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Annapolis Advocate

Paul Pinsky, your senator in the 22nd district

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Looking for campaign flyers?

I wanted to let you know that since I will not be opposed in the Democratic Primary (thank you for your support!), I've chosen to limit my distribution of *individual* campaign materials.

I'll be joining the 22nd district delegates in some mailers and handouts, and I'll be supporting their efforts through other outreach efforts as well.

But rather than *add* to the campaign literature deluge, I've decided to save some paper and reduce any diversions from those elections that are contested.

You can find a complete list online of the candidates I'm endorsing at senatorpinsky.org.

I'll also, of course, be out and about at forums and neighborhood association meetings talking about the issues. If you have an upcoming event and would like to invite me, please just email ppinsky@senatorpinsky.org or call 240-391-8154.

— Paul Pinsky, state senator, 22nd district

We Have Reasons To Be Proud, But Not Satisfied

Dear Neighbor,

This year concludes the four-year terms of every state and county elected official in Maryland, and now we face, in the upcoming election, what amounts to a referendum.

The basic question: Is Maryland a better place today than it was four years ago?

That's somewhat complicated to answer. National trends — the slow recovery from the Great Recession, for instance — have a powerful impact on our lives here in Maryland.

But I think we can say, given what we can do and accomplish here in our state, that we're definitely headed in the right direction.

We can point to an impressive list of new state policies, everything from the Gun Safety Act and Marriage Equality to the Dream Act and death penalty repeal. And don't forget the important increases we've made to the minimum wage and school funding

Have we seen mistakes over the past four years? Sure. Count the state health insurance exchange and our inability to fix the home foreclosure problem among them.

Still, overall, I'm pleased over what we've been able to accomplish. But don't take that as cheerleading for the status quo. We're still falling far short of where we should be.

Most sadly, we have too few

elected officials in Annapolis who offer a vision for a Maryland that works for average working Marylanders. And we have too many top 1 percenters and large corporations who take but don't give — and unduly influence our state political agenda.

Through all the victories — and defeats — I continue to be proud to serve you, as a voice for the voiceless, a voice for progressive reform.

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Paul".

P.S. Remember, no public tax dollars go for this newsletter. Thanks to all the District 22 residents whose contributions make the *Annapolis Advocate* possible.

Editorial: An Unequal Tale of Two Issues

Annapolis is still not offering a level playing field for average working families.

One example: In this year's legislative session, the governor proposed increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10. He recommended that this increase be phased in over two years, with an indexing provision for future years.

Sadly, the legislature changed the phase-in to *four* years — and removed the indexing.

The minimum wage increase does still count as an important victory. With the hike, Maryland becomes only the second state to legislate a

\$10.10 rate. But business pressure has definitely limited this victory's impact.

The irony here: A higher minimum wage actually rates as a pro-business move, many analysts believe, since a higher wage provides more income for people to buy additional goods and services.

Meanwhile, at about the same time lawmakers were limiting future benefits for low-wage workers, they were increasing future benefits for our state's most affluent.

Responding to a "tax cut" push from Republicans and conservative Democrats, the legislature voted to exempt

the first \$5.3 million of bequests from any state estate tax, a hefty hike from the current \$1 million exemption.

The rationale? Boosters claimed that high estate rates had wealthy Marylanders people exiting the state and moving south. In fact, studies have shown no vast "tax exodus" of the rich from Maryland.

I objected to this new estate tax. But most lawmakers bought into the exodus myth.

The result? Maryland will lose close to \$150 million of tax revenue annually, money that would have been spent on schools, mass transit, and the environment.

Building Community, One Neighborhood at a Time

Scholarship Panel Tabs Nearly 100 Students

Twenty-five 22nd district residents came together last month in New Carrollton for one purpose: to award Senator Pinsky's state scholarships for deserving students.

The scholarship selection panelists would have liked to grant college scholarships to everyone worthy who applied. They didn't have the resources to do that. But they were able to start close to 100 students on their post-secondary paths. Those recipients can be found online at www.senatorpinsky.org.

Senator Pinsky would like to thank the 25 members of the committee, listed below, for a job well done.

Lisa Davila, **Beacon Heights**; Theresa Laughlin, **Berwyn Heights**; Adam Ortiz, **Edmonston**; Darlene Pinnock, Felix Yeoman, **Glendale**; Eulalie Gower-Lucas, **Greenbelt**; and Theresa Creel, Tommy Paolucci, **Hyattsville**.

Also, Lulu Alexander, Lula Beatty, Dorothy Brown, Hosea Chew, Jim Henderson, Ron Minor, Troy Perry, **Lanham**; Michael Abitong, Reeda Butler, Nora Fachianno, Laverne Williams, **Lewisdale**; Lincoln Lashley, Jane Michalek, Raymond Reed, **New Carrollton**; Marita Novicky, Amity Pope, **Riverdale Park**; Lisa Jackson, **University Park**.

Senator Pinsky has been listening — to what Marylanders in the 22nd district say they need to improve their communities. He's been helping, too.

The senator's legislative initiatives are helping small communities and nonprofits in those communities revitalize neighborhoods.

A sampling of the results:

A Welcome in Riverdale

Riverdale is home to immigrants from Nicaragua to Nigeria. They've moved to Prince George's County from countries all across Latin America and Africa.

To find work, many immigrants often congregate around 7-11's looking for job opportunities. Contractors stop and hire for the day.

But these new neighbors need more than a day's work. They need job training and English language classes.

That's why CASA of Maryland and the Central Kenilworth Area Redevelopment organization have partnered to build a community center *within* the immigrant community that offers a centralized hiring location, training, and English classes.

Senator Pinsky was able to raise \$150,000 in state money to help renovate the gymnasium that St. Bernard's Church graciously donated for the effort. The church's proximity will provide additional services to serve the community.

A New Carrollton Park

Little children want to run around. That's a simple fact. Unfortunately, not every community has a park that's conducive to play.

One section of New Carrollton, dotted with a number of condominiums and apart-

ments, has few park outlets for young children, and local town officials have been trying to remedy that situation. Senator Pinsky met with these officials and then helped acquire \$100,000 in state funds to construct a new park project.

The town is donating the land, and construction should begin soon.

Art for Kids

Over the past 24 years, ARTWORKS in North Brentwood has been bringing art to young people through creative, hands-on art instruction after school. The project has never had adequate space to call its own, but if all goes according to current plan, its location will be.

That appears about to change, thanks to the advocacy of ARTWORKS's executive director Barbara Johnson and the support of Senator Pinsky.

The old Marche Florist building on Rte. 1 in Hyattsville south of the County Services building, a vacant property for over a dozen years, will become the new home to ARTWORKS, and with the financial help of the state, courtesy of Senator Pinsky's efforts, renovation planning has already begun.

ARTWORKS is also partnering with the well-known downtown restaurant Pizza Paradiso to open up next door to the ARTWORKS studio center. These new efforts will build on the Hy-

attsville revitalization that Franklin's Restaurant, the EYA development, and Busboys and Poets have all helped nurture.

Senator Pinsky has brought in \$250,000 for the ARTWORKS renovation.

A Greenbelt Theater

The theater in Greenbelt has always been a nice, community place to see a first-run movie. You run into neighbors, parking's pleasant, and popcorn's plentiful.

The city of Greenbelt, the theater owner, has wanted to renovate the historic facility for years, with everything from a bathroom upgrade and wheelchair accessibility to an enhanced capacity to take advantage of the new digital technology.

The council had set aside city money for the renovation, but also needed assistance from the state. Senator Pinsky and the 22nd district delegates came through with that assistance. Over the last five years, they acquired \$300,000 in state funding for the project, but renovation

delays jeopardized the state support.

This past winter, Senator Pinsky proposed legislation to extend conditions for the grant. The legislature eventually went along with the proposal, and renovations will begin early this summer, requiring a temporary closure of the theater.



A Legislative Shakedown, Right from Hollywood

The wildly successful Netflix TV series *House of Cards* has been filming in Baltimore for two seasons now. The show has modestly helped the local economy, buying goods for things like set construction and employing a few locals in the process.

The *House of Cards* filming in Maryland has also brought the state some publicity, something especially important to many state leaders.

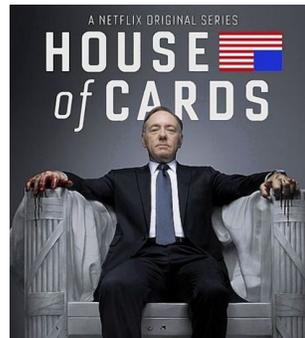
That's the main reason why the legislature last year provided \$11.5 million in tax credits to the producers of *House of Cards* and a few other locally produced TV series.

But that \$11.5 million apparently didn't strike Hollywood as sufficiently generous. Earlier this year, the *House of Cards* producers proceeded to behave just like the star of their show, a scheming, no-conscience congressman.

Those producers delivered

a *House of Cards*-style political ultimatum to Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley: Either give us an even larger tax credit or we'll pack-up and leave your state!

No subtlety here. Just the sort of ultimatum that might come from fictional Con-



gressman Frank Underwood.

Some legislators in Annapolis did bristle at the *House of Cards* ultimatum, including Senator Paul Pinsky. The producers' response? They hired a well-healed, ex-felon lobbyist to host a reception with

the show's star, Kevin Spacey, in downtown Annapolis.

Senator Pinsky stayed away, as did a number of other lawmakers. But many others attended, eager to grab a picture or selfie with Spacey.

In the end, the *House of Cards* producers didn't get the full \$18 million they sought, but they came close. *House of Cards* will continue to be filmed in Maryland. That privilege will cost the Maryland state treasury \$15 million.

"I can think of a lot better ways to spend \$15 million than on a TV show," notes Senator Pinsky, "starting with job training and housing assistance and all sorts of other moves that would stimulate our state's economy over the long-term."

"We can enjoy watching *House of Cards*," adds the senator, "without trying to mimic its strong-arming."

Building Protections Against Domestic Violence

Far too many women in Maryland continue to be the victims of domestic violence.

Unfortunately, the state law supposed to protect women through court "protective" or "peace" orders has not been victim-friendly.

A protective order usually covers people in a domestic relationship, a peace order everyone else. To issue one of these orders in Maryland, judges have had to find "clear and convincing evidence" that the abuser had committed specified threatening acts.

If a woman couldn't provide enough "clear and convincing evidence," the spouse/boyfriend/husband remained

able to keep threatening the victim — or even harm her.

This past session, lawmakers in Annapolis were finally able to overhaul this outdated standard. The new law establishes "preponderance of the evidence" as the new evidentiary standard.

This new standard, supported by Senator Paul Pinsky, should better protect victims from abusers.

Other legislation passed in the 2014 session increases penalties for violating peace and protective orders, with fines up to one year in jail for multiple violations.

This year has also brought two more encouraging developments on the domestic

abuse prevention front.

The first: a long-overdue provision in last year's gun control law finally closes a loophole that had allowed an individual subject to a peace or protective order to own certain firearms.

The second: toughens penalties for committing a violent crime in the presence of a minor. Studies have shown that children who witness domestic violence may suffer emotional and developmental difficulties similar to those suffered by children who have been directly abused.

"These needed changes," notes Senator Pinsky, "will provide many people a security they just haven't had."

Stat Watch

In 2006, Maryland ranked third nationally in millionaires per capita, with 6.21 households per hundred holding seven digits of net worth.

In 2013, report researchers from the Phoenix Global Wealth Monitor, Maryland ranked first nationally in millionaires per capita, with 7.7 households per 100 holding at least \$1 million in net worth.

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This *Annapolis Advocate* makes up just part of Senator Paul Pinsky's ongoing effort to keep 22nd district residents informed. Paul also writes a monthly email newsletter. To subscribe, e-mail "update-on@list.senatorpinsky.org" or sign up at senatorpinsky.org

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An Annapolis Scorecard: The 2014 Session

Bill	Description	Senator Pinsky Position	Legislative Action
New Teacher Scholarships	Creates scholarship for high achieving students wishing to pursue a career in education.	Sponsored by Senator Pinsky	Enacted into law
Distracted Driving	Increases offense for accidents resulting in death or severe harm of another as a result of texting.	Supported by Senator Pinsky	Enacted into law
Chicken Litter to Clean Energy	Would have used anaerobic digestion to transform Eastern Shore poultry litter to community clean energy, diverting pollution from the Bay.	Sponsored by Senator Pinsky	Passed Senate, failed in House Committee
Combined Reporting	Would have shut down tax dodge used by big corporations to avoid paying state taxes.	Sponsored by Senator Pinsky	Failed in Senate Committee
Wind Farm Construction Halt	Would have stopped construction of Eastern Shore wind farm, out of military contractor concern over impact on a naval base 56 miles away.	Opposed by Senator Pinsky	Passed, vetoed by governor
House of Cards Tax Break	Increases film tax credits from \$7.5 million to \$18.5 million to retain <i>House of Cards</i> TV series production in Baltimore.	Opposed by Senator Pinsky	Enacted into law, smaller than proposed
Student Tests and Teacher Evaluation	Prohibits the use of unproven new student tests in evaluation of teachers for at least two years.	Co-sponsored by Senator Pinsky	Enacted into law
Reversal of Stormwater Requirements	Would have reversed a previous law reducing pollution from stormwater.	Opposed by Senator Pinsky	Defeated in committee
Minimum Wage	Phases in an increase to the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 over 4 years.	Co-sponsored by Senator Pinsky	Amended and enacted into law
Estate Tax for Millionaires	Reduces tax on multimillion dollar estates, resulting in massive lost revenue to state.	Opposed by Senator Pinsky	Enacted into law
Decriminalization of Marijuana	Reclassifies possession of small quantities of marijuana from criminal to civil offense.	Supported by Senator Pinsky	Enacted into law