

DYLAN BEHLER
Legislative District 30A
Anne Arundel County

Environment and Transportation
Committee

Subcommittees

Environment
Land Use and Ethics



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 154
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3045
800-492-7122 Ext. 3045
Dylan.Behler@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Dear Neighbor:

On February 6, 2025, I was humbled and honored to be sworn in to serve as your State Delegate to represent us here in District 30A. With the conclusion of the Maryland General Assembly's 447th legislative session on April 7th, I am honored to provide you an update on our work over the course of those 90 days. Undoubtedly, this was one of the most difficult legislative sessions Maryland has seen in decades.

Marylanders were and are facing the ever-increasing cost of goods and rising electricity costs. On top of that, we were faced with a \$3 billion budget deficit. These challenges were exacerbated with actions taken at the Federal level that stifle our economy and hurt our most vulnerable community members. But with all of this in mind, the General Assembly here in Annapolis worked thoroughly to pass a balanced budget and legislation to move our State forward through these challenging times. Below are updates on my committee work, a budget breakdown, and a summary of major legislation this session.

Environment and Transportation Committee

I am grateful that Speaker Adrienne Jones appointed me to serve on the Environment and Transportation Committee (ENT) in the House. On this Committee, I have worked directly on issues that our community cares deeply about – from the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay, to addressing the housing crisis that our communities are experiencing, to ensuring that we are improving our transportation networks here in Anne Arundel County.

This session the ENT Committee oversaw 333 House Bills and 94 Senate Bills – with the combined 427 total bills being the most a committee reviewed in the House! Here are highlights of the work of the Environment and Transportation Committee from this session:

Chesapeake Bay Legacy Act (HB506) – This legislation, introduced by Governor Wes Moore, makes critical changes to our Bay restoration approach to ensure we are aligning ourselves with the most recent science. More specifically, this legislation creates a new 'Leaders in Environmentally Engaged Farming' program, codifies a water quality monitoring program, and ensures that we can manage our fisheries in an ever-changing climate.

Protecting Tenants from Mold (SB856) – Sponsored by District 30's own Senator Henson, this legislation will put in place important protections to protect tenants in Maryland from the health and other related impacts of mold.

Expanded Producer Responsibility (SB901) – This legislation establishes an extended producer responsibility program in the State for packaging and paper products, which will ensure that packaging producers are more responsible for their products through the entirety of the lifecycle of their product. This, in turn, will ensure that we are mitigating the environmental, health, and social impacts of ever-increasing amounts of packaging in our economy.

Building Energy Performance Standards (HB49) – The Climate Solutions Now Act made a variety of important statutory changes to limit greenhouse gas emissions here in Maryland. This also included a requirement that the Maryland Department of the Environment administer a Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS) program to ensure our buildings are adequately electrified. HB49 will ensure that this program is implemented using an efficient and common-sense approach.

Common Ownership Community Reserve Funds (SB63/HB292) – This legislation will make it easier for condominium and other common ownership communities to meet the requirements of previously passed by the Maryland General Assembly to fund reserve accounts in the event there are critical infrastructure needs.

Making Roadways Safer (HB182) – This legislation will create a tiered penalty structure for automated speed enforcement violations, so we are levying uniform penalties for those that are caught excessively speeding.

Maryland’s Balanced Operating Budget

The core constitutional role of the Maryland General Assembly in any legislative session is passing a balanced State budget for the next fiscal year. As referenced previously, we started this legislative session under difficult circumstances – the structural deficit, the Federal Administration, and the rising cost of goods created a unique situation that had to be addressed in a deliberate and meaningful way.

I am proud to report though that the General Assembly, with the support of the Governor, passed a \$66.9 billion fiscal year 2026 operating budget (**HB350/HB352**). The final budget maintains our commitment to the services and values that benefit our communities by making critical investments in education, transportation, and public safety – and balances those commitments with nearly \$2 billion in spending cuts. Through this process we also ensured that 94% of filers pay the same or a lesser amount in income taxes. Additionally, this targeted and balanced approach allowed us to avoid other revenue options like a \$.75 delivery tax, a broad-based business-to-business tax, or the elimination of itemized deductions for most Maryland taxpayers. This balanced budget includes:

- \$15.6 billion in funding for Medicaid, covering about 1.5 million residents.
- \$594.4 million in new funding for our public schools; representing a 7.3% increase from FY25.
- \$500 million in new revenues to support the State’s transportation and aging infrastructure needs.
- \$181.5 million restored in Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026 for community services for those with developmental disabilities.
- \$139 million invested in growing the private sector economy.
- \$121.8 million in police aid; \$46 million above the statutorily required amount, in addition to \$60 million in victim services funding and \$5.5 million for community-based services for young people.
- \$100 million for climate pollution reduction efforts at the State and local levels; and
- \$2.4 billion in cash reserves, including \$2.1 billion in the Rainy-Day Fund and \$317 million in the General Fund to protect against continued federal uncertainty in the year ahead.

Capital Budget Investments

The Capital Budget (**HB351**) is one of the General Assembly’s best tools to help create jobs and stimulate the growth of our local economies across Maryland – and we worked collaboratively to invest capital funds to provide funding to support critical State institutions and organizations that serve as pillars of

our communities. Funding for Statewide projects and grant programs from which our community and county stand to benefit include:

| | |
|--|---|
| School Construction Built to Learn Fund - \$371,225,000 | Bay Restoration Fund Septic Upgrades - \$15,000,000 |
| Rental Housing Programs – \$113,500,000 | Comprehensive Flood Mitigation Funding - \$13,867,000 |
| Bay Restoration Fund Wastewater Program - \$50,000,000 | Community Health Facilities Grant Program - \$8,000,000 |
| University of Maryland Comprehensive Cancer Center - \$32,000,000 | Public Library Capital Grant Fund – \$7,500,000 |
| Program Open Space Local – \$25,472,393 | Greenspace Equity Program – \$7,000,000 |
| Waterway Improvement Fund – \$25,500,000 | African American Heritage Preservation Grant - \$5,000,000 |
| Program Open Space State – \$18,894,479 | Community Parks and Playgrounds – \$5,000,000 |
| Agricultural Land Preservation Program - \$18,629,109 | Oyster Restoration Funding – \$4,032,000 |
| Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative - \$18,000,000 | Maryland Arts Capital Grant Program - \$3,000,000 |

I am also proud to report that there is significant funding for important Annapolis and Anne Arundel County priorities in the final Capital Budget – this funding includes:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Revolutionary War Memorial for Black Soldiers (Annapolis) - \$1,000,000 | Summit School Building Expansion (Edgewater) - \$400,000 | Bates Lower Field Improvements (Annapolis) - \$500,000 |
| Military Readiness Center (Glen Burnie) - \$176,000 | Annapolis City Dock - \$7,800,000 | Gaudenzia Campus (Crownsville) - \$400,000 |
| Veterans Cemetery Expansion and Improvements (Crownsville) - \$113,000 | Annapolis Maritime Museum Weems and Plath Building (Annapolis) - \$100,000 | Monarch Academy Children’s Guild pre-school playground (Annapolis) - \$200,000 |
| Florestano Building AACC (Arnold) - \$8,020,000 | Historic Annapolis Building Restorations - \$3,900,000 | Chase Brexton (Glen Burnie) - \$300,000 |
| Annapolis State Police Barracks Communications Improvements - \$5,042,000 | Thomas Point Lighthouse Landing Dock (Annapolis) - \$60,000 | BWMC Oncology Center and Forensic Nursing Zone (Glen Burnie) - \$606,000 |
| Dragun Building AACC (Arnold) - \$1,063,000 | New Edgewater Community Center - \$2,250,000 | Arc of Central Chesapeake (Linthicum) - \$175,000 |

Choice Neighborhood Initiative for Eastport Terrace and Harbor House (Annapolis) - \$500,000

American Legion Post No. 7 Renovations (Crownsville) - \$50,000

Peerless Rens Outdoor Renovation (Annapolis) - \$40,000

Acton's Cove Boating Infrastructure (Annapolis) - \$350,000

Annapolis Middle School Field Lights - \$500,000

Earleigh Heights Fire Station (Severna Park) - \$170,000

Kiwanis Club (Edgewater) - \$50,000

Juneteenth Museum and Café (Annapolis) - \$200,000

Harness Creek Overlook Pond Retrofit (Annapolis) - \$175,000

Children's Theater of Annapolis Art Center - \$100,000

Major Legislation

We also worked to pass legislation to address some of the most important issues facing Marylanders and Maryland families. Here is an overview of key legislative efforts:

Lowering Energy Bills by Promoting the Affordability, Reliability, and Predictability of our Electric Grid: As the MGA entered the 2025 Legislative Session, Marylanders started receiving unacceptably high energy bills. We had to take immediate action. Demand for electricity in Maryland and throughout the country is rising at an untenable rate. At the same time, coal and oil electric generation stations are retiring; while this is good for slowing climate change, it also has led to increased energy prices. To curb rising prices, the MGA passed a legislative package. As passed, the package advances a comprehensive solution to enhance energy affordability and reliability. This is the most aggressive energy affordability package for Marylanders in decades.

- **The Next Generation Energy Act (SB937)** provides a \$200 million refund (averaging \$80 per customer) to residential electric customers in two installments (once in the summer and once in the winter), expedites new and cleaner in-state generation to decrease our reliance on power from surrounding states, creates cost containment

mechanisms around utility companies' spending on gas infrastructure, ensures multi-year rate plans provide a tangible benefit to customers while capping costs, removes waste incineration from Maryland's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard subsidy program, and ensures large load customers like data centers pay their fair share.

- **The Renewable Energy Certainty Act (SB931)** makes it easier to build renewable energy projects like solar and battery storage by removing unnecessary local roadblocks, places a first-in-the-nation 5% cap on the amount of agricultural land which can be used for solar, and allows local governments to participate in community solar programs.
- **The Energy Resource Adequacy and Planning Act (SB909)** creates a new Strategic Energy Planning Office to streamline energy forecasting and reduce dependence on external grid operators, ensuring Maryland's energy grid is more resilient and dependable.

Fighting Back Against Federal Government Chaos and Overreach: Maryland is one of the most vulnerable states in the country to the fallout from the actions currently being taken at the Federal level, with an outsized number of federal employees and contractors, a large number of federal agencies physically headquartered here, and billions-of-dollars granted to our research institutions. In response to the mass and indiscriminate firings of dedicated federal public servants, the MGA advanced **HB723** requiring the Maryland Department of Health to expedite license approval for fired federal health care workers who have been licensed in other states. Through **HB1424**, we created a financial assistance program for laid-off federal workers outside of the normal unemployment insurance system and created an expedited process for hiring those workers into State government roles. And we created a bipartisan, **Senate and House Joint Federal Action Oversight Committee** to monitor how ongoing federal actions are impacting the State so we can respond quickly and as needed. We also took steps in **HB1222** to protect our immigrant communities in sensitive locations like schools, hospitals, and religious institutions, in addition to making it easier for immigrants who are victims of crime and aiding police investigations from facing deportation with **SB608**.

Developing World-Class Public Schools for All Maryland Children: The Blueprint for Maryland's Future remains one of the most transformative education investments in our state's history. It is already expanding access to publicly funded Pre-K, strengthening teacher pipelines, and building clearer pathways to college and career readiness as students graduate. The Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act (**HB504**) builds on those efforts by giving local school systems increased flexibility around some State funding, extending career

counseling services, creating a school leadership training program for administrators, building pathways for more school professionals to enter the teaching profession, and strengthening the community school model. Moreover, through **HB197**, we required the State Department of Education to create a restorative practices plan, ensuring all schools are adequately supporting the socioemotional well-being of children. Finally, we took steps to strengthen the Truancy Reduction Pilot Program (**HB1442**) as we seek to address chronic absenteeism following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reducing Crime and Maintaining Safe Neighborhoods: Enhancing public safety so individuals and families feel safe in their communities remains of paramount importance. The MGA took steps to reinforce our justice system by cracking down on reckless and aggressive driving through the Sergeant Patrick Kepp Act (**HB744**), as well as enabling prosecutors to aggregate multiple theft offenses by the same individual in multiple counties through the Organized Retail Theft Act of 2025 (**HB179**). With **SB360**, we created avenues for individuals who are victims of revenge porn generated by artificial intelligence to seek justice as we navigate this new technology and its consequences. And we passed the Rape Kit Testing Tracking Program and Grant Fund (**HB675**), which supports investigations into older, untested sexual assault kits and extends the submission deadline for evidence. This legislation addresses critical backlogs in rape kit testing and improves law enforcement's ability to respond to sexual assault cases. We will continue providing police and prosecutors with the resources and tools needed to protect Marylanders.

Creating an Equitable Justice System Focused on Rehabilitation: Sustained public safety requires a justice system focused on

rehabilitating those who commit crimes before they re-enter our communities. Punitive approaches make recidivism more likely, so we must ensure that those within the justice system are provided opportunities to become productive members of society after they have served their sentences. We passed the Expungement Reform Act of 2025 (**SB432**) to expand the number of misdemeanor offenses eligible for expungement, reduce expungement waiting periods, and prohibit certain minor charges from appearing on the Maryland Judiciary Case Search. We also advanced the Second Look Act (**HB853**), which recognizes that individuals who commit crime early in life have the capacity to change and allows those individuals to seek a hearing for a reduced sentence after serving at least twenty (20) full years of their sentence. Additionally, we modified parole considerations for individuals sixty-five (65) and older, streamlined the medical parole process, and directed savings from these parole processes to the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services for reinvestment with the passage of **SB181**.

Preserving High-Quality Health Care Our Residents Rely On: Access to affordable healthcare and prescription drugs is critical to the wellbeing of all Marylanders. One of the most important tasks for the MGA this Session was to strengthen these programs regardless of potential federal cuts. We passed the Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for All Marylanders Now Act (**HB424**) to empower the Prescription Drug Affordability Board to set price limits on vital medications, offering relief to families struggling with high costs. We also know that telehealth remains a critical tool in the toolbox for Marylanders seeking care, which is why we passed the Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2025 (**HB869**) to ensure its availability in the future. By advancing **HB297**, the General Assembly made permanent the State-Based

Young Adult Subsidies Pilot Program, ensuring young people continue to have the ability to purchase affordable health insurance through the Maryland Health Benefits Exchange. We know that health outcomes are too often determined by race, class, and other societal factors, so we mandated the Maryland Department of Health to create a health equity dashboard to better track these disparities so that we can hold health professionals more accountable to outcomes through **HB1100**. Building a healthier Maryland saves lives, and we will continue to do everything we can to ensure that Marylanders have access to affordable and high-quality health care.

Supporting Maryland's Public Servants: Maryland's government has a responsibility to protect and support those who dedicate their lives to serving the public good. Following the murder of Davis Martinez, a parole and probation agent killed while on duty, the MGA held multiple hearings in 2024 to get to the root of the problem. Those legislative oversight hearings led to the introduction of the Davis Martinez Public Employee Safety and Health Act (**HB176**), which establishes a new unit within the Maryland Department of Labor to oversee the safety of public employees. This unit will enforce regulations, set penalties for public bodies and elected officials who fail to comply, and strengthen the overall safety measures for public employees. Furthermore, we know firefighters are exposed to caustic chemicals while on the job, too often leading to long-term health issues including Cancer. We advanced the James "Jimmy" Malone Act (**HB459**), which requires counties with self-insured employee health benefit plans to provide free preventive Cancer screenings for firefighters according to the latest guidelines from the International Association of Fire Fighters.

Strengthening Apprenticeships and Skills

Training: Meeting the demands of a 21st century economy means developing alternative pathways to our state’s workforce through opportunities. Our economic future depends on Maryland employers' ability to build a dependable and skilled labor force. The traditional method of workforce development heavily relies on school-based learning, which often leaves students with burdensome college debt and a lack of practical on-the-job experience. Apprenticeships shift our workforce training paradigm to allow individuals to earn a living wage while they learn their necessary trade skills, which is why we passed the Registered Apprenticeship Investments for a Stronger Economy (RAISE) Act (**SB431**) to modernize the State’s apprenticeship system. The law will expand the definition of a qualifying apprenticeship, ensuring more Marylanders can access career training programs that align with industry needs.

Expanding Access to Affordable Reproductive

Health Care: In the 2024 General Election, Maryland voters overwhelmingly voted to enshrine the right to abortion care in our state constitution. Making reproductive care a constitutional right was a critical step to protecting access, but affordability is wholly distinct from availability. Moreover, as surrounding states restrict a woman’s right to choose, individuals from out-of-state are seeking necessary care here where they are free from political interference. To build on the constitutional amendment incorporated last November, the MGA passed **HB930** to establish a first-of-its-kind public health abortion grant program to increase access and finance the support network of reproductive care funds and providers in Maryland. This program utilizes existing and unspent insurance premiums for abortion coverage already set aside and required to be collected by the Affordable Care Act. All

people should have access to the care they need regardless of whom they are, where they live, whether they are insured, or their income level.

Supporting Maryland’s Seniors and Nursing

Home Residents: Maryland’s seniors and nursing home residents are some of the most vulnerable in our society, and we have a heightened duty to meet their needs. We passed **HB158** to expand the Senior Call-Check Service and Notification Program as the Social Connections Program. This initiative provides older adults at risk of isolation with regular check-ins through phone calls, text messages, video chats, and in-person visits. Beyond wellness checks, the program fosters purposeful social engagement by connecting seniors with local volunteer networks, community events, and peer support groups. Furthermore, we recognized the Maryland Department of Health lacks sufficient capacity to conduct inspections and complaint investigations of nursing homes throughout the State. To compensate for this staffing shortage, we authorized local jurisdictions to take on this responsibility upon a county's request through **SB376**.

Demanding the Highest Ethical Standards from Elected Officials:

Conflicts of interest undermine our democracy. When our elected officials put their personal interests first, they send a message that their constituents’ needs are less of a priority. We passed **HB932** this year to ensure future Governors avoid conflicts at all costs by restricting their ability to participate in any matter that may come before a state agency that involves their business interests.

Advancing Basic Consumer Protections:

Far too often, consumers are locked into costly subscriptions they never meant to renew—buried in fine print or auto-renewed without clear notice. This year, we took action. The Maryland General Assembly passed **HB107** which requires companies to clearly disclose the

terms of any automatic renewal offers, including the post-trial price and a simple way to cancel — no more surprise charges months later. This law ensures Marylanders are fully informed and in control when they sign up for services, protecting both their wallets and their rights.

Facing our History Head On: Black Marylanders have long been essential to our state’s growth, from building the infrastructure of Baltimore and Annapolis to powering agriculture, industry, and innovation in Maryland. Yet, the legacy of slavery, Redlining, and economic exclusion still shapes disparities today. That is why we created the Maryland Reparations Commission (**SB587**) to study these injustices and recommend meaningful policy solutions. Closing these economic and systemic gaps is not exclusively about justice—it is about advancing meaningful economic policy that benefits all of us. Research shows that eliminating racial

income and wealth disparities could add over \$50 billion to Maryland’s economy. We must confront the lasting impacts of policies that hamper our potential for growth in the future, and this Commission will provide a vehicle for this important work.

Safeguarding the Right to Vote: While other states make voting harder, Maryland strengthened access to the ballot. We passed **SB93** to ensure voters continue receiving clear instructions to request a mail-in ballot with every State Board of Elections mailing. With **HB983**, we guaranteed multi-lingual support at polling places for those who need it. Finally, we passed **HB586** and thus expanded service-learning credit for student election judges and created new incentives to boost turnout among trained poll workers. Our democracy is strongest when every voice is heard.

Thank You!

The adjourning, *sine die*, of the 2025 Legislative Session marks the end of my first session as your Delegate. I am proud of what we have achieved together in the Maryland General Assembly to help guide our State through these difficult times. I firmly believe that we are here in the General Assembly to govern and make tough decisions, and I believe we did that this year.

Over the interim, I will continue to be present throughout District 30A and remain as accessible as possible to you - and it would be my honor to join you at events in your community. I will also continue to focus on community work and constituent services. As always please do not hesitate to reach out if I can ever help assist you solve a challenge that you or your community are experiencing by emailing dylan.behler@house.state.md.us or by calling our office at 410-841-3045.

It is the honor of my life to represent you here in the House of Delegates. I hope to continue to earn this privilege. I cannot wait to see you soon on your doorstep, at your HOA meeting, or elsewhere in the community. Thank you again!

Sincerely,



Dylan Behler
Delegate District 30A