

The Annapolis Report from Annapolis: Day 90



Going into the Maryland General Assembly's 445 there was a great deal of anticipation. It was a new term, with a new governor and the first term since the COVID-19 shutdown in March 2020 where the daily operations of offices, committee hearing, floor sessions were restored to pre-pandemic guidelines. It has been a boost to our collective morale to have the halls teaming again with visiting school children, and the public waiting to testify in person, hold rallies in Lawyer's Mall or see their government in action in the Senate Chamber. An added feature that we maintained is the full live streaming of all proceedings and allowing for the public to provide virtual oral testimony via Zoom.

Inauguration of Governor Wes Moore and Lt. Governor Aruna Miller



It's hard to believe it's only been 5 weeks since Governor Moore delivered the oath of office in an historic swearing-in ceremony of the Moore-Miller Administration's cabinet secretaries, marking the most diverse cabinet in the state's history. Our Maryland Cabinet Secretaries also reflect a balance between individuals from the private sector and those with government experience.

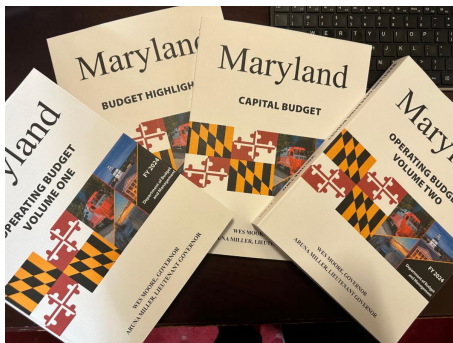
"I'm asking you to believe that at this moment Maryland can lead. I'm asking you to understand that it is time for our policies to be as bold as our aspirations . . ."
Governor Wes Moore

The Moore-Miller Administration entered office in January with ambitious goals such as ending child poverty, creating new pathways to public service, accelerating the transition to \$15/hr minimum wage and making major investments in transportation infrastructure, reducing vacancies in state agencies and public education to proposed bills and a budget to reflect those priorities. Governor Moore testified multiple times on his bills and has invited groups of lawmakers from both sides of the aisle to the Governor's office in the State House, also known as "the 2nd floor," to discuss them and other priorities. This kind of partnership with the Executive Branch and state agencies is a welcome change from the last 8 years.



A VIEW FROM THE FLOOR

Senator Clarence Lam (District 12) and I started as seatmates in 2021 separated by plexiglass and we both served on EHEA. This year, while the good doctor exercises the utmost of caution, and we served on different committees (EEE and Finance, respectively,) we have enjoyed being each other's "call a friend" when presenting our respective committee's favorable floor reports. Especially, during my defense of SBO610- Virtual Schools and his of the SBO460- Trans Health Equity Act.



FY 2024 Operating Budget is on the Governor's Desk

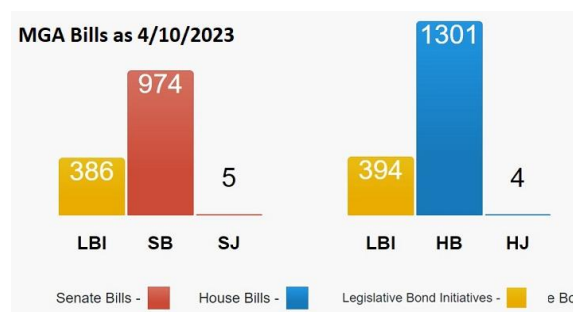
- Total revenue for Maryland's 2024 budget is \$63 billion.
- Top three sources: \$18.9B, \$14.6B from individual income tax, and \$7 billion sales tax.
- Maryland's health expenditures total 32% of the overall fiscal year 2024 budget.
- Invests a record \$900 million for public education in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.
- The Rainy Day Fund balance is \$2.5 billion, for a total of \$2.85 billion in cash reserves.



The newly formed Senate Committee on Education, Energy and Environment (EEE).

We heard 411 bills this session including offshore wind energy, community solar, energy renewable energy subsidies for incineration, fixing mail-in ballots that are missing a signature on the envelope as well as hundreds of education centered bills including setting policy for virtual education.

BILLS INTRODUCED IN HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES



Please feel free to reach out to me at mary.washington@senate.state.md.us or 410-841-3145 if you have questions about the legislative session. Later this week, I will send an update which provides a more comprehensive overview of major policy issues facing the Maryland General Assembly this year, your concerns, my

legislative work in the EEE committee, bills that I was the primary sponsor and passed the Senate, and those that are on their way to the Governor's Desk for his signature. So until then, I wish you and yours a good morning.

In Partnership,



Senator Mary L. Washington

