

ROBERT G. CASSILLY
Legislative District 34
Harford County

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review

Joint Committee on Federal Relations



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 321
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3158 · 301-858-3158
800-492-7122 Ext. 3158
Bob.Cassilly@senate.state.md.us

District Office
1015 South Main Street
Bel Air, Maryland 21014
443-502-0583

2018 Legislative Session in Review
An End of Session Letter from Senator Bob Cassilly

Dear Harford County Neighbor,

The 2018 ninety day legislative session of the Maryland General Assembly concluded on April 9th. Once again, it has been my privilege to serve the citizens of Harford County as your Senator for Legislative District 34. I very much appreciate the considerable citizen input that I received throughout the session. I am very pleased to report that, although the session was filled with many challenges, the citizens of Harford County and Maryland were well served by the Harford County Delegation to the General Assembly.

I was elected to the Senate in the same election that made Larry Hogan our second Republican governor in the past 40 years. I work hard to support Governor Hogan's goals of creating good jobs and empowering people by cutting taxes, controlling spending, and unleashing the awesome productive power of the private sector. I work hard to protect our public safety by serving our police and prosecutors as their advocate in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. I also work closely with our County, municipal, and community leaders to advocate for the communities of the 34th Legislative district as they work to improve our schools, transportation, public service, and the environment.

In the attached 2018 Legislative Session Summary, I provide some details on how I have been working for you to generate economic opportunity, enhance public safety, improve our schools, and advocate for Harford County.

Thank you to the many who corresponded with me throughout the legislative session, and I hope you will continue to share your thoughts.

With my best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Cassilly".

Senator Bob Cassilly

2018 Legislative Session Summary Senator Bob Cassilly

The Budget

For the fourth consecutive year, Governor Hogan introduced a balanced budget (**Senate Bill 186**) for fiscal year 2019 that provides record funding (\$6.5 billion) for K-12 education without raising taxes and without budgetary gimmicks. In order to create more jobs for Marylanders, the Governor is committed to making Maryland more business friendly. In his budget, the Governor once again fulfills his promise to change Maryland for the better.

Funding in the budget for projects in Harford County includes:

- \$7 million in fiscal year 2019 for construction of Havre de Grace Middle and High School.
- Over \$3.46 million for renovation of Fallston Hall at Harford Community College.
- \$500,000 for window replacement to the Abingdon Public Library.
- \$80,800 of grants in fiscal year 2018 for Nonpublic Aging Schools Program to renovate and improve school facilities (John Carroll; St. Joan of Arc; St. Margaret; and Trinity Lutheran).
- \$100,000 for a Hazardous Substance Site Assessment at the former Ames Shopping Plaza.
- \$29,000 for re-decking piers at Havre de Grace City Yacht Basin.
- \$99,000 for repairs to piers, boat launch, and parking lot at Otter Point Creek Boat Launch.
- \$750,000 for maintenance dredging of Otter Point Creek and Bush River marinas.
- \$63,250 for West Taylors Creek maintenance dredging.
- \$45,000 for Rumsey Island and Taylors Creek maintenance dredging.
- \$125,000 for design and construction of the expansion to the Harford County Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse Resource Center.
- \$250,000 for the Aberdeen Proving Ground Discovery Preview Center
- \$96,000 for design, construction, and renovation of the Historic Colored School

Harford will also see an increase in its share of gas tax with the passage of **SB516**.

Tax Relief

I supported the Governor's tax relief package which includes:

- **SB 318**, raises the standard deduction and indexes it to inflation.
- **SB 134**, allows an income tax credit to small business that provide paid sick leave benefits to employees.
- **SB184**, increases the personal deductions taxpayers can take on their state income taxes, saving Maryland taxpayers an estimated \$1.2 billion in 2019.
- **HB 327**, expands edibility for State and local earned income tax credit by repealing the minimum age requirement.

Public Safety

My highest priority as an elected official is the safety of all Marylanders. I fully support Maryland's police and prosecutors who are dedicated to keeping our county and state safe. As a member of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee (JPR), I help shape all bills impacting public safety, the police, and courts. Committee members consider many hours of testimony, throughout the 90 day legislative session, from crime victims, police, prosecutors, judges, former convicts, and others. Significant bills passed by JPR this session include:

- **SB270**, which I co-sponsored, enhances prosecution of repeat sexual predators.
- **HB1029**, provides for mandatory sentences for those convicted a second time of illegally possessing a loaded handgun.
- **SB101**, includes a major portion of Governor Hogan's crime fighting legislation. It eliminates parole for second time violent offenders, prevents the transfer of violent offenders to unsecure drug treatment facilities, and toughens sentences for sexual abuse of a minor.
- **SB1137**, expands penalties for distribution of the drug fentanyl, allows the police to use wiretaps to combat gun crimes, and increases penalties for witness intimidation.
- **SB1265**, provides for increased focus on school safety with expanded coordination of state and county resources, enhanced training for our armed school resource officers, and additional funding to improve physical security in the schools.
- **SB725**, addresses the issue of cyber bullying in our schools.

- **SB528**, facilitates prosecuting intimidation directed at groups based on their religious beliefs, ethnicity, and the like.
- **SB963/HB247**, establishes a Victim Services Unit at the State level to coordinate assistance to victims of crime.

Other important legislation that I supported but was not passed by the General Assembly this year includes:

- **SB296**, Repeat “Drunk Driving Offenders Act,” would have increased penalties for those who have repeat drunk or impaired driving convictions.
- **SB346**, would have reinstated the death penalty for those who commit mass murders such as the incident that occurred in Edgewood last year.
- **SB1210**, would have reversed the efforts by certain counties to become sanctuary counties for undocumented aliens. Those counties prevent their police from cooperating with federal immigration officials, thereby increasing the risk of harm to federal law enforcement officers. Federal officers have to chase people down after they have been released from county jail instead of simply transferring custody from county to federal officials.

Also, I worked hard to address the problems with existing laws that severely limit the ability of law enforcement to effectively intervene in situations where armed citizens present a serious potential for risk of harm to self or others. The bill that ultimately passed through the legislature (**HB1302**) does not adequately address that issue and, unfortunately, creates the potential for heightened risk to the police, the gun owner, and society. This is an issue that will certainly require considerable legislative attention in the next session.

School Safety

I supported Governor Hogan’s school safety bill (**SB1264**) which would have required primary and secondary schools to have an armed resource officer present on school days. The compromise bill passed by the General Assembly (**SB1265**) does not provide state funding for armed resource officers. Instead, it provides resources to evaluate school safety, standardizes school security training and response, coordinates state and county resources available for school security, requires all public school buildings to have enhanced security features by the 2020-21 school year,

establishes a grant program to help schools add security features, and allocates \$10.0 million annually for the grant program.

Also, I co-sponsored **SB725**, which provides police and prosecutors with enhanced tools to fight cyberbullying.

Jobs

In order to create opportunities for every Marylander to benefit from our expanding economy, it is vital that we expand employment opportunities for introductory workers and blue collar workers. For this reason, I supported the Governor's "More Jobs for Marylanders Act" last year and supported his efforts this year to expand upon that program.

To further expand the pool of start-up jobs, it is vital that we protect and encourage those employers who, because of the unique nature of their businesses, are able to provide inexperienced and often undereducated workers with an opportunity for a first job - these are our **Opportunity Employers**. These start up jobs do not usually offer high pay or generous benefits but they do offer young people an opportunity to develop very basic job skills. Unfortunately, the General Assembly continues to force additional costs and other burdens upon our Opportunity Employers, such as requiring that they provide pay rates and benefits not justified by the minimal returns an Opportunity Employer can reasonably expect to see from untrained and unskilled workers. I supported Governor Hogan's efforts to minimize the burdens imposed on our Opportunity Employers through the paid sick leave bill (**HB1**). Unfortunately, the Legislature rejected Governor Hogan's compromise bill (**SB135**) which included accommodations for Opportunity Employers.

Education

I share the Governor's commitment to bettering the education of all Maryland students. I supported his annual budget which allocates more than \$6.5 billion for education. Also, I supported the BOOST program, which allows low-income youth to receive income based scholarships to attend nonpublic schools. This important program allows students in Baltimore City's failing public schools a chance to attend a private school and escape the endless cycle of a failed educational system. Unfortunately, the Legislature substantially reduced the BOOST funding.

Health Care

Because healthcare costs consume an ever growing share of personal income and the State's tax revenue, it is critical that we pursue every reasonable and effective means to expand care while controlling ballooning costs. We must also address the serious health epidemic of drug use that is fueled by the overuse and over prescription of opioids. Some key health related bills I supported and which passed the Legislature include:

- **HB1782**, provides funding to offset a potentially devastating increase in the cost of certain health care plans and further stabilizes the health care market.
- **SB13**, requires the Maryland Health Care Commission to evaluate development of an electronic system to allow health care providers access to a patient's prescription medication history.
- **SB522**, requires a health care provider, when prescribing an opioid, to advise the patient of the benefits and risks associated with the prescribed opioid.
- **SB1223**, requires an authorized provider of controlled dangerous substances (CDS) to attest that the authorized provider has completed two hours of specified continuing education to the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) as a qualification for initial or renewal registration to dispense CDS.

I was instrumental in defeating **SB30** which would have undone a key protection enacted decades ago at the height of the medical malpractice crisis. I lead a Senate filibuster of SB30 which was later killed by the House.

Women and Children

I supported the following bills to address the needs and enhance protection of certain adults and children:

- **SB491**, expands the circumstances under which a court can issue a permanent protective order for a victim of abuse.
- **SB2**, allows courts to terminate the parental rights of a rapist whose rape resulted in a pregnancy, thereby eliminating the need for a rape victim to have any further confrontations with her attacker.
- **SB912**, establishes a Maryland Prenatal and Infant Care Coordination Services Grant Program Fund to provide grants to counties and municipalities for coordination of services to low-income pregnant and postpartum women and to children

- **SB308**, establishes the Fostering Employment Program to provide employment opportunities for “foster care recipients” and “unaccompanied homeless youth” through training that leads to industry-recognized credentials.
- **SB373**, allocates \$3 million for the Head Start Program to promote school readiness for children of low income families. **Environment**

I fully supported the Governor’s initiatives to protect and improve our environment. The budget includes a record \$1.2 billion investment in wide ranging Chesapeake Bay restoration initiatives, including full funding of the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund. The budget also includes \$436,733,000 for the Maryland Department of the Environment to provide quality drinking water to all Marylanders.

Military/Veterans

As a member of the Veterans Caucus, I supported a number of bills that will help our veterans, and active military:

- **HB327**, provides a \$15,000 tax exemptions for military retirement income.
- **SB429**, allows spouses of deceased veterans to qualify for local property tax credits.
- **SB996**, increases by \$5,000.00 the tax deduction available to certain veterans 65 and over.
- **SB509**, requires each community college to have a veterans’ advisor as well as a veterans’ resource center on campus.
- **SB362**, allows certain disabled veterans to be exempted from vehicle registration fees for leased vehicles.

Constitutional Protections

It is vital that we maintain the integrity of our election process and the voters’ confidence in that process. I co-sponsored the Voter Registration Integrity Act (**SB357**) which would have required Jury Commissioners to notify the Board of Elections when potential jurors drawn from the voters’ rolls are determined to be non-citizens. I co-sponsored **SB591** which would have required applicants for absentee ballots to provide identifying information to reinforce security. The General Assembly rejected both.