

BROOKE E. LIERMAN
Legislative District 46
Baltimore City

Environment and Transportation
Committee

Chair
Land Use and Ethics Subcommittee

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review

Joint Committee on Ending
Homelessness

Joint Committee on Pensions



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 311
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3319 · 301-858-3319
800-492-7122 Ext. 3319
Brooke.Lierman@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

2020 END OF SESSION REPORT

Friends and Neighbors,

For the first time since the Civil War, the Maryland General Assembly adjourned early this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This decision to adjourn the legislative session did not come lightly. House and Senate leadership coordinated to make a decision that was informed, research-based, and promptly responded to the current public health crisis. Public health research shows that the more steps we can take right now to prevent transmission of the virus, the better off we'll be. Practicing social distancing now can save lives later.

Despite our early finish, the General Assembly session was incredibly productive. Thanks in part to our new leadership team - Speaker Adrienne Jones and President Bill Ferguson - we moved expeditiously and in coordinated fashion to pass legislation that will help our state move forward. In the pages below, you will find information on legislation that we considered.

It is an incredible honor to serve in the House of Delegates and I continue to champion legislation that reduces barriers and increases opportunities so that every Marylander can reach his/her full potential. You can always get in touch with me at 410-841-3319 and brooke.lierman@house.state.md.us. To read more about my work, please sign up for my email updates and visit my blog at www.brookelierman.com. Thank you for being involved!

MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY COVID-19 RESPONSE

The World Health Organization has declared the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic, and a national emergency has been declared. Governor Hogan and Mayor Young announced that Maryland and Baltimore will operate under states of emergency and will take additional precautionary measures to help mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. My website has links and information for families, employees, students, small business owners, and more.

COVID-19 Emergency Legislation

The General Assembly and Governor are unified in the effort to keep residents safe in the wake of this rapidly evolving public health threat. The General Assembly passed two bills to provide the Governor with the necessary tools to respond to this public health emergency:

(1) **SB190: FY21 State Budget.** In our annual budget, we set aside and provided authority to the Governor to use up to \$100 million to help respond to the public health threat. We also left a larger-than-normal fund balance because of the likelihood for a large decrease in revenues.

(2) **HB1663: COVID–19 Public Health Emergency Protection Act of 2020.** This bill allows the Governor to take specific actions to expand healthcare benefits and protect workers in response to the public health threat such as:

- eliminating co-pays and other out-of-pocket costs for COVID–19 testing and covering the cost of a COVID–19 immunization should it become available
- waiving certain telehealth protocols for COVID–19 to allow more patients to be diagnosed and treated over the phone and online
- allowing the state, in partnership with federal government, to provide unemployment insurance benefits to workers who are temporarily out of work or quarantined due to COVID–19
- preventing retailers from price gouging necessary goods and services such as food, water, fuel, and medicine
- prohibiting employers from firing employees who are isolated or quarantined for COVID-19
- changing the definition of a work week to allow state hospital nurses to care for COVID identified patients and still be eligible for full-time benefits

FY2021 OPERATING & CAPITAL BUDGET

Under the Maryland Constitution, the General Assembly must pass a balanced budget each year. Maryland has a “strong executive” model: the Governor proposes the initial budget early in session, and the General Assembly can only cut or restrict funds and move money around in the operating budget

FY21 Capital Budget

Capital Budget - Team 46 worked hard this year to secure & safeguard funding for many organizations & projects around our district, including...

Creative Alliance
The Well/Hon's Honey
Living Classrooms
Middle Branch Park
Rash Field
Hands on Patterson Park Public
Maryland Science Center
Port Discovery
Chesapeake Shakespeare
South Baltimore Community Land Trust
The Cherry Hill CDC
Life Ministries Food Pantry
Ronald McDonald House
National Aquarium

.... And \$12m for the Baltimore Regional Neighborhoods Initiative at DHCD that provides funding for community development corporations for capital projects around Baltimore

(although we can add to the capital budget). The FY21 operating budget that we passed is balanced and creates a more structurally-balanced budget in future years than we have seen in some time. We worked hard to ensure that we were able to fully fund K-12 education formulas and fully fund the promised increases in salary to all behavioral health and disabilities service providers. We also fully funded our community colleges and provided our state share of funding for the Howard Street Tunnel.

Fast Fact: Maryland's Governor has the strongest constitutional budget authority of any governor in the nation. This year you will have the opportunity to vote on whether you think (like I do!) that our General Assembly should be able to amend the operating budget like we can with the capital budget - and like nearly every other state legislature can.

EDUCATION

More people emailed me about the education reform and funding bill **The Blueprint for Maryland's Future (HB1300/SB1000)** than about any other single piece of legislation. After 3 years of meetings by the Kirwan Commission, this year we introduced and eventually passed landmark legislation that will change public education in Maryland over the next decade. Today, **fewer than 40% of graduating high school students are college and career ready**. Moreover, our current school funding formula is regressive – poorer school districts receive less funding and we have large achievement gaps based on socioeconomic status, race, disability, English language proficiency, and at-risk designation. And, average salaries for teachers are 25% below comparable professions and nearly half of teachers leave the profession after two years. **If we don't provide children a great education now, we will be paying higher costs in health care, public safety, and benefits generations to come.** The Blueprint is a transformational plan that makes 5 key investments, implemented over 10 years:

- Expanding full-day prekindergarten for low-income 3 and 4 year olds and providing more family support centers in high-poverty areas

HEARING FROM YOU!

As your Delegate, what matters to you matters to me! Based on what I heard from you, I focused my efforts this session on education, public safety, the environment, transportation, the arts, families and communities, small businesses, criminal justice reform, and open government. Many of my bills passed in one chamber but - because of the shortened session - not in the opposite chamber. I look forward to continuing to work on these issues in the future.

In this short session, I heard from 800+ people on a range of topics...

Education: 100+

Crime/Public Safety: 30+

Budget & Taxes: 100+

Transportation: 25+

The Arts: 30+

Housing: 30+

The Environment: 200+

Criminal Justice Reform: 40+

And more...

- Hiring and keeping high-quality, diverse teachers by paying teachers a salary comparable to other fields, providing more rigorous teacher preparation programs and implementing career ladders to provide more opportunities for career advancement
- Raising the standards for college and career readiness so students can compete with their international peers
- Providing more resources for the students who need them most
- Implementing an accountability board to monitor progress and ensure tax-payer funds are being used effectively

The Blueprint isn't just good for public schools, it's a vital investment in Maryland's economic future. It will help attract new businesses and entrepreneurs as our state adapts to an economy increasingly rooted in technological innovation. The Blueprint relies on strong accountability measures to ensure that new funding is spent how it should be, including the creation of a new oversight body: the Office of the Inspector General for Education.

Of equal importance, I was thrilled to support the **Built to Learn Act (HB1/SB1)**. This legislation will invest additional **capital funding** in our school buildings, including \$450 million for Baltimore City Public Schools. HB1 prioritizes schools with the oldest buildings in the system, those with significant facility deficiencies, schools with high concentrations of students eligible for free and reduced price meals, and schools with a high number of relocatable classrooms.

In the world of **higher education**, we made historic progress by passing **HB1260/SB1043** which finally requires the state to compensate HBCUs for over a decade of damaging program duplication that the state allowed to go on even though it undermined and hurt enrollment at HBCUs. We also took strides to support our student athletes in higher education. I am excited about the potential of a bill that I sponsored this year to support our college student athletes - **the Jordan McNair Safe and Fair Play Act (HB533/SB518)**. This bipartisan bill would allow student athletes the right to use their own name, image, or likeness to earn money (something the NCAA doesn't allow), and would create a Commission to review rules and ensure our student athletes are healthy and safe. We have many great supporters, including the McNair family, College Park's student government, the NFL Players Association, former college athletes, sports law professors and more! Although the bill did not pass this year, I will continue to champion this cause because I believe that many of our college athletes are being exploited and are being stripped of their basic human rights to participate in the economy.

I also heard from many of you about the various proposals in the General Assembly to increase revenue. For many years, revenue projections have demonstrated that our state sales tax is underperforming, largely because people buy fewer goods now and spend more money on services, including online services. Many of you wrote in with concerns about the large proposed sales tax bill (**HB1628**). I shared your concerns about its breadth and the fact that it may have placed many of our professionals at a disadvantage with other states. That bill did not pass.

Rather, we looked at ways to modernize our tax code without putting additional burdens on working families. [HB932](#) **modernizes Maryland's tax code**. Today, if you buy a CD at Best Buy, you pay sales tax - if you download the music on iTunes, you do not. **This bill ensures equity across platforms and evens the playing field between brick-and-mortar businesses and online outlets**. It brings us in line with 28 other states with the same exact revenue structure and will help fund public education. We also passed [HB732](#) to increase the existing excise tax on cigarettes by an additional \$1.75 and impose an excise tax on electronic smoking and vaping, something 21 other states and D.C. have already done. It also sets up Maryland to be the first state in the country to apply **a gross receipts tax to large advertising buys**. Companies such as Facebook will now be required to pay a tax based on the overall revenue of their online ads. Everyone can relate to constantly being buried by ads online, and this bill will ensure companies who use your personal information to make targeted ads help give back to our schools.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The violence in Baltimore City is absolutely unacceptable, and many of you wrote in to me to ask what the state plans to do to help create a safer city. The loss of life and ongoing crime is tragic and must end. I worked every day this session on legislation to create safer communities in Baltimore and around Maryland.

Two years ago, I championed and passed **Maryland's first program to prevent gun violence using evidence-based efforts**. Although the Governor funded the program during its first year, he zeroed it out in FY20. Therefore, **this year, I sponsored [HB822/SB708](#)**, a bill to mandate a minimum of \$10 million in funding for and to make several alterations to the Violence Intervention and Prevention Program (MD VIPP) which funds local efforts around the state. MD VIPP is the state's only program designed to fund a variety of evidence-based violence prevention programs like Safe Streets, Roca, and hospital-based violence intervention programs. The Police Commissioner agrees that these programs are a fundamental piece to creating a safer Baltimore - the police can do enforcement but they cannot do the prevention and intervention that is also needed. **Programs like these have been credited with violence reduction in Boston, Oakland, Chicago, and more**. New York, which has long provided stable funding to such programs, has seen a nearly 40% reduction in its gun homicide levels since 2010. I am thrilled that we were able to pass this legislation on the last day of session.

We also passed a number of other important public safety bills, including:

Strengthening Witness Intimidation Laws ([HB40](#)). This legislation lowers the standard of proof from clear and convincing to preponderance of the evidence in criminal cases when it's believed there has been witness intimidation. This gives prosecutors another tool in the toolbox when dealing with organized crime or gun cases where members of the community can be afraid to come forward and help with a case.

Auditing and Tracking Gun Crimes ([HB1629](#)). This bill requires a statewide audit of gun crimes to pinpoint where the breakdown exists in the criminal justice system, from 911 call to disposition. The better we can track this information the better law enforcement will have the ability to allocate resources where communities need them.

The PROTECT Act ([HB1408/SB929](#)). The PROTECT Program is established to maximize the use of State, local, and community resources to combat neighborhood decline in Baltimore City and throughout the State, support comprehensive strategies to reduce crime and fear in those communities, and ensure that Baltimore City Police Department sworn officers are utilized in direct public safety roles. The Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention will select 10 high-crime micro-zones within the State and create, as a civilian position, one coordinator in each neighborhood who lives in the neighborhood and will work with state agencies to support that community and better prepare returning citizens for re-entry and a life that is not reliant on crime.

Maryland State Crime Plan and Law Enforcement Councils ([SB907](#)). This emergency legislation creates the Law Enforcement Coordinating Council to prevent and reduce crime by (1) coordinating and focusing State resources and (2) ensuring interagency communications and intelligence sharing throughout State and local law enforcement agencies. The legislation also requires the Department of State Police to establish regional councils throughout the State to: identify regional crime trends; strategize on the deployment of resources to respond to regional crime -- particularly violent crime; review outstanding warrants; and discuss community engagement efforts.

Background Checks on All Private Gun Purchases ([HB4](#)). This crucial public safety legislation will ensure that all rifle and shotgun transfers are done above board. Currently, there is no law that requires background checks are conducted for private firearm sales. House Bill 4 will result in tens of thousands of additional background checks conducted and ensure each and every transaction is properly vetted. This bill also imposes penalties on any parties who attempt to circumvent this background check process or provide false information to complete a transfer.

I am hopeful that this robust package of legislation will make a real impact on crime and prosecution rates in Baltimore. I live in and am raising children in Baltimore and not a day goes by that I am not working to create a safer city for everyone.

ENVIRONMENT

As a coastal state and one dependent on our waterways and beaches for tourism, Maryland must play a leading role in preserving our environment - for future generations, but also for economic reasons. I am a strong supporter of environmental legislation, and am proud of my record as a “Green Champion” by the League of Conservation Voters. This year, I championed three bills to protect the environment: (1) **The Plastic Bag Reduction Act ([HB209/SB313](#))**, (2) **the Transit Safety and Investment Act ([HB368/SB424](#))**, and (3) **the Environmental Accountability and**

Transparency Act (HB614/SB460). All three of these bills sought to address global warming and the degradation of our environment: (1) by reducing trash and pollution of our waterways, (2) by making public transit in Maryland safer and more reliable so that people can get where they need to go, and so that more people are inclined to use public transit instead of driving their own cars, and (3) by ensuring that the public has access to complaints, enforcement reports, and violations of environmental and natural resource laws -- this will empower the public to be watchdogs and increase accountability at the Maryland Department of the Environment. All of these bills passed one chamber but not the other because of the shortened session. I plan to sponsor these bills again next year.

I supported many other environmental initiatives as well. Many of you reached out to me about [HB1545/SB887](#), a bill to responsibly **decrease Maryland's carbon dioxide emissions rate** by ending coal burning at Maryland's six remaining coal plants and support coal plant workers and communities impacted by coal plant closures by establishing a Coal Community Transition Fund. I also heard from many of you about [HB438/SB560](#), a bill to update **Maryland's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards** so that trash incineration is no longer classified as a renewable energy source, and is no longer subsidized by the state. Unfortunately, neither of these bills passed. After several years of effort, the General Assembly did pass a **ban on Chlorpyrifos (HB229/SB300)**. This bill prohibits aerial application of chlorpyrifos and establishes a Pesticide Transition Fund to support Maryland farmers transitioning away from chlorpyrifos. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) found that chlorpyrifos is the fourth most common pesticide found in human foods!

I was proud to be part of a movement this session to focus on **resiliency** as our coastal towns and cities in Maryland prepare for rising water levels and hotter temperatures. Flooding already causes around \$2 million in damages each year in Baltimore and the urban heat island effect causes public health issues throughout District 46. It's time that we start putting time and resources into planning for these inevitable emergencies. I co-sponsored [HB539/SB457](#) to allow the City and other counties to **create their own Resilience Authorities** to give more leeway to funding initiatives to mitigate flooding and rising temperatures.

My plastic bag ban legislation was part of the "**Pathway to Zero Waste**" legislative package this year. This package included many of the bills that I discussed above, plus legislation focused on **incentivizing composting, recycling transparency**, and more. I will be supporting and co-sponsoring many of these bills again next year to help them gain more traction and help move our state to a cleaner and more sustainable future.

TRANSPORTATION

One of my most important bills this session was legislation **to provide dedicated funding to the Maryland Transit Administration. The Transit Safety and Investment Act (HB368/SB424)** sought to ensure that the State is providing the proper investment into MTA's capital resources. MDOT's Capital Needs Inventory in 2019 revealed that they needed \$2 billion additional dollars

simply to maintain a state of good repair over the next 10 years! Although we were successful in the House, the Senate did not pass this legislation prior to Sine Die. With the rapid decrease in travel because of COVID-19, I suspect that our MTA will be in even more dire straits next year. I also helped usher through a bill to work toward expanded MARC service. [HB1236](#) will start the process of negotiating with Virginia and Delaware to expand commuter service and will require a plan for a spur between the Penn and Camden line in downtown Baltimore. Unfortunately, the study to restart creation of the Baltimore Bayview station was cut from the bill at the last moment - I will continue championing that as well.

Late last year I helped create the first **Maryland Transit Caucus** and this year it saw huge growth - we now count over 75 members! I am thrilled to help lead this Caucus and was proud of the package of bipartisan legislation we prioritized this year.

The Transit Caucus prioritized six bills this year - four of which passed through the House! They included: (1) the MTA funding bill; (2) the **P3 Oversight and Reform Act** ([HB1424](#)), to strengthen Maryland's public-private partnership laws to ensure oversight and predictability to protect the financial and environmental health of the state; (3) the **Pedestrian Safety Act** ([HB973/SB815](#)), to dedicate fines for traffic offenses related to pedestrians to the Pedestrian Safety Fund; (4) the **Electric Bus Transition Act** ([HB432/SB423](#)), to require MTA to transition its approximately 800 bus fleet to all electric over time, as the agency procures replacement buses; (5) the **Southern Maryland Transit Project** ([HB205/SB105](#)), which requires the state to pay over the course of several years for the final environmental planning phase of the Southern MD Rapid Transit Project; and (6) the **Western Maryland Transit Study** ([HB1367](#)), which requires the MDOT to study the feasibility of expanding commuter rail service to Western Maryland via the MARC Train line and/or currently inactive rail lines. Most of these bills passed in their own chamber, but none of them made it all the way to the Governor's desk. **We will remain committed to and continue to push these issues as the caucus grows stronger!** I look forward to working with my fellow members in the House and Senate to pass these important bills and create a more vibrant and better connected state.

ARTS

Over 25,248 full-time equivalent jobs in Maryland owe their creation to the arts sector in Maryland, along with \$87.4 million in local and state revenue. The total economic activity generated by the arts sector in Maryland has been measured to be over \$961 million per year. Undoubtedly, the arts sector in Maryland is prolific, an economic engine, and adds to the wealth of reasons to live in the State of Maryland – and in Baltimore, where we are so fortunate to have an abundance of museums, music, and arts organizations working with and in our communities every day. **Every year that I have been in office, the Governor has reduced funding for arts organizations. This year, he allocated zero capital dollars for arts organizations in the capital budget**, including museums, theaters, and more. Therefore, this session, I sponsored two bills to support our arts communities in Maryland – **one bill to support capital funding for arts organizations and create the Maryland Arts Capital Grant Program** ([HB127/SB287](#)), and

another to support operating funding ([HB135/SB465](#)). Combined, these bills sought to support our small and large arts organizations now and in the years to come. The arts not only enrich our lives, they help our state economy and our communities thrive. It's imperative that Maryland continue to support and invest in the arts. Both of these bills came very close to passing, and I will continue to support the arts next session and beyond!

PROMOTING STRONG FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Baltimore - and Maryland - are only as strong as our communities and families. I am passionate about supporting families, workers, and small businesses and every year I sponsor and support legislation to promote our communities.

Housing & Neighborhoods

This year, after **23 years** of introductions, the Maryland General Assembly **took a critical step towards ending housing discrimination by passing the Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) Act ([HB231/SB530](#))**. The HOME Act ensures that individuals using a voucher cannot be turned down for housing simply because of the type of income they have to spend on housing - it prohibits "source of income" discrimination. I was incredibly proud to be the lead sponsor of this legislation and carry on the work of former Delegates John Hurson, Tom Hucker, Salima Marriott, Liz Bobo, Doyle Niemann, and Steve Lafferty.

I also sponsored the **Community Development Program Act ([HB472/SB387](#))**, that, if passed would have provided additional resources to the dormant Community Development Fund, that is dedicated to supporting neighborhood revitalization, community organizing, community services, small business development and main street district revitalization across our state. We failed to pass the bill this year but I will continue to champion this cause in the future because I firmly believe in investing in community-based organizations because of the key role that they play in the neighborhood revitalization.

Supporting Workers & Families

I was a proud co-sponsor of the **Time to Care Act ([HB839/SB539](#))** again this year **which would give Marylanders more support when they need time off work to care for loved ones** at the beginning of life, the end of life, or during an emergency. I believe that the government has a role to play in ensuring stability for families at a time when personal life has to come first. Unfortunately, due to the shortened legislative session, this bill did not make it through the legislative process. I look forward to enthusiastically supporting it again next year.

Too many Maryland employees and businesses are being harmed by an unfair and unnecessary employment practice that remains all too common: relying on applicants' salary history to set pay. I co-sponsored the "wage history bill" ([HB123/SB217](#)) **that requires an employer, on request, to provide a job applicant the wage range for the position to which they are applying**, rather than allowing the employer to rely on an applicant's wage history to determine their future pay. The latter approach has a tendency to perpetuate wage discrimination from one

job to the next. Eliminating salary history from the decision of what to pay someone is long overdue; enacting this legislation will make Maryland employment policy more equitable for all. This bill passed and will become law.

I was also an enthusiastic supporter of **Maryland's CROWN Act** ([HB1444/SB 531](#)) which will add hair texture and style to the definition of race and prohibit employers from discriminating against employees for their hairstyles. This bill was passed with bipartisan and overwhelming support and was sent to the Governor.

Protecting Marylanders' Access to Healthcare

We worked on a number of important health care bills this session to ensure that all Marylanders have access to quality, affordable health care services and medications, including:

[HB959/SB872](#): Health Insurance - As the Trump administration makes efforts in Congress, in the courts, and across the country to derail the Affordable Care Act, it was important to join my colleagues in supporting this bill which will codify several aspects of the ACA into state law, specifically the consumer protection provisions.

[HB1120/SB738](#): Health Care Providers and Health Benefit Plans - This bill restricts hospitals and medical facilities from withholding medical services from a patient due to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, or disability of the individual. It is critical that we try to remove bias from the health care system and ensure equitable access to care for all.

[HB448/SB402](#): Telehealth Practices - This bill authorizes health care providers to provide telehealth services for their patients so long as the level of care remains consistent. Telehealth makes it easier for Marylanders with geographic, time, and mobility restrictions to receive primary and behavioral health services. Telehealth is also vital in a time of public health emergency, such as COVID-19.

[HB1100](#): Prescription Drug Affordability Board - This bill allows the Prescription Drug Affordability Board to set upper payment limits with the ultimate goal of lowering the cost of prescription drugs for Marylanders.

[HB1420/SB 875](#): Hospital Financial Assistance Policies and Bill Collections - I was a proud co-sponsor of this legislation which will expand financial assistance to families across Maryland who otherwise would not be able to afford hospital care.

All of these bills passed and are pending the Governor's signature to become law!

I will continue to work with my colleagues next year to pass [HB1081/SB873](#): **the Medical Debt Protection Act**. This bill would have put into place a number of guardrails to protect Marylanders from predatory hospital debt collection practices and ensure that Marylanders would not become destitute because they got sick.

Protecting Consumers - Retail Energy Suppliers

In the past two years, the number of calls I receive from constituents complaining about doorknocks from retail energy salesmen continues to increase. This year, I was proud to sponsor [HB1224/SB685](#) to ensure that low-income Marylanders who receive energy assistance from the state are not being taken advantage of by these third-party retail supply companies. This legislation would follow the lead of several other states that have created a way to ensure that only third party suppliers with electricity/gas products that cost less than standard offer service can take energy assistance funds...another way to ensure that we are using taxpayer dollars (via energy assistance programs) most efficiently and responsibly! This bill passed the Senate but we ran out of time to consider it in the House. I will work hard to pass this bill next year.

SUPPORTING MARYLAND BUSINESSES

Baltimore is special because of our people and because of our small businesses - they add character and a draw to so many of our neighborhoods! Whether it's an urban pirate ship docked in Fell's Point, an independent bookstore, cheese shop, restaurant, tech or architecture or law firm - the economy of our District and our City relies on these businesses to thrive and to create jobs. I try hard to be an advocate for our business sector, including brick and mortar stores and our entrepreneurial community. This year, I supported our small businesses by co-sponsoring several pieces of legislation, including [HB492/SB493](#), a bipartisan bill that increases the **minimum amount of funding that the Governor must appropriate each year to the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network Fund to over \$1 million**. The SBDC offers free business consulting services to new and existing small businesses. The counseling provided ranges from best practices to financing to bringing all appropriate or applicable resources to the table. I also co-sponsored a bill to establish the **Maryland Small Business Innovation Research and Technology Transfer Incentive Program ([HB514/SB398](#))**, which aims to foster job creation and economic development in the state through a grant and investment program administered by the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO).

I also enthusiastically supported a bill to **create greater opportunities for minority business enterprises ([HB313/SB442](#))** and was a proud sponsor of [HB521/SB583](#) to establish the **Maryland Small Business Innovation Research Technical Assistance Program**. This program provides technical assistance to eligible small businesses to encourage and facilitate the receipt of grants under the federal Small Business Innovation Research and Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) programs. **I am thrilled that all four of these bills passed both chambers and are awaiting the Governor's signature to become law**. Unfortunately, we were not able to pass [HB930/SB977](#) which was a bill that Delegate Lewis and I proposed with Senator Hester to establish a **small business health insurance subsidy program** to help defray costs for small businesses to access affordable health insurance coverage through the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

I heard from many of you this year about [HB1219/SB817](#) which would take politics out of the parole process by increasing the number of years an individual with a life sentence must serve in prison before being able to be paroled, and **removing the requirement for the Governor to review and approve parole**. Unfortunately, this bill did not have time to make its way through the Senate in the shortened session. Fortunately, we were able to pass [HB801/SB684](#) to create the state's first **pre-release unit *for women*** - who have never had one before! Pre-release centers are critical resources for successful re-entry and it puts women inmates at a huge disadvantage not to have access to one.

Too often, individuals land in jail simply for being poor and unable to afford paying a fine or fee. Following the lead of D.C. and Virginia, **I worked with Attorney General Brian Frosh** this session to pass legislation prohibiting the MVA from suspending a driver's license merely because an individual cannot afford to pay a fine or fee (civil suit is still an option for the state). [HB280/SB234](#) will also enable more people to take advantage of payment plans offered by the court system which can apply retroactively.

I also worked with the Maryland Parent-Teacher Association, the Office of the Public Defender, and many churches to propose legislation designed to ensure that our young people are not falsely confessing to charges and their parents are notified when they are detained by police. Children under 18 provide false confessions at three times the rate of adults. This past year, two young students (with disabilities) were questioned by police in school for having play money and their parents were not notified. As a parent, I find that unacceptable. I worked on [HB624/SB593](#), **the Juvenile Interrogation Protection Act** to ensure parental notification, *Miranda* rights that are understandable for kids, and to ensure that a lawyer is available for children prior to questioning. The bill did not pass this session, but I will continue to work to ensure due process exists for all Marylanders.

OPEN & ETHICAL GOVERNMENT

I believe that the government should be open and transparent to all residents as a key component of Democracy. In order to move us closer towards this goal, this session I sponsored the **Equitable Access to Records Act** ([HB502/SB590](#)) which streamlines and simplifies the process for residents making requests under the Public Information Act. In this same vein, I co-sponsored a bill ([HB140/SB56](#)) which requires petitions and ballot questions to be written in plain language - at a 6th grade reading level or below - so that more Marylanders can truly understand what they are voting on when issues come to the public for a vote. These bills did not pass this session - we simply ran out of time - but I will continue working on open government issues next session. As the **new ethics subcommittee chair**, I also oversaw a number of ethics bills and I was happy to help pass [HB315](#), a bill that ensures that there is no 'revolving door' in government so that in addition to legislators, that also no secretaries can leave their positions and immediately begin lobbying. We also increased penalties for bribery. We did not have time to pass other legislation, but I look forward to continuing to strengthen our ethics laws - send me your ideas!

THANK YOU!

It is the honor of my life to serve as a State Delegate in the Maryland House and to represent the people of District 46. In the limited amount of time that we had, I worked day in and day out to pass legislation to create opportunities, reduce barriers, create a safe, thriving, and prosperous Maryland for all.

I look forward to continuing serving as your representative and hope you will keep in touch with me during this challenging time. Never hesitate to reach out to me or my legislative director, Dani DiPietro, with concerns, questions, or ideas. Our office phone number is (410) 841-3319 and we can be reached by email at brooke.lierman@house.state.md.us. Take care!

My best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brooke Lierman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.