

# AnnapolisReport



Senator  
Catherine E. Pugh



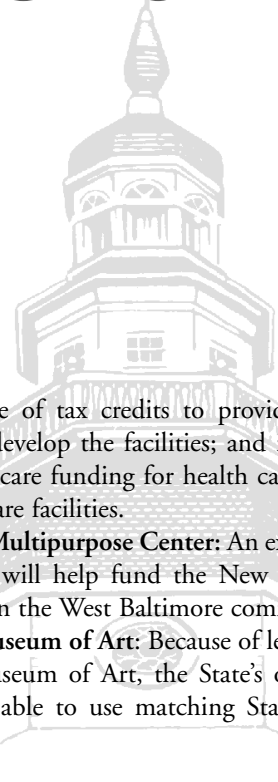
Delegate  
Frank M. Conaway, Jr.



Delegate  
Barbara A. Robinson



Delegate  
Shawn Z. Tarrant



*Your legislators from District 40 have prepared this report summarizing events of the 2007 legislative session. If you would like more information on any of these topics, contact your legislator at the addresses listed, or phone the Department of Legislative Services Information Desk at 410-946-5400.*

## LOCAL LEGISLATION OF INTEREST

**Parent -Teacher Associations (PTAs):** A pilot program in Baltimore and Prince George's County will raise money for high schools by providing a dollar-for-dollar match from the State for private donations made to each high school PTA, up to a maximum of \$125,000 for each school system.

**Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Grant:** The State will also provide a \$100,000 matching grant to the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity for the renovation of its Baltimore City corporate headquarters.

**Restoration Gardens Grant:** The Board of Directors of Empire Homes of Maryland, Inc. will receive a State funding for a matching grant of \$150,000 for the construction of a youth supportive housing facility.

**Drug Treatment Initiative:** The Maryland State Drug and Alcohol Abuse Council must review of the State's approach to drug treatment, including a review of the location of treatment services and the use of employment and housing services for individuals in treatment.

**Public Transportation:** The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) must continue to operate the Amtrak Line between Perryville and Penn Station in Baltimore (Penn line) and the CSX line between Frederick and Point of Rocks (Frederick extension) and cannot close a station on any route before a public hearing has been held with adequate notice as specified in the bill to the public.

**Transit Service for Low-Income Individuals:** The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is required to issue weekly transit passes for local bus, light rail, or metro subway service provided by MTA to eligible training organizations that must provide the passes to individuals receiving employment and training services through a workforce investment training program. In addition, the organization must reimburse MDOT for the cost of the training passes.

**Urban Senior Care Communities:** A task force will study the feasibility of developing senior care facilities in Baltimore City;

investigate the use of tax credits to provide incentives for the private sector to develop the facilities; and investigate the use of Medicaid or Medicare funding for health care services needed by seniors at senior care facilities.

**New Shiloh Multipurpose Center:** An extension was given on a State loan that will help fund the New Shiloh Multipurpose Center, a project in the West Baltimore community.

**Baltimore Museum of Art:** Because of legislation this session, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the State's oldest and largest art museum, will be able to use matching State money in a more efficient manner.

## STATE AID TO BALTIMORE CITY

State aid to Baltimore City will total \$1.2 billion in fiscal 2008. On a per capita basis, State aid to the city is \$1,885. In addition, State retirement payments for city teachers and librarians will total \$56.9 million.

**Education:** State funding for public schools remains a high priority. Over the last five years, State funding for public schools in Baltimore City has increased by \$263.7 million. In fiscal 2008, public schools in the City will receive \$832.7 million for operations and \$52.7 million for school construction. In addition, the city library system will receive a total of \$6.6 million in fiscal 2008 and the State Library Resource Center at the Enoch Pratt Free Library will receive an additional \$10.4 million in State funding.

At the higher education level, State funding for the Baltimore City Community College will total \$40.2 million in operational grants. Morgan State University will receive \$8.7 million in capital funds, Coppin State will receive \$87.1 million and other educational facilities will receive \$14.7 million.

**Public Safety:** Police protection, fire, and rescue aid in the City will receive \$11.0 million in State funding. Also, the State will provide \$126.6 million for the operation of the city detention center and the central booking facility, both of which are State agencies.

**Social Services:** The State budget includes \$256.8 million for City programs focused on health, mental health, developmental disabilities, alcohol and drug abuse treatment, prevention and disease control, and child welfare services. In addition, capital grants will be provided for community service organizations, including the Community Housing Associates, the Glenwood Life Counseling

Center, the Baltimore Medical System, the Chase Brexton Health Services, and the Healthy Start Transitional Housing.

**Quality of Life:** Local transportation and land preservation grants remain fully funded. Local highway grants for the City will total \$233.4 million in fiscal 2008 and local Program Open Space grants will total \$11.6 million. Additional funds will also aid community parks and playgrounds.

**Community Projects and Programs:** In addition, a number of other community projects and programs will receive State funding, including a substance abuse treatment facility at Baltimore Station; improvements at the Baltimore Zoo; and the WestSide Revitalization Project.

STATEWIDE ISSUES OF INTEREST TO CONSTITUENTS IN DISTRICT 40

The General Assembly of Maryland, at its 422nd session from January to April 2007, considered nearly 2,500 bills and resolutions that affect many areas of importance to Maryland citizens. Of these, 652 bills were enacted, most of which take effect October 1, 2007.

Successful 2007 initiatives strengthen the laws related to the protection of children by increasing the maximum penalty for possession of child pornography, passing a Jessica's law that prohibits parole during a mandatory minimum sentence for sexual predators of minors, and making sexual abuse of a minor under age 13 a crime of violence under certain circumstances. The General Assembly also created new offenses related to criminal gangs and the crime of human trafficking.

Other action to benefit children requires child residential center employees to be at least 21 years old and to complete a State-approved training program, and creates a statewide Child Support Payment Incentive program for delinquent parents with large arrearages. Young would-be drivers who are truants can't get a learner's permit. Child dependents will be allowed to stay on their parent's insurance policies until age 25.

Actions by citizens to protect themselves against identity theft were enhanced by establishing procedures for security freezes on credit reports and by requiring businesses to disclose security

breaches of personal information. Additionally, new law requires automatic expungement of all police records for anyone arrested or confined but not charged, including a procedure for expungement by those in a similar situation before the law's October 1, 2007, effective date.

Efforts to protect the State's environment are ongoing. This session, the legislature passed the Clean Cars Act, based on the California model, which, after implementation of regulations, will lower vehicle emissions beginning with the 2011 model year. Other successful measures support the use of biodiesel and other renewable alternative fuels and the use of alternative energy sources such as solar energy and wind.

A successful health-related initiative bans indoor smoking statewide in public places and in work environments that are not open to the public to protect those employees. Increased funding for the State's Stem Cell Research Fund supports both public and private research. To reduce fatalities caused by fire when cigarettes are left unattended, cigarettes manufactured or sold in Maryland after June 30, 2008, must meet national fire safety standards for self-extinguishment.

Maryland scored a first in the nation by requiring certain State contractors to pay their workers a "living wage" with rates based on geographic location.

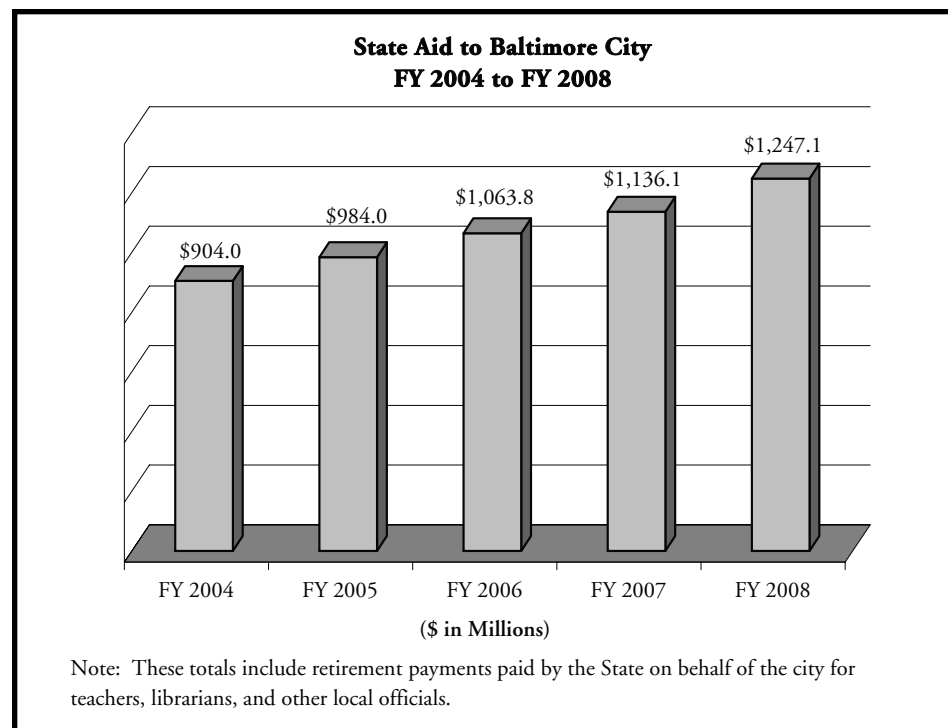
In the 2008 general election, voters will have the opportunity to decide whether the Maryland Constitution should be amended to provide for early voting. The General Assembly also agreed, if money is available, to provide voter-verifiable paper trails beginning with the 2010 elections. And for the first time, with the exception of those who are convicted of buying or selling votes, a convicted felon is eligible to register to vote on completion of the court-ordered sentence.

The General Assembly adopted a \$30 billion budget for fiscal 2008 that is just 3.5% over fiscal 2007. (Fiscal 2008 begins July 1, 2007, and ends June 30, 2008.) The budget includes historic increases for the public schools, preserves a safety net for low-income Marylanders, and there are new initiatives to provide oral health care for the underserved.

COURTS AND PUBLIC SAFETY

**Eyewitness Identification:** Ensuring that eyewitness evidence is as reliable as possible is essential in preserving a defendant's due process rights. New law requires each law enforcement agency in the State to write and adopt an eyewitness identification policy that complies with federal standards.

**Drug-Exposed Infants:** Exposure to methamphetamine is as detrimental to a



child's health as exposure to cocaine and heroin. The definition of a drug-exposed infant now includes exposure to methamphetamine or a derivative of methamphetamine for the purposes of determining whether a child is in need of assistance or whether terminating a parent's rights is in the child's best interests.

**Ground Rents:** Dating from colonial times, this form of property holding recently has been used to take homes or charge large sums for past due rent. In 2003, the General Assembly limited the amount that ground rent holders could receive as reimbursement for expenses to collect past due rent and for ejection. This session, emergency legislation prohibits the creation of new residential ground rents beginning January 22, 2007. Other passed measures dismantle the ground rent system as a means of losing one's home for failure to pay, by providing for the creation of a lien. Additional bills make numerous other changes to modernize the practice.

#### EDUCATION

**State Education Aid – Increases:** As the final year of the phase-in for the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002, fiscal 2008 will see the largest increase yet in State funding. The aid will increase by \$691 million over fiscal 2007 to nearly \$5.2 billion, an increase of 15.4%. In total, education aid will increase by \$2.2 billion from fiscal 2002 to 2008, reflecting an average annual growth rate of 10.2%. Future increases will be driven by inflation and enrollment increases and are expected to be more modest.

**At-Risk and Lower-Wealth Students:** More support for these students was an objective of the Bridge Act. In fiscal 2008, funding based on the numbers of at-risk students increases 24.2% for compensatory education, 20.9% for special education, and 42% for limited English proficiency. Lower-wealth student aid increases 30.4% under the guaranteed tax base program that provides aid to 11 school systems located in jurisdictions with less than 80% of the statewide wealth per pupil.

**Colleges and Universities - Funding:** Every segment of higher education receives

a general fund increase in the fiscal 2008 budget. New general funds total \$136.7 million or 10.4%. \$23.0 million of general funds will defray expenses associated with a 2% cost-of-living allowance for State employees. There is an additional \$29.3 million in general funds associated with one-time health insurance savings. Including this amount, institutions actually have approximately \$166 million in additional general funds available for expenditure in fiscal 2008, an increase of 12.6%.

**Four-year Institutions:** The University System of Maryland will receive a total general fund increase of \$80 million, or 8.5% over fiscal 2007, including \$15.4 million to offset the loss of tuition revenue resulting from the second-year freeze on undergraduate resident tuition rates. Morgan State University receives a total increase of \$5.2 million in general funds including \$0.9 million for the tuition freeze, or 8.3% higher than fiscal 2007. State aid for private institutions increases \$8.6 million over fiscal 2007 or 17.2%.

**Community Colleges:** For fiscal 2008, the budget fully funds community colleges increases of \$31.8 million over fiscal 2007. Community colleges also receive other revenues from the State, tuition and fee revenues, and appropriations from local governments. Baltimore City Community College receives a \$5.2 million, or 14.8%, increase in general funds.

#### HEALTH, HEALTH INSURANCE, AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**Medicaid and Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP) Funding Increases:** Funding for these programs increases by 6.4%, bringing the total to \$4.9 billion. About 650,000 people are expected to enroll in Medicaid or MCHP in fiscal 2008, an increase of 15,000 over projected fiscal 2007 levels.

New funding (\$18 million) will phase out hospital day limits imposed on Medicaid recipients to save money, allowing Medicaid to begin paying for every day of necessary hospital care by the middle of fiscal 2008. The budget also restores, at a cost of \$11 million, State-funded Medicaid coverage for about 3,500

legal immigrant children and pregnant women which had been discontinued in fiscal 2006 but was restored following a court ruling that the elimination of coverage violated the Maryland Constitution.

**Small Group Insurance:** Small employers may get an administrative discount if they purchase additional benefits for their employees such as dental, disability, or vision insurance or other types of special coverage. Small employers may also offer a limited benefit plan to seasonal, temporary, and part-time workers.

**Community-based Services for Children:** \$16.5 million in new funding provide community-based services and community-based out-of-home placements needed by children with mental or developmental disabilities, regardless of eligibility for the State Medical Assistance Program.

#### STATE GOVERNMENT

**State Employee Compensation:** Fiscal 2008 benefits for State employees include the required State match of \$600 for employee contributions to individual deferred comp plans, merit increases from 1.7% to 3.9%, and a general salary increase of 2%.

#### PLEASE CONTACT US:

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**Senator Catherine E. Pugh** is an Assistant Deputy Majority Whip and Chair of the Joint Committee on Fair Practices. She is also a member of the Finance, Joint Audit, and Substance Abuse Committees. Senator Pugh, formerly a member of the House of Delegates, is a member of the Legislative Black Caucus and Treasurer of the Women Legislators of Maryland. A long-time Baltimore City community activist, Senator Pugh also served on the Baltimore City Council, representing District 4. A graduate of Morgan State University, Senator Pugh is President and CEO of C. E. Pugh & Company.

**Delegate Frank M. Conaway, Jr.**, was first elected to the House of Delegates in 2007. He serves on the Judiciary Committee and on its Estates and Trusts Subcommittee. Delegate Conaway is also a member of the General Assembly's Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland. He attended Howard and Morgan State Universities, as well as Sojourner-Douglass College. Currently, Delegate Conaway is employed by the Municipal Post Office, City of Baltimore. He is an author and a member of the Prince Hall Masons.

**Delegate Barbara A. Robinson**, newly elected in 2007, serves on the Appropriations Committee and its Public Safety and Transportation Subcommittee and Oversight Committee on Pensions. Delegate Robinson is also a member of the Legislative Black Caucus and the Women Legislators of Maryland. She is a graduate of both the University of Baltimore and Coppin State University. She is the Founder and Executive Director, Self Pride, Inc., and a talk show host on WEAA Radio. She has won numerous civic awards including Woman of the Year, Zonta International, Inc., in 2006.

**Delegate Shawn Z. Tarrant**, now serving his first term in the House of Delegates, sits on the Health and Government Operations Committee and is a member of the Legislative Black Caucus. He is a graduate of Norfolk State University and for many years has been the Region Director, State Government Operations, Bristol-Myers Squibb. Among his many community activities, Delegate Tarrant continues to serve as President of the Ashburton Area Association and on the Board of Deacons of the Union Baptist Church.

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