

Dana's News from Annapolis

Dear Friends,

The 445th Session of the Maryland General Assembly ended at midnight on Monday, April 7th. This was the most challenging session I've ever experienced. I used to say that my first year, 2007, which was when the Great Recession started, was the most difficult. But this year was difficult in a different way.

We started the session knowing that we had to close a \$3 billion deficit in the State's budget. But things got worse with the cuts to the federal workforce that the Trump Administration has implemented very suddenly, affecting thousands of Marylanders, and the upending of established federal policy on education, immigration, and other areas. Plus, there is the uncertainty generated by the prospect of more cuts to State funding provided by the federal government.

Despite all these challenges, we passed a balanced budget with \$2.4 billion in cash reserves, to at least partially hedge against further federal cuts. We also passed energy reform legislation in response to rising utility costs and health care bills that will guard against repeal of federal health care legislation. We ended the session knowing that, in contrast to the new Administration and Congress, we have acted and governed responsibly.

One of my roles in the House is serving as Chair of the Environment Subcommittee. The Subcommittee is usually busy in any year with environmental bills dealing with the Chesapeake Bay, climate change, recycling, pesticides, and other weighty issues. But this year, we were particularly busy, and I found myself working to negotiate several major bills and then present them on the House floor. They included bills on such topics as Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS), Clean Cars and Advanced Clean Truck standards, bottle bill recycling, mattress recycling, extended producer responsibility (EPR), and other topics. I was greatly helped by the generous assistance provided by such experts as Chris Parts, Ben Roush, Chaz Miller, and Kitty McIlroy.

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DANA'S LEGISLATION

I was very pleased that the General Assembly passed 10 of my bills, several of which focused on public safety and motor vehicle safety.



[HB 131 /SB 11 Environment - Bay Restoration Fund - Septic System Upgrade Program:](#)

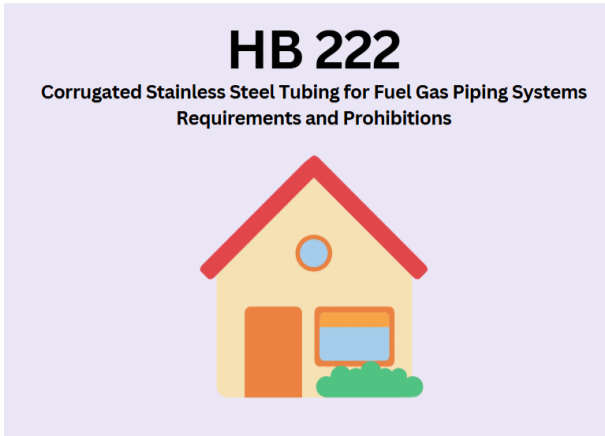
This bill will require MDE to include failing septic systems located within the watershed of a nitrogen-impaired body of water as a priority for funding assistance from the Bay Restoration Fund. Failing septic systems increase the nitrogen levels of rivers and

streams not only making stream life unsustainable but increasing the amount of nitrogen flowing into the Chesapeake Bay.

[HB 222 / SB 175 Public Safety - Fuel Gas Piping Systems and Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing - Prohibitions and Study:](#)

Corrugated Stainless-Steel Tubing (CSST) is a product used to deliver propane and methane gas into homes in many areas in Maryland. But when lightning strikes a home, CSST can malfunction, causing gas leaks to occur which in turn can cause a house fire.

Under HB 222, the MD Department of Labor and the Office of the State Fire Marshal will make recommendations on preventing the fire hazards associated with CSST and gas piping.

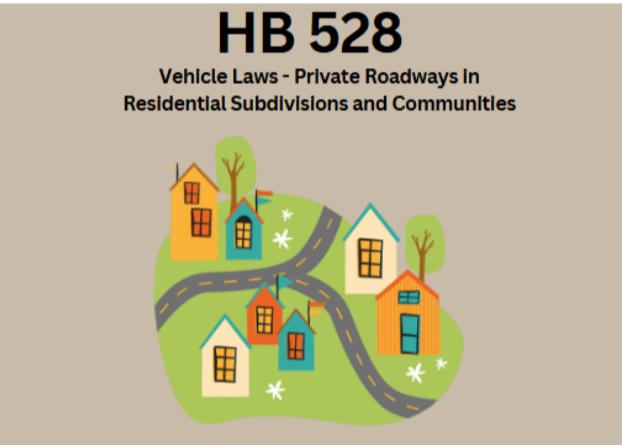


[HB 344 / SB 315 Maryland Environmental Service - Membership of Board of Directors - Alterations:](#)

This legislation will remove the State Treasurer from the Maryland Environmental Service (MES) Board of Directors and replace that position with the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Planning or their designee.

[HB 528 / SB 915 Baltimore County - Vehicle Laws - Private Roadways in Residential Communities:](#)

Under state law, local police cannot enforce vehicle laws on private roads in homeowners' associations and condo associations. This legislation creates a pilot program in Baltimore County to authorize the police to enforce vehicle laws in the pilot area (the Queen Anne Village Community), helping to improve safety for residents.



[HB 938 Continuing Care Providers - Governing Bodies - Membership:](#)

This bill requires that the governing bodies of continuing care providers—retirement communities for older adults that provide residents with a continuum of care from independent living, to assisted living, to skilled nursing care—include an alternate member from the community in addition to a voting member from the community, to ensure residents always have a voting presence.

[HB 1152 / SB 896 Pet Policy Transparency Act:](#)

This bill will require landlords to provide a link to a property's pet policy on its website and include it with rental application forms. The bill also standardizes the information that should be provided in a property's pet policy. With these provisions, it will be easier for renters to know early in the process whether and what kinds of pets are allowed.



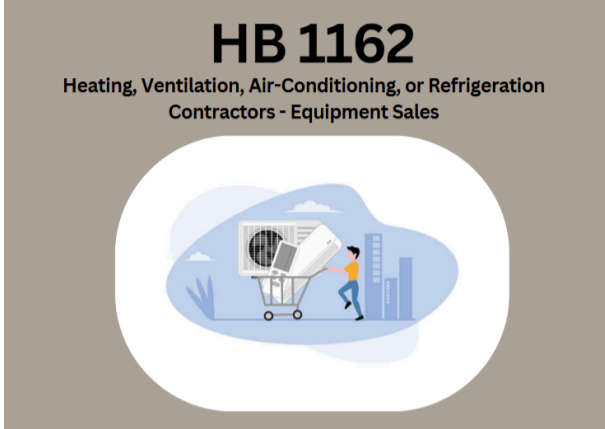


[HB 1155 / SB 722 Department of the Environment - Definition of Ecological Restoration:](#)

This bill defines "ecological restoration" as an activity aimed at recovering, re-establishing, or enhancing a degraded ecosystem. Having this definition in the Maryland Environmental Code is critical to elevating "ecological restoration" as a tool for Maryland's response to climate change and habitat loss.

[HB 1162 Heating, Ventilation, Air-Conditioning, or Refrigeration Contractors - Equipment Sales:](#)

This legislation establishes a requirement that HVAC equipment distributors only sell equipment to individuals legally authorized to install the equipment. By requiring equipment sellers to follow license requirements, this legislation will significantly improve compliance and benefit Maryland Consumers.



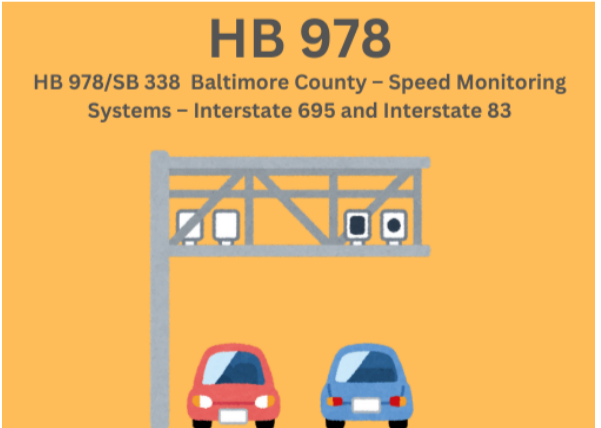
[HB 1375 Vehicle Equipment - Portable Variable Messaging Signs - Authorization:](#)

This legislation will allow tow trucks to display portable variable messaging signs while at the scene of a crash or a disabled vehicle. The use of these signs will be regulated by the State Highway Administration. These signs will be a clear and effective way of alerting drivers to the

presence of a tow truck and any potential dangers on the road, in addition to protecting the responders.

[HB 1543 /SB 1000 Gaming - Sports Wagering Facilities - Request for Relocation:](#)

This bill enables the transfer of a sports wagering facility license a few miles away from their current location within Baltimore County.



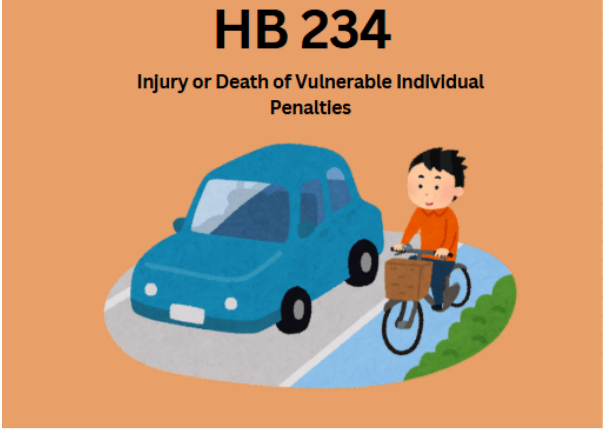
[HB 978/SB 338 Baltimore County – Speed Monitoring Systems – Interstate 695 and Interstate 83:](#)

Drivers on the Beltway and JFX drive way too fast, sometimes with tragic results. Just this past Saturday (April 5), three people died in a fiery crash on the Beltway. Senator Chris West and I cross-filed legislation to authorize SHA to put four speed cameras on the County part of the Beltway in each direction,

and three cameras in each direction on I-83 heading North. The speed camera locations will be identified by SHA as ones that are high risk for motor vehicle crashes that result in serious bodily injury or death. Drivers will receive a \$40 ticket for driving 12 mph or more over the speed limit. Although my bill didn't pass, Senator West's bill did, and hopefully, it will slow drivers down and improve traffic safety. I want to thank Senator West for his leadership on this issue.

[HB 234 /SB 385 Vehicle Laws - Injury or Death of Vulnerable Individual – Penalties:](#)

This bill passed the House, but not the Senate, so I'll introduce it again next year. It would have expanded penalties that were passed in a similar bill in 2021 to include the possibility of incarceration up to 2 months for anyone who operates a car negligently and as a result seriously injures or kills a vulnerable road user. The legislation I sponsored, and the General Assembly passed, in 2021 defined a "vulnerable road user" (VRU) to include pedestrians, bicyclists, highway and utility workers, and emergency personnel working along a highway.



[HB 1556 Environment – Advanced Clean Cars II Program and Advanced Clean Trucks Program – Implementation, Application, and Enforcement:](#)

This was the most controversial bill I introduced this year. The **Advanced Clean Cars II Program** and the **Advanced Clean Trucks Program**, created in 2023, seek to accelerate the transition to zero-emission vehicles by setting higher electric vehicle (EV) adoption mandates. The Clean Cars standard requires that 43% of all vehicles shipped by each manufacturer to Maryland dealers in model year 2027—starting next fall—be EVs. In model year 2028, that requirement increases to 51% of all vehicles shipped to dealerships. By contrast, in 2024, the percentage of new EV car sales in Maryland was 10.1%, an increase of only 1% from 2023. The percentage of new car sales that were plug-in electric hybrids was 2.7%. Obviously, Maryland is a long way from meeting its goals.

Manufacturers who can't meet Clean Car and Clean Truck mandates have told car and truck dealers that they will send fewer cars and trucks to Maryland dealers to avoid penalties mandated by the programs. That would mean a large reduction in cars that dealers can offer, resulting in far fewer choices for Maryland buyers and a huge loss in sales for Maryland dealers. My bill would have waived penalties for the Clean Cars and Clean Trucks programs for two years. By suspending enforcement for these two model years, the bill would have provided temporary flexibility for vehicle manufacturers and dealers.

Then on April 4th, the Governor issued an Executive Order that accomplished what HB 1556 set out to do. Therefore, my bill, which was on its way to passage, did not proceed. But we accomplished the goal of giving our auto and truck dealers some relief from enforcement of the EV standards and ensuring they'll be able to sell a full complement of cars and trucks for the next few years.

MAJOR SESSION LEGISLATION

FY 2026 BUDGET

[HB 350 Budget Bill](#)

Key points about the final budget approved by the House and Senate include:

- Significant Spending Reductions: The budget cut \$1.6 billion in general fund spending. Additionally, special fund spending was reduced by \$298 million. The budget also abolished 364 new or vacant state agency positions.
- Decreases General Fund Spending: Overall general fund spending was reduced by \$400M (1.5%) from FY2025 levels.
- Preserves Strong Reserves Against Impact of Potential Federal Actions: \$2.4 billion in cash resources (equivalent to 9.4% of general fund revenues) are preserved, including \$2.1 billion in the Revenue Stabilization Account (Rainy Day Fund) and \$317 million in the General Fund.
- Meets Spending Affordability Goals: The budget delivers a \$317 million general fund balance and a \$7 million structural surplus—well above Spending Affordability Committee targets. The long-term fiscal outlook has been significantly improved, reducing the structural gap for FY27 from \$2.9 billion to under \$150 million. Spending reductions and revenue proposals produce a structural surplus in FY26.

- Raises \$1.2 billion in ongoing revenues that helps eliminate the structural deficit; 94% of taxpayers will pay the same or less in income taxes under the new income tax structure.
 - Supports Transportation Infrastructure: Raises \$500 million for transportation, addressing long-term infrastructure needs.
 - Restores Key Legislative Priorities:
 - \$122.4 million for teacher collaborative time in schools
 - \$15 million for cancer research
 - \$11 million for crime victim services
 - \$7 million for Local Enterprise Zone Grants
 - Funding for Public TV, the Arts Council, and BCCC.
 - Adds \$181.5 million for Services for Developmentally Disabled, which reversed harmful cuts proposed by the Governor.
 - Invests in Maryland's Economic Future:
 - \$139 million to grow private-sector jobs, including \$27.5 million to make Maryland the "Capital of Quantum"
 - \$38 million for Tradepoint Atlantic
 - Preserves Health Care for 1.5 million Marylanders: Provides \$15.6 billion for Medicaid and funds provider rate increases across critical services.
 - Boosts State Employee Pay: \$200.6 million for salary enhancements, including 1% COLA and ~2.5% increments for unionized employees.
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ENERGY AND ENVIORNMENT

[HB 1035 / SB 937 Next Generation Energy Act](#)

[HB 1036 / SB 931 Renewable Energy Certainty Act](#)

[HB 1037 / SB 909 Energy Resource Adequacy and Planning Act](#)

Taken together, these three bills make major changes to Maryland's energy policy by catalyzing in-state energy generation while protecting Maryland's ratepayers.

HB 1035 provides ratepayer protections in the future and direct relief to ratepayers in Fiscal Year 2026. Among other protections in the bill, the Public Service Commission (PSC) will be unable to approve multiyear rate plans—which lock in rate increases over several years—unless there is a proven benefit to customers. It also limits the use of ratepayer money to replace gas pipelines unless utilities show there is a safety issue. A separate bill that would remove waste incineration from Tier 1 of the state's renewable portfolio was added to HB 1035.

HB 1036 focuses on making solar energy easier to achieve in Maryland. It prevents local governments from blocking solar developments and sets statewide standards for implementing solar. For example, it allows solar farms to be built on 5% of any county's priority preservation area; after that, counties can restrict the placement of solar on the remaining 95% of county farmland.

HB 1037 creates a new state office focused on future energy planning, which will free the state from relying on the regional grid (PJM) for information. This new office will ensure that policymakers have an accurate assessment of current and future energy needs and ways to handle those needs with minimal impact on ratepayers.

These three bills will also establish expedited procedures for new power facilities in Maryland, potentially including nuclear, natural gas, and battery energy storage

[SB 901 Environment – Packaging and Paper Products – Producer Responsibility Plans:](#)

This bill was the result of a study done by the Maryland Department of the Environment in 2023. It establishes a "Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility Program" that requires packaging producers to pay a fee for their packaging materials, and it incentivizes producers to reduce their packaging and make it recyclable. The fees will be used to reimburse counties for much of the cost of collecting packaging and recyclables.

[HB 506/SB 428 Chesapeake Bay Legacy Act:](#)

This bill establishes the "LEEF" program, "Leadership in Environmentally Engaged Farming," creating a new framework to incentivize and encourage farming practices that support improved water quality, carbon sequestration, and soil health. The bill codifies the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) water quality monitoring program and asserts its

importance for long-term, scientific data collection. It also adjusts DNR's agricultural land lease requirements to allow for lease operators to pursue indigenous and other regenerative agricultural practices. Finally, the bill incorporates elements of my HB 1175 (Nutrient Management-Tidal Buffer-Vegetative Buffers and Restrictions on Fertilizer Application) by including plantings in a farm's 100-foot tidal buffer as a LEEF practice.

EDUCATION

[HB 504 Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act:](#)

This Act retains essential funding for community schools, students from low-income families, special education, and multilingual learner services. The final bill delays implementation of collaborative time mandates until fiscal year 2029, aligning with real-world workforce capacity. The bill includes provisions for a National Teacher Recruitment Campaign to bring licensed and prospective teachers to Maryland in addition to establishing the Maryland Teacher Relocation Incentive Grant. The historic investments the legislature has made in education in recent years are already delivering results. As the Blueprint enters its third year of full implementation, access to pre-K has expanded, teachers have been given raises, and student achievement is improving.

FEDERAL WORKFORCE PROTECTION

[HB 1424 /SB 683 Protect Our Federal Workers Act:](#)

This legislation provides financial and legal tools to support Maryland's 142,876 federal employees, some of whom have been affected by the federal administration's cuts to the federal workforce. It expands existing funds and accounts to provide interest-free loans to federal workers impacted by unforeseen employment disruptions.

HEALTH CARE

[HB 424/SB 357 Prescription Drug Affordability Board -Authority and Stakeholder Council Membership:](#)

This legislation expands the authority of the state board to lower prescription drug costs. The board currently has authority to look for ways to reduce the cost of certain drugs for people on the state's health care plan, but this legislation would grant the board authority to place cost reductions on private insurance plans.

[HB 718 MD Health Insurance Coverage Commission:](#)

This legislation creates a commission to monitor and assess the impact of potential and actual federal changes to programs such as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, the MD Children's Health Program, and the MD All-Payer Model. The Commission will provide recommendations annually to ensure that access to affordable healthcare is protected.

[HB 930 /SB848 Public Health Abortion Grant Program – Establishment:](#)

This bill protects access to abortion services through a public health grant program. The program is funded from unspent insurance premiums for abortion coverage. Under Affordable Care Act rules, these funds can't be used for other purposes. There is \$25 million currently available to create an endowment for this program—with an ongoing revenue stream of about \$3 million a year. Funds will support abortion care for the uninsured and underinsured.

[HB 974 Preventative Services Enforcement:](#)

This legislation preserves Biden-era insurance carrier coverage requiring preventative medical services without co-pays. Types of preventative services include immunizations, annual wellness checks, cancer screenings, birth control, physicals, vaccines, and more. By keeping Marylanders healthy, overall cost of care drops. Studies show that for every dollar spent on preventative care, the state saves \$6 in healthcare costs.

[HB 869 / SB 372 Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2025:](#)

This legislation makes insurance coverage for telehealth care in Maryland permanent. Telehealth is an important way to expand access to healthcare by reducing barriers to receiving care like unreliable transportation or missing work to make an appointment.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

[HB 853 Maryland Second Look Act:](#)

The Maryland Second Look Act allows incarcerated individuals who were sentenced between the ages of 18-24 and who have served at least 20 years in prison to petition a court to consider reducing their sentence. The Court may reduce a sentence only if it determines that the individual is not a danger to the public and that the sentence reduction serves the interest of justice. Individuals sentenced to life without the possibility of parole or for sexual crimes that would invoke the MD Sex Offender Registry would be excluded from this bill, as would someone who was convicted of murder of a first responder killed in the line of duty. Many thanks to Delegate Cheryl Pasteur for sponsoring this legislation.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

[HB 502 / SB 433 Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy and Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative – Established:](#)

HB502 positions Maryland to be a model employer for people with disabilities. The bill creates the Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy (ODEAP) under the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) to implement the Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative. The office will support the employment, training, and career-readiness of individuals with disabilities to help create more inclusive, accessible hiring across State government.

DISTRICT 11 COLLEAGUES' LEGISLATION

Senator Shelly Hettleman

[SB181/HB1090 Correctional Services - Geriatric and Medical Parole:](#)

Reforms how the Maryland Parole Commission considers the health and age of incarcerated people when making parole decisions. It guarantees that incarcerated people with documented severe chronic or terminal medical conditions have the opportunity to request parole. The bill also removes the Governor from the parole decision-making process, which has delayed the release of thousands of parole-eligible Marylanders. Extensive research has demonstrated that individuals age out of engaging in criminal activity. The bill ensures there is an appropriate balance between public safety and compassionate release.

Delegate Jon Cardin

[HB 966/SB 655 Courts - Artificial Intelligence Evidence Clinic Pilot Program:](#)

Establishing an Artificial Intelligence Evidence Clinic Pilot Program within the Administrative Office of the Courts to provide expertise in artificial intelligence to the circuit courts and the District Court in the form of expert testimony on the authenticity of electronic evidence that a court determines may have been created or altered using artificial intelligence.

Delegate Cheryl Pasteur

[HB 197 / SB 68 Public Schools – Restorative Practices Schools – Comprehensive Plan:](#)

The bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education to develop a comprehensive plan by July 1, 2026, for establishing Restorative Practices Schools integrating restorative practices into the daily activities of a school. Restorative practices focus on resolving conflict, building relationships and repairing harm rather than on punishment for misbehavior. The bill also requires a county board of education to use the comprehensive plan if the county board chooses to establish a Restorative Practices School in its respective county. This bill will help bring our schools into the 21st century, meeting the needs of the 21st century student, family, and community.

DISTRICT 11 BOND BILLS AND OTHER CAPITAL FUNDING

- Irvine Nature Center** - \$100,000 – To improve the environmental education center and surrounding outdoor scenic trails, garden, aviary and other green living areas.
- Jewish Community Service’s Alternative Living Unit Program** - \$300,000 – To improve, repair and renovate eight Alternative Living Units providing low- and moderate-income housing to adults with disabilities.
- Kesser Torah Community Recreation Center** - \$200,000 – Construction of a recreational building consisting of spaces for an indoor gymnasium, fitness center, music room, game room, and event spaces.
- Maryland Troopers Association Headquarters** - \$200,000 - For the repair and renovation of the Maryland Troopers Association property in Pikesville to fix flooding, humidity, mold, swelling, and foundation issues in the building's basement.
- Mays Chapel Elementary School** - \$190,000 - To furnish and install a new playground, renovate existing playgrounds, and other facility improvements.
- Mount Pleasant A.M.E. Grave Restoration** - \$68,000 – To repair and restore graves and markers at this cemetery in Owings Mills; for the cost of ground penetrating radar to locate unmarked graves; to build a fence around the gravesite property; and put up a marker to inform visitors about the cemetery’s historical community value.
- Pikesville Armory Foundation** - \$5 million – For the redevelopment of the Pikesville Armory into an arts-infused intergenerational space for the whole community.

CONSTITUENT SERVICES

My office advocates for anyone in District 11B who needs assistance dealing with state agencies. It often can be hard to get a clear response from them. Julie Hubbard, my Constituent Services Director, can contact these agencies for you and try to resolve any problems.

Some ways my office can assist you:

- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Legislative scholarships
- Complaints about state roads or concerns with MDOT
- Problems or questions about other state agencies
- Complaints or questions about public utilities
- Referrals to Baltimore County agencies

We can also provide the following services:

- Requests for state documents— copies of bills, regulations, legislation, senior citizen information, etc.
- Citations for outstanding local accomplishments and family milestones
- Tours of the State Capitol
- A flag flown over the State Capitol to mark a special anniversary, community service, or in memory of an individual



I am proud, and honored, to continue my role for a second year as the Speaker Pro Tem of the House of Delegates, which enables me to engage with legislators and advocates on a variety of issues.

My most rewarding role has been as your advocate in Annapolis. I look forward to working for you and assisting you when needed. Please contact me at 410-841-3527 or at dana.stein@house.state.md.us if I or my staff can ever be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dana Stein". The signature is fluid and cursive.



MARYLAND

HOUSE OF DELEGATES



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