

DELEGATE SANDY Rosenberg!

2016 Session of the Maryland General Assembly

Dear Friend,

This session was a historic opportunity to respond to the issues raised by the death of Freddie Gray.

Like far too many Baltimore residents, he was lead poisoned as a child. I continued my efforts to reduce the risk that children will be harmed for life by this preventable disease. Work strengthens families and reduces crime. Building a 21st century Pimlico Race Course would bring jobs to Park Heights. We took a big step towards making that happen. A pilot program I enacted will enable fathers to get work and pay their child support. Education leads to higher-paying jobs. More pre-kindergarten means more kids ready to learn. In this summary of the 2016 General Assembly session, I describe what I accomplished on these and other issues.

Now that I'm back home, I hope to see you in the community.

Sandy Rosenberg

KEEPING THE PREAKNESS AT PIMLICO

Running the Preakness at Pimlico is a major economic boost for the Park Heights community, the City of Baltimore, and the metropolitan area.

The Maryland Stadium Authority has commissioned a study to evaluate Pimlico's ability to serve as the permanent home of the Preakness Stakes. The Authority built Oriole Park and M&T Bank Stadium. Consequently, its work is highly regarded. If the report recommends that the Preakness remain at Pimlico, it would create the justification and the momentum to do so.

To get the Stadium Authority to undertake this project, I brought together representatives of the Maryland Jockey Club, the Racing Commission, the City of Baltimore, and the Stadium Authority. There hasn't been a World Series game in Baltimore since 1983, but the Preakness is run every year. With a favorable report this fall, that will be the case for decades to come.

There are other positive developments in the Southern Park Heights area. The City has issued a request for housing proposals to revitalize a 49-acre stretch south of Park Heights and Garrison Avenues. In addition, Sinai Hospital is making a significant investment in its neighboring communities.

1,000 MORE CHILDREN IN PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Quality pre-kindergarten makes a crucial difference in a child's life. When students are deprived of a prekindergarten education, they begin kindergarten lacking important skills, often falling behind their peers, and rarely, if ever, catching up.

Over the last two years, approximately 2,800 four-year-olds with family incomes at or below the federal poverty line have benefited from a \$15 million federal grant, matched by \$8.6 million from the state, to support expanded pre-K classes.

My legislation, House Bill 668, would allow an additional 1,000 children to participate by mandating that Governor Hogan budget the needed \$11.1 over the next two years, matching \$30 million from Washington. The bill was enacted and awaits his signature.



ENFORCING THE LAW ON LEAD POISONING PREVENTION

We have made great progress in reducing the number of children who are lead poisoned and harmed for life. Nonetheless, this is a preventable disease. I took several steps to strengthen enforcement of existing laws.

Owners of rental properties are required to take steps to reduce the risk that tenants will be poisoned. When a landlord goes to court to evict a tenant, he must present proof of compliance with the Reduction of Lead Risk in Housing Act. However, 81% of property owners submitted incorrect, outmoded, or unsupported documents, according to a recent study conducted by the Public Justice Center for the Abell Foundation. At my initiative, the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Judiciary will issue a report on how MDE's compliance data can be shared with the court system.

Approximately 150,000 eviction complaints are filed in Baltimore City annually, a rate second only to Detroit. Landlords have lawyers represent them in these proceedings, but tenants rarely have an attorney. This imbalance must be corrected. That and other



Citizens for Samuel I. "Sandy" Rosenberg
 2218 Angelica Terrace
 Baltimore, MD 21209

By Authority, Citizens for Sandy Rosenberg, Herbert Brown, Treasurer



issues raised by the PJC/Abell study will be addressed by a work group in response to my introducing House Bill 796.

Fewer than 12 inspectors are responsible for more than 400,000 lead-affected properties state-wide. If each inspector visits 10 properties a day, it would take nearly 13 years for each lead-affected property to be inspected just once. This does not count rental properties that must be inspected with every change in occupancy. House Bill 810 would have funded more inspectors with increased registration fees. This issue will also be studied this summer.

Finally, at my suggestion, the budget bill asks the Governor to allocate \$500,000 from the Medicaid program for lead-poisoning treatment for children with an unsafe blood lead level.

REBUILDING SCHOOLS AND KEEPING LIBRARIES OPEN

Keeping libraries open for 12 hours every day of the week, redeveloping blighted areas, and using public schools for after-school and summer programs are some of the initiatives that will be funded under a \$290 million five-year program. **My top priority this interim will be to work with my colleagues, Senator Lisa Gladden and Delegates Jill Carter and Nathaniel Oaks, to make sure that the 41st District receives a fair share of these benefits.**

We already know that there will be plenty of school construction. Ground will be broken at Forest Park High School and Lyndhurst Elementary over the summer. Renovations will begin at Arlington, Calvin M. Rodwell, Mary E. Rodman, and Medfield Heights elementary schools over the next 24 months. We will be working with residents and alumni to decide the future of Cross Country and Northwestern.

Langston Hughes Elementary has closed, but we are working to find new uses for the building. With the opening of the Shop Rite, the Liberty Heights corridor is no longer a food desert. We need to build upon that success with additional development. Finally, more slots revenue will come to many of our neighborhoods with the opening of the National Harbor venue in Prince George's County.

JOBS FOR FAMILIES AND HOUSING FOR SENIORS

When noncustodial parents fall behind on child support payments, their children face financial insecurity and often must rely on government services. The inability to pay child support orders can result in the loss of parental privileges and even contempt charges. This impairs the goal of strengthening families and helping parents find a pathway toward self-sufficiency.

House Bill 1502 will establish the Noncustodial Parent Employment Assistance Pilot Program to help unemployed or underemployed noncustodial parents in Baltimore City obtain jobs that enable them to meet their child support obligations.

I worked on HB 1502 with Secretary of Human Resources Sam Malhotra and now look forward to doing so again as we implement this program.

Greatly needed renovations will occur at housing complexes for seniors and the disabled under the federal Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (RAD). Approximately 2,400 residents live in these buildings, which have been sold to private developers by the Housing Authority of Baltimore City.

We need to ensure that these improvements are done well and on budget. At my request, a monitoring report will be issued by the Maryland Department of

Housing and Community Development every six months.

MENTAL HEALTH CARE WHEN AND WHERE NEEDED

A strategic plan for ensuring the availability of clinical crisis walk-in services and mobile crisis teams 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, will be developed under House Bill 682. The plan must ensure that the system is accessible to individuals in need of mental health or substance abuse services, consider regional models and other strategies for ensuring efficient service delivery, and monitor services and outcomes for individuals served.

Young people with serious mental health problems usually are better served where they live than in an institution. That's why I introduced House Bill 759: to maintain high quality mental health care for youth in outpatient settings.

I introduced the bill at the request of the mental health community. Though it did not pass, it brought the key players to the witness table for both the bill hearing and discussions afterward, as we hoped. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene "plans to continue to make Wraparound services available to youth with intensive needs," Secretary Van Mitchell replied.

RIGHT TO TRAVEL AND TO BE A PARENT

Because of House Bill 803, **your right to travel won't be affected by arbitrarily higher life insurance rates.** This measure bars insurers from limiting or denying coverage solely because of your future lawful travel plans. Coverage may be denied or limited or rates increased only if there are bona fide differences in risk or exposure, substantiated by relevant data from at least one independent, reliable source other than a State Department travel advisory.

A decade ago, I worked on the law making it illegal for an insurer to raise your rates solely because of your past travel. My thanks to Ken Birnbaum for bringing this issue to my attention.

A person with a disability should not be denied parental rights based on assertions and speculations about his or her capability to raise a child. With the passage of legislation that I introduced, the party alleging that the disability of the other party affects the best interest of the child bears the burden of proof in custody and visitation proceedings. The judge must explain any such findings.

WWW.DELSANDY.COM

