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Joint Committee on Administrative,
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2019 Legislative Session in Review
An End of Session Letter from Senator Bob Cassilly

Dear Harford County Neighbor,

The 2019 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 2019 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". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "B" and "C".

Senator Bob Cassilly

2019 Legislative Session Summary

Senator Bob Cassilly

Budget

For the fifth consecutive year, Governor Hogan introduced, and the General Assembly passed, a responsible and balanced budget (**House Bill 100**). I support the Governor's legislative priorities rooted in his strong commitment to an efficient and effective government that both provides for essential governmental services and also unleashes the awesome potential of the private sector to create strong and diverse employment opportunities.

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 that impact public safety. Committee members considered many hours of testimony throughout the 90 day legislative session from: crime victims, police, prosecutors, judges, former convicts, and active citizens. We also considered a number of bills intended to address the serious health epidemic of drug use that is fueled by the overuse and over prescription of opioids and other substances. Some of the more significant bills I supported this session include:

- **SB245**, enhances the fight against drunk driving by requiring that ignition interlock devices are equipped with a camera capable of recording still images of the person taking the test of their blood alcohol level. This ensures that a driver under the influence does not use someone else who is sober take the test in order to defeat the mechanism.
- **SB570**, which I co-sponsored, would have enhanced laws related to the distribution of fentanyl or anything chemically similar to fentanyl. Unfortunately, it died in the Senate.
- **SB339**, which I co-sponsored, establishes the Commission to Advance Next Generation 9-1-1 Across Maryland to improve access to and maintenance of the emergency telephone system throughout Maryland.
- **SB 856**, which I co-sponsored, establishes the Justice Reform Council in the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, to develop legislative initiatives to reduce juvenile crime and recidivism and improve treatment of juvenile detainees.
- **SB561**, also known as Laura & Reid's Law, creates an additional felony, with up to a 10 year sentence, for a person who commits a crime of violence against a woman they know is pregnant.
- I co-sponsored the Governor's bill **SB176**, known as the Judicial Transparency Act of 2019, which would have required the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy to publish detailed, judge-by-judge information on the actual sentences that are handed down for violent crimes across the state. It passed through the Senate unanimously but died in the House.

2019 Legislative Session Summary – Senator Bob Cassilly

- I co-sponsored Governor Hogan’s bill **SB163**, the Repeat Drunk Driving Offenders Act of 2019, which would have created a felony offense punishable by up to 10 years for anyone convicted of a drunk or drugged driving offense on three or more prior occasions, as well as anyone convicted of causing a death or a life-threatening injury on their second and/or subsequent offenses. It passed through the Senate unanimously. The House downgraded the offense from a felony to a misdemeanor and moved the substance of the Governor’s bill to their own **HB707**.
- I co-sponsored Governor Hogan’s bill **SB166**, the Repeat Firearms Offenders Act of 2019, which would have doubled the minimum sentence from five to ten years for repeat offenders who use a firearm to commit a violent crime. Unfortunately, this bill died.
- I co-sponsored Governor Hogan’s bill **SB162**, the Felony Human Trafficking Act of 2019, which would have classified felony human trafficking as a violent crime. It passed through the Senate unanimously but it died in the House Judiciary Committee.

Education

In this increasingly complex and competitive global economy, it is vital that we provide our children with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete and succeed in life. This session the General Assembly addressed a number of important education related issues:

- **SB1030**, established the so-called Blueprint for Maryland's Future, also known as Kirwan. The stated purpose of the bill is to transform Maryland's early childhood, primary, and secondary education system to the levels of high-performing systems around the world. This program is reasonably funded at \$255 million in the FY2020 budget. The challenge in future years will be to prioritize the extensive recommendations. We simply cannot afford the immediate implementation of all of the extensive recommendations made by the Kirwan Commission.
- I supported **SB 240**, the Maryland Community College Promise Scholarship Program which awards tuition for a high school senior attending a Maryland community college.
- I co-sponsored **SB 544**, which would have prohibited a county board of education from establishing a grading policy that requires teachers to inflate grades when students fail. Unfortunately, the bill died in committee.
- I opposed **SB 128**, which reversed Governor Hogan’s directive that all schools start classes after Labor Day.
- I opposed **HB 725**, which is intended to replace standard school discipline with “restorative approaches” that employ “relationship focused methods” This effort puts the interests of the misbehaving student above the interests of the rest of the class and overrides decisions of disciplinary by our school principals and teachers.
- **SB 747**, authorizes a county board of education to remove a county superintendent of schools. I was able to amend the bill to remove a provision that would have allowed an arbitrator from outside of the county or outside the state to completely override the Board’s decision.

School Safety

Last year I supported Governor Hogan’s school safety initiatives, which passed with amendments. This year we worked to fight cyberbullying and online threats to children in Maryland.

- I co-sponsored **SB103**, which addresses the worst online bullying. It makes it a crime to induce a child or teenager to commit suicide. That offense is punishable by imprisonment for up to 10 years and a \$10,000 maximum fine.
- I supported **SB736** which seeks to address issues related to “sexting” and child pornography

Jobs

I continue to support legislation that will improve our economy and provide good job opportunity for Marylanders. It is vital that we protect our business owners and workers in order to extend the economic expansion.

- I co-sponsored the Governor’s bill **SB 174**, which would have extended the More Jobs for Marylanders Program by 10 years, and provided more funding to the jobs programs and created “opportunity zones.” Unfortunately, the bill was defeated.
- **SB 581** provides incentives to build homes and start businesses in blighted areas.

Harford County Projects

The budget includes \$10 million in special projects in Harford County, including:

- **Harford Crisis Center:** \$750,000.
- **Aging Schools Program.** \$1,106,966.
- **Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna.** \$100,000 for a project in Havre de Grace
- **Maryland Center for the Arts –New Amphitheater:** \$125,000.
- **Havre de Grace Combined Support Maintenance Shop Automotive and Surface Equipment Facility:** \$6,339,000.
- **Ripken Stadium.** \$1,000,000 to provide funds to the Maryland Stadium Authority for improvements to the stadium.
- **Chesapeake Therapeutic Riding at Serenity Hill Farm:** \$100,000.