

Create Change PTACHC: Advocacy & the State Legislative Process

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Let's Get Started

- ▶ Who am I?
 - ▶ Parent of three HCPSS teens at Mount Hebron HS and Patapsco MS
 - ▶ Legislative Aide to State Senator Clarence Lam, Maryland General Assembly
 - ▶ Community activist and advocate for civic engagement
- ▶ Has there ever been something going on in your community or the state that you felt strongly should change? Something you felt really wasn't going the way you wanted or wished everyone supported?
- ▶ Have you ever wished you could take an issue important to you and change the policies or laws related to that issue?
- ▶ You CAN! I want to help you do it! We can do it together!

What is a civic organization and what is civic engagement?

- ▶ **“Civic organization** means a community-based company, club, committee, association, corporation, or any other organization or group of persons acting in concert which is composed of persons who are members thereof on a voluntary basis and which is primarily established to further educational, charitable, religious, cultural, or local economic development purposes.”
(Source: <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/civic-organization>)
- ▶ **“Civic engagement** means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.” - Preface, page vi (Source: New York Times, American Democracy Project - https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial2/coll_aascu_defi.html)

Why is civic engagement important?

- ▶ *“In the past few years...Americans' participation in civic life—or ‘civic engagement’—has declined dramatically. According to Harvard Professor Robert Putnam, over the last 25 years, Americans' participation in public meetings is down by 35 percent and participation in clubs and civic organizations has been cut by more than half.*
- ▶ *...[This is] bad news for democracy. Alexis de Tocqueville pointed out in his Democracy in America that the key to making American democracy work is our willingness to create and maintain a variety of civic associations.*
- ▶ *Against the backdrop of weakened civic engagement, the issues facing our increasingly globalized world are becoming more complex. And the activities that traditionally boost citizens' understanding of these issues—like newspaper readership—are also in decline.”*

PBS News Hour, By the People: https://www.pbs.org/newshour/spc/btp/articles/about_engagement.html

Expectations & Ground Rules

- ▶ People sometimes avoid civic engagement because they fear conflict or feel it will become unpleasant; this activity is meant to build knowledge, skills, confidence and community and help make the process fun!
- ▶ This is a nonpartisan work session intended to provide information and assistance on the Maryland state legislative process and how each of us can better engage our legislators, and others in our community, to participate in the democratic process and solve public problems.
- ▶ Our community and opinions are diverse, please show respect for alternative views and listen actively.
- ▶ This particular session is not a forum for debate on any particular issue.

Why are you here?

- ▶ What do you hope to get out of tonight's session?
- ▶ What are some examples of issues you might like to get engaged on to take some kind of action to change or support?
- ▶ Examples :
 - ▶ Student Resource Officers (SRO's) in schools
 - ▶ Reopening schools and virtual learning
 - ▶ Funding for our schools
 - ▶ Social justice and equity
 - ▶ Food security for our community
 - ▶ Small business support in our community
 - ▶ Mental health resources for those who need it

Local Policy and Legislative Bodies

- ▶ **Board of Education** - oversees educational matters that affect Howard County; eight members, seven elected by the voters (two at-large, five by councilmanic district) to four-year terms, and a student member with limited voting rights, who serves a one-year term and is chosen by County students. (<https://www.hcpss.org/board>)
- ▶ **County Council** - serves as the county's legislative branch, as the Zoning Board, and as the Liquor Board; five members elected from five separate districts who serve four-year terms a three term limit for Council members. The elected members of the Council. They also provide constituent services for residences in their district. (<https://cc.howardcountymd.gov>)

State and Federal Legislative Bodies

▶ **Maryland General Assembly**

- ▶ Maryland's legislative body, directly represents the electorate, with 47 districts represented by 47 Senators and 141 Delegates (<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov> – Members > Find My Representative > Lookup – MHHS District 9A/B)
- ▶ Enact laws and propose amendments to the Maryland Constitution
- ▶ Meet in regular session for 90 calendar days each year beginning the second Wednesday in January, acting on more than 2500 pieces of legislation and the State's annual capital and operating budgets

- ▶ **United States Congress** – Bicameral legislature of the federal government of the United States, the House of Representatives and the Senate; 535 voting members: 100 senators and 435 representatives (<https://www.house.gov> or <https://www.senate.gov> – Find Your Representative – MHHS District 7)

Maryland General Assembly Website



Legislative Services | Legislative Audits

Search    

MEMBERS COMMITTEES MEETINGS LEGISLATION BUDGET LAWS FLOOR ACTIONS SEARCH & ARCHIVES

SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNOUNCEMENT

Senate Reopening Guidelines
Click the link above to view the Senate Reopening Guidelines document

Updated 11/30/2020 - COVID-19 Data Dashboards
November 18, 2020 - Joint Covid-19 Response Legislative Workgroup Meeting
Senate Reopening Guidelines
House Reopening Guidelines
House Committee Guidelines
Police Reform Final Report

Session Information

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov>

MGA Website Highlights

- ▶ About the General Assembly (Bottom of the Home page)
 - ▶ The Legislative Process – basics and diagram of bill process flow
 - ▶ Department of Legislative Services – library, publications, resources and jobs
- ▶ Video Tutorials (Bottom of the Home page) - Introduction to MGA Website, Understanding a Bill Page, Searching for Bills, Searching Media
- ▶ Homepage features and links
 - ▶ Members, Committees, Meetings, Legislation, Budget, Laws, Floor Actions
 - ▶ Search & Archives - legislation session year, number (SB or HB), sponsor, etc.
 - ▶ Example: Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018 (SB1265)

Howard County Delegation Webpage



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About HoCo

Howard County Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly

Navigation

- Boards And Commissions
- History
- County Government
- State And Federal Representatives
- State Delegation**

Howard County Delegation Announcements

The Howard County Delegation of the Maryland General Assembly is currently chaired by Senator Clarence Lam and Delegate Jessica Feldmark for the 2021 session. The Howard County Delegation of the Maryland General Assembly will hold a public hearing on proposed local legislation in the late Fall of 2020 and a public hearing on statewide issues after the 2021 legislative session begins. The Delegation will hold work sessions during the legislative session to discuss proposed legislation. Additional details about future public hearings and delegation meetings will be posted on this page as they are scheduled.

The Howard County Delegation will hold a public hearing for local bills virtually at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 17. Members of the public may register to testify or to watch the hearing through WebEx by going to <https://howardcountymd.webex.com/howardcountymd/onstage/g.php?MTID=e1b32cd17996cae752a24df9f0944fd1> and

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/About-HoCo/State-Delegation>

2021 MGA Reopening Guidelines



The screenshot shows the Maryland General Assembly website. At the top left is the logo for the Maryland General Assembly. To the right of the logo is the text "MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY". Further right is a search bar with the text "Search i.e. Bill search, keyword" and a magnifying glass icon. To the right of the search bar are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and a "MY MGA" logo. Below the search bar is a navigation menu with the following items: MEMBERS, COMMITTEES, MEETINGS, LEGISLATION, BUDGET, LAWS, FLOOR ACTIONS, and SEARCH & ARCHIVES. The main content area features a large image of the Senate chamber with the text "SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNOUNCEMENT" overlaid. Below the image is the text "Senate Reopening Guidelines" and a link to view the document. To the right of the image is a list of links: "Updated 11/30/2020 - COVID-19 Data Dashboards", "November 18, 2020 - Joint Covid-19 Response Legislative Workgroup Meeting", "Senate Reopening Guidelines" (highlighted), "House Reopening Guidelines", "House Committee Guidelines", and "Police Reform Final Report". At the bottom of the page is a yellow banner with the text "Session Information".

Legislative Services | Legislative Audits

Search i.e. Bill search, keyword

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2021 Operational Planning Highlights

- ▶ See the **Senate Reopening Guidelines**, **House Reopening Guidelines**, and **House Committee Guidelines**, on the MGA website (*Home page right side*) for details on reopening and operational guidelines. *Always verify procedures with MGA staff to get the most current information during session. Procedures may be changed by the Speaker of the House, President of the Senate or Committee Chairs, as needed, at any time.*
- ▶ **State House:** State House will likely be closed to the public for the legislative session to prevent large crowds from congregating inside.
- ▶ **Lawyer's Mall:** Construction on Lawyer's Mall will be completed by January, so outdoor rallies will still be permitted, if socially distanced and masked, based on City of Annapolis guidelines.

2021 Operational Planning Highlights

▶ Senate Operations Plan

- ▶ **Daily Access** - Only Senators, two approved staffers per office with daily health check, telework, social distancing & face covering requirements, testing required for members and staff, rapid tests available on-demand. Press have daily access to facilities; interns and contractual employees - remote only; guests – only permitted in Stage 3, must be escorted while in building.
- ▶ **Committee Room Precautions** - Members of the Public virtually testify via Zoom.
- ▶ **Committee Witnesses** - Default Senate Bill Hearings: Bill Sponsor, 4 favorable witnesses, 2 favorable with amendment witnesses, and 4 unfavorable witnesses. Chairs may increase the number of witnesses on select bills when a bill is assigned a hearing date -- 8 favorable, 4 favorable with amendments, and 8 unfavorable. With the exception for “lead proponent,” who has 5 minutes to testify, all witnesses will be provided with 2.5 minutes to testify.

2021 Operational Planning Highlights

- ▶ **Senate Committee Witnesses (*Continued*)**
 - ▶ **Favorable/Sponsor:** The last Favorable witness slot shall be opened up to the public, for a randomly-selected witness. If the Sponsor does not notify the committee of witness signup within 48 hours of witness signup opening, the slots will be open to the public in a randomized selection.
 - ▶ **Favorable with Amendments:** Favorable with Amendments witnesses will have 2 slots, one selected at random, the other selected at the discretion of the Chair.
 - ▶ **Unfavorable Witnesses:** will also be provided 4 witness slots. Up to two of these slots will be “organizational” slots, and the Chairs shall use their discretion to ensure that organizations most accurately reflect groups opposed. The other two opposition slots will be randomly selected by those who sign up.

2021 Operational Planning Highlights

- ▶ **Senate Scheduling Considerations:** The Senate may not convene daily, especially for the first third of Session. Floor sessions will be scheduled with notice to all Senators. On days without floor session, committees will be urged to start hearings earlier in the day, and a block of time may be reserved so Senators can meet with constituents, virtually or in person.
- ▶ **House Office Building:** House will allow access to the public and other non-legislative officials by appointment only, to avoid unnecessary crowding in hallways. Any meeting guests will have to be escorted to and from the main entrance to the House Office Building and your office.
- ▶ **District Nights, Legislative Receptions and Committee Dinners:** All such events are cancelled for in-person participation for the 2021 session.

2021 Operational Planning Highlights

- ▶ **House Committees:** Operate virtually, bill hearings begin January 14th, Committee Chairs will provide at least 48-hour member and public notice as to which bills will be heard during which time slot on which day via the MGA website.
- ▶ **Online Testimony Submission, Sign Up and Availability:** The public will be able to sign up to testify and upload written testimony through the MGA website. Testimony for each bill will be posted on the MGA website after a bill is voted out of the relevant standing committee.
- ▶ **Voting and Subcommittee Meetings:** All subcommittee meetings and voting sessions will be livestreamed through the MGA website.

Follow-up & Advocacy Teams

- ▶ MY ASK(S) TO YOU:
 - ▶ Identify your local, state and federal representatives and how to reach them
 - ▶ Choose a topic you want to investigate regarding local or statewide legislation
 - ▶ Search the State Delegation and/or MGA websites and Google for this topic
 - ▶ Join or create a PTACHC Advocacy Team
- ▶ Please feel free to email me if you want to form an advocacy team with others who share your view
- ▶ As you work together on your issue, feel free to contact me, if I can answer questions or be of assistance – email: 1vicepresident@mthebronptsa.com

Resources and Questions

- ▶ Videos and materials from the Mount Hebron High School Advocacy webinars and workshops (past and upcoming) are available on our [MHHS PTSA website under Programs/Events>Advocacy](#) and our [Facebook page](#).
- ▶ If you would like to join us, or set up advocacy programs, workshops, webinars, and teams at your school, and need help, please feel free to email me at 1vicepresident@mthebronptsa.com.
- ▶ Questions?