you are asking for something specific, such as support or opposition to particular legislation.
8. Make the issue local and relevant by discussing a recent local issue. Use statistics, stories and fellow constituents to support your issue.
9. Keep the door open to future dialogue by being courteous.
10. Stay on topic. Be careful not to let the meeting stray off course. Let the legislator make comments, but don't let them avoid the issue. Tactfully bring the conversation back on track.
11. After the meeting, thank your legislator for their time, both at the meeting and in writing. If you have a business card, leave one with your legislator or their aid.

Speaking at Committee and Council Meetings

Every Citizen has the right to attend a committee meeting and speak about legislation. Testimony from community members can and does influence legislation. You do not have to speak at a committee meeting if you attend; you can attend to watch how the process works.



Committee meetings can be a confusing place for citizen advocates. Legislators move in and out of the room and the use of confusing acronyms is commonplace. Being well prepared will help to alleviate any anxiety and confusion. You do not need to become an expert, but you do need to know enough to show that you care about the issue and the effects on communities and neighbors. To learn about the “legislative lingo” used during such meetings, visit <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/pubs-current/current-legislative-lingo.pdf>

Tips for Public Testimony

Formatting Written Testimony and Statements for the Record

- I. Title
 - A. Can either be on a page of its own or on the top of the first page and include:
 1. Your name, position and organization
 2. Committee before which you are testifying or to which you are submitting a statement for the record
 3. Subject on which you are submitting testimony (i.e., Bill 15-2008, FY 2010 DHS budget hearing, etc.)
 4. Date on which you are submitting the testimony/statement
- II. First Paragraph
 - A. Introduction
 1. Good afternoon (morning)
 2. Who you are
 3. What you do

4. Where you are from
5. Information about the organization or yourself
- B. Why you are testifying/submitting a statement for the record
 1. For budget and oversight hearings, include the agency(ies) of concern (APRA, DCRA, etc.) as well as specific concerns with examples
 2. For public hearing/roundtables on bills, include the bill number and title, specific concerns with examples and the potential impact (positive or negative).
- III. Recommendations
 - A. Be specific
 - B. Tie to concerns and impacts
- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Thank the chair and the committee for the opportunity to comment
 - B. Offer assistance---Include a statement such as “If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them.” If you are submitting a statement for the record, include the names of people who can respond to questions as well as the numbers at which they can be reached.

Tips for verbal testifying

Here is a list of technical suggestions that will make your verbal testimony most effective:

1. Summarize your written statements. The committee staff will enter the written statement into the record.
 - i) Be aware that sometimes the patron of a bill may offer amendments to the bill. Amendments could possibly change your opinion of the bill and affect your presentation. It is imperative that you pay close attention while the committee members discuss and amend the bill.
 - ii) Be prepared to adapt your remarks to avoid making the same point made by previous speakers.
2. Respect the time limits. Keep your remarks within the time allotted. You may be up there longer if the committee members ask you questions.
3. Be germane- Stay on the topic of the hearing
4. Speak clearly and close to the microphone
5. Bring copies for the committee. The hearing notice notes the number of copies to be provided- bring them. If you can't, provide one copy before the hearing and the committee staff will make copies.
6. Bring copies to distribute to the audience and the government.

Other helpful hints

1. Before you leave for the hearing, call the committee to determine if the hearing will be starting on time.
2. If your organization has buttons, wear one.
3. Remember: You are not only testifying to the committee. You are addressing the community: hearings are televised live and are replayed by cable on on-demand video via computer. Use this as an opportunity to educate the community on the problem and the solution.

The Maryland General Assembly meets from January to April of each year. The General Assembly offers a complete schedule of hearings on the Maryland General Assembly website: <http://mlis.state.md.us/>. A

full list of topics, committees, and times of hearings is available by clicking on “Hearings Schedule. Also, you may find “Prior Session Information” helpful in learning what decisions have already been made.

Utilizing the Media

Tips for Writing Effective Letters to the Editor

The “Letters to the Editor” section is one of the most popular sections of newspapers, assuring letter writers a wide audience for their views. The structure of a letter to the editor of a newspaper is the same as that of a letter to an elected official. Refer to the steps listed in “Tips for writing to your Elected Official” and use the tips below to target your letter to a newspaper.



1. **Make it relevant:** Refer to a current issue in proposed legislation, an upcoming event, or a recent article, op-ed or letter in the newspaper. If you are writing about a particular bill, write its name and number. If you are writing in response to an article, write its title, author and date. Example: I strongly agree with (author's name) view on children's mental health. ("Name of Op-Ed," date) However, there is additional support for his argument.
2. **Make it concise:** Letters should be approximately 250 words and should be type-written and double spaced. Try to highlight a single aspect of the issue that wasn't emphasized previously by the newspaper. Keep in mind that your letters will be edited or shortened by the newspaper.
3. **Make it credible:** Many newspapers only print a letter to the editor after calling the author to verify his or her identity and address. Provide your name, address, day and evening telephone numbers. Should a letter be printed, a newspaper will usually include your name and city. Be sure to sign your letter.
4. **Make it useful:** Send a copy of your letter to your elected official to let him or her know that you are raising awareness.
5. **Make it visible:** Send your letter to both large and small newspapers. It is also valuable to write in magazines. The more you write the more likely you will be published.






Additional Tips

- If possible, submit your letter by email or fax so it will reach the newspaper in a timelier manner. Be sure to check the newspaper's website for instructions on letter submission.
- Make your letter easy to read: short sentences, short paragraphs and simple words are best.

Social Media Tools

Advocating via social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and blogs is a low effort way to reach a large number of people about a particular issue. To use social media effectively, you should have a clear plan in mind of who your audience is, which social media platforms are most suited to that audience, and what results you hope to gain from your efforts.



Social Media Sites and Their Uses		Pros	Cons
Facebook 	The largest social network, 12+ billion users, 475 billion pieces of content shared daily	Easy to use, lets you share lengthy posts, links and videos.	Your posts only reach your friends, and usually the ones you interact with most
Twitter 	271 million users. Lets you share text, links, images, and 6 second videos. Space limited to 140 characters per tweet	Large reach; hashtags let you reach a global platform	Limited space to get your message across; short lifespan of posts
Instagram 	Primarily mobile app. Lets you share pictures and short videos with caption	Visual media catches interest, hashtags let you reach a global platform	No links, analytics or scheduling capabilities
LinkedIn 	Network of 300 million users. Professional network for white collar urban/ suburban users	Able to reach powerful people through mutual connections	Not useful for posting or sharing information
Snapchat 	Mobile app for sharing pictures and videos between friends. Media lasts for up to 24 hours on your story or up to 10 seconds between friends	Lets you share in real time. Good for attending and recording very current events	Very short lifespan of posts. Only your followers see what you post

Tips for Social Media Advocacy

1. **Keep your posts positive or neutral**, even if you don't share the same political view or agenda as the elected official that represents you. If you visited a representative and your experience was less than positive, here are ways you can still share the work you did:
 - a. Express gratitude for the person's time
 - b. Share that you personally met to talk about a particular issue
 - c. Acknowledge that more work needs to be done in your state.
2. **Know the Twitter handle of the relevant elected official.** Most leaders have Twitter accounts or Facebook pages. You can find it on the official's website or through a quick Google search. Use that username in your Twitter message. This is proper Twitter etiquette, and also gives the account holder a notice that he or she has been mentioned in someone else's tweet.

For example, *"Had a great meeting today with @SenSmith and staff. She supports afterschool programs in Maryland!"*

Or: "Joined colleagues this a.m. in meeting with @SenSmith's office to ask that she cosponsor S. 1064. I hope he does the right thing."

3. **Check in with the official's office before you Tweet a message about a visit.** It is good etiquette and relationship-building to let staff know that you may use social media to share highlights of the visit. It also gives that office advanced notice, and they can look for your Tweets in case they want to share or retweet on their own sites.
4. **Ask before you share a photo of an official or staffers.** Each leader's office has its own policy for social media use. Some like to retweet and share photos and messages from their constituents. Others prefer to only push out headlines or key messages and not retweet messages from visitors. Take time to look at the office's Twitter page before your visits and get a feel for how the office uses social media. While elected officials typically aren't camera-shy, staffers generally aren't used to having photos taken, let alone shared on social media sites. However, sharing photos of you and your colleagues outside the office or in front of the building is a great way to highlight your visit and your work. You can post photos to Twitter or Facebook to increase engagement. Research has shown that Tweets with photos get 18 percent more clicks, 89 percent more favorited, and 150 percent more retweets!
5. **Use the best hashtag (#).** If you are involved an advocacy campaign, use the commonly accepted hashtag for that campaign in all the messages you post about your advocacy efforts, so that others interested in this issue can easily search and follow related tweets. For example, **IN REACH** advocates for afterschool programs. Use the following hashtags to raise awareness for afterschool activities: #afterschoolworks #afterschool4all #2nextprez
6. **Tweet @inreachinc** , your local representatives, and at other organizations to get your posts seen. A few examples are @afterschool4all @Voices4HK @PGSentinel @PGParents @PGCPS @JA_GW

IN REACH Advocacy Priorities

Although this toolkit can help you advocate for any group or any issue, there are a few issues that **IN REACH INC.** specifically advocates for.

Afterschool funding

Research shows that kids in afterschool programs go to school more, see improvements in their behavior, and increase their likelihood of moving on to the next grade level and graduating. Consistent participation in quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in student test scores and work habits. Afterschool programs keep kids safe and supervised in the hours after school, giving parents peace of mind that their children are safe during the peak hours of juvenile crime and victimization. Yet in Maryland, only 16% of children participate in an afterschool program. Increased funding for afterschool programs is necessary to expand programs to give all children the opportunity to attend free afterschool programs. Policymakers need to know that this is a priority for their voters.

Recently, Congress just proposed reduced funding, a cut of \$117 million from last year, for 21st Century Community Learning Centers. If the Senate bill were to become law, **approximately 117,000 children would lose access to quality afterschool and summer learning programs next year.**

Families

A critical component of a student's success in school is dependent on that child's experience at home. It is crucial that families and parents receive the support they need to guide their children through school and life. This includes a living wage and sensible paid leave, protecting families from foreclosure and allowing them access to quality health care

College affordability

In today's economy, higher education is no longer a luxury for the privileged few, but a necessity for individual economic opportunity and America's competitiveness in the global economy. At a time when jobs can go anywhere in the world, skills and education will determine success for individuals and for nations. As a result, a college education remains the best investment a student can make in his or her future. Even as a college degree or other postsecondary credential or certificate has never been more important, it has also never been more expensive. Over the past three decades, tuition at public four-year colleges has more than doubled, even after adjusting for inflation. For lower and middle class students, college is increasingly becoming unattainable.

Bills withdrawn from the 2016 legislative session:

HB 0018 Exempting recent high school graduates from payment of tuition to attend a community college in the State under specified circumstances; providing a 50% discount on tuition to individuals unemployed for at least 6 months but who have been seeking employment and who are attending a community college and seeking vocational certificates; requiring the State to reimburse community colleges for foregone tuition revenue; requiring that funds used to reimburse community colleges shall be paid from the Education Trust Fund; etc.

HB834 Establishing the Last Dollar Scholarship; establishing specified application requirements; authorizing the use of the Scholarship for specified costs at specified institutions of higher education subject to a specified limitation; limiting the Scholarship to a maximum of \$3,000 per academic year; authorizing the Scholarship to be renewed for up to an additional 4 years under specified circumstances;

and requiring the Governor to appropriate at least \$1,000,000 in the State budget to provide specified scholarships.

Appendix

Advocacy Resources

Afterschool Alliance works to engage public will to increase public and private investment in quality afterschool program initiatives at the national, state and local levels. Afterschool Alliance has all the tools a citizen needs to advocate for afterschool programs on behalf of children. Their website will help you stay current on policy updates and programs regarding afterschool and reach policymakers on these issues. Visit their website at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/>

The Maryland Family Network (MFN) is a nonprofit organization that works to ensure that young children and their families have the resources to learn and succeed. Through its strong advocacy and public policy presence, MFN has helped to make Maryland one of the best states in the country for early education and child care. With resources such as a public policy handbook published each September that guides you through public policy issues of concern that you can talk to your representatives about as well as the opportunity to sign up for public policy alerts, MFN is a valuable resource for family and child advocates. Visit their website at <http://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/>

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to serving and supporting boards of education in Maryland. MABE is a leading advocate for public education in the state. MABE has resources for the citizen advocate for education such as school policy updates and priorities to know what issues your representatives need to hear about. Visit their website to learn more: <http://www.mabe.org/>

The Maryland Public Policy Institute (MPPI) is a nonpartisan public policy research and education organization that focuses on state policy issues. Our goal is to provide accurate and timely research analysis of Maryland policy issues and market these findings to key primary audiences. MPPI is a useful resource for advocates who want to know about the effectiveness of existing public policy in Maryland as well as policy change reports from legislative sessions. Staying current on public policy is a very important part of activism. Visit their website to learn about current policy issues: <https://www.mdpolicy.org/events/>

The Maryland Center on Economic Policy (MDCEP) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to ideas that work for everyone and a public climate where they can prevail. MDCEP advances innovative policy ideas to foster broad prosperity and help our state be the standard-bearer for responsible public policy. MDCEP engages in research, analysis, strategic communications, public education, and grassroots alliances promoting robust debate and greater public awareness of the policy choices Maryland residents face together. By providing publications such as fact sheets, reports, and presentations, MDCEP can help advocates stay informed about past legislative sessions and important policy topics. Visit their website at <http://www.mdeconomy.org/>

The Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative (TNI) is an effort by Prince George's county to focus on uplifting 6 neighborhoods in the county that face significant economic, health, public safety and educational challenges. Through this initiative, the county will improve the quality of life in those neighborhoods, while identifying ways to improve service delivery throughout the county for all residents. The six areas of the County that have been identified for TNI are: East Riverdale / Bladensburg, Glassmanor / Oxon Hill, Hillcrest Heights / Marlow Heights, Kentland / Palmer Park, Lagley Park, and Suitland / Coral Hills. For more information, visit their website at: <http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/1048/Transforming-Neighborhoods-Initiative-TN>

Glossary of Terms

Advocacy is a [political process](#) by an individual or a large [group](#) which normally aims to influence public-policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions; it may be motivated from moral, ethical or faith principles or simply to protect an asset of interests.

A **Bill** is a proposed law put before a legislature.

Constituencies are bodies of voters in specified areas who elect a representative to a legislative body. A representative is likely to listen to the voices of his or her constituencies because they are the citizens that voted that representative into his or her current office

An **Electoral College** is a set of [electors](#) who are selected to elect a [candidate](#) to a particular [office](#).

A **fiscal year** (or **financial year**, or sometimes **budget year**) is a period used for calculating annual ("yearly") [financial statements](#) in [businesses](#) and other organizations. In many jurisdictions, regulatory [laws](#) regarding [accounting](#) and [taxation](#) require such reports once per twelve months, but do not require that the period reported on constitutes a [calendar year](#) (i.e., January through December). Fiscal years vary between businesses and countries. Fiscal year may also refer to the year used for income tax reporting.

General assembly may refer to an official meeting of the members of a trade union, church, association, or similar organization, or of their representatives.

A **Grassroots** movement (often referenced in the context of a [political movement](#)) is one driven by the politics of a community. The term implies that the creation of the movement and the group supporting it are natural and spontaneous, highlighting the differences between this and a movement that is orchestrated by traditional power structures. Grassroots movements are often at the local level, as many volunteers in the community give their time to support the local party, which can lead to helping the national party. For instance, a grassroots movement can lead to significant [voter registration](#) for a political party, which in turn helps the state and national parties.

Public Policy as government action is generally the principled guide to action taken by the administrative or executive branches of the [state](#) with regard to a class of issues in a manner consistent with law and institutional customs.

A by-election (occasionally also spelled "bye-election", and known in the [United States](#) and the [Philippines](#) as a **Special Election**) is an [election](#) held to fill a political office that has become vacant between regularly scheduled elections.

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