

TO CONTACT
SENATOR PINSKY:
301-858-3155



Annapolis Advocate

Paul Pinsky, your senator in the 22nd district

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Paul.Pinsky@senate.state.md.us

A Welcome to Our New Readers

If this *Annapolis Advocate* happens to be the first you've received, welcome!

Recent redistricting is changing our state's electoral map, and a number of new communities will be joining the 22nd legislative district starting with the 2014 election.

In advance of that election, I wanted to add you to my 22nd district legislative newsletter and introduce myself to you. Enjoy the reading!

— Paul Pinsky, state senator, 22nd district

This November, Not Just a Presidential Race

Dear Neighbor,

Commercials promoting — or trashing — Barack Obama and Mitt Romney are already filling our TV screens, and we're still five months away from Election Day.

The stakes in the White House race could hardly be higher, of course, and President Obama's re-election remains critically important to the future of working families throughout the United States.

But Maryland voters also have two other vitally important issues on November's ballot: the Dream Act and the Marriage Equality Act.

I believe both these measures deserve the support of Maryland voters. Here's why.

The Dream Act would allow more Maryland young people to follow their dreams by opening access to in-state college tuition rates to all qualified students, regardless of their citizenship status.

Students who have attended Maryland schools for at least three years and have parents who have filed tax returns, also for at least three years, will be able to gain in-state tuition under the Dream Act.

To attend a four-year institu-

tion, these students must first attend a community college and then be accepted at a four-year Maryland college.

This is an issue of fairness. If a student, whether from Asia, Africa, or Latin America, is brought to this country as a child and works hard in school, why should we exclude this student from college?

That exclusion is currently taking place because immigrant students have not been able to qualify for in-state tuition levels. Out-of-state tuition rates have become prohibitively expensive.

At the University of Maryland's College Park campus,

for instance, out-of-state tuition runs \$27,200 a year, against the \$8,800 in-state tuition. For an "A" student from an immigrant family, out-of-state tuition levels turn a life's dream into a dead-end job at McDonalds.

Eleven states already offer their immigrant students in-state tuition rates. A "yes" vote on the Dream Act this November would ensure our

students the same access to basic fairness that students in those states now have.

Should any couple, a man and a woman or a same sex couple, have the right to marry?

That's another issue Maryland voters will decide in November.

If people make a commitment to

each other and want to constitute a legal family, I believe, why shouldn't they be allowed to marry?

I co-sponsored the Marriage Equality Act lawmakers in Annapolis passed earlier this year. This Marriage Equality Act law does not require any church or religion to perform or recognize a same-sex marriage. The act simply puts Maryland on record as recognizing the right to marry for any couple that follows the laws of the state.

In mid-May, President Obama and Vice President Biden came out in favor of marriage equality, and polls nationally show majority support for this equality.

But no marriage equality ballot issue at the state level has yet passed. This November we could well become a national pacesetter.

Paul



Scholarship Panel Tabs 85 Students

A big “thank you” to the 21 residents of the 22nd district who volunteered this past spring to serve on Senator Paul Pinsky’s scholarship committee.

After a thoughtful review, the committee members have selected 85 worthy students for state scholarship assistance.

We’re proud to honor here the committee members, listed by community.

Berwyn Heights:

Theresa Laughlin, Nipa Shaw, and David Williams. **Glenn Dale:** Darlene Pinnock and Felix Yeoman. **Greenbelt:** Rae Brooks and Eulalie Gower-Lucas. **Hyattsville:** Theresa Creel, Candace Hollingsworth, Tommy Paolucci, and Kay Stauder.

Lanham: Lulu Alexander, Dorothy Brown, Dorothy Shackelford, and Dwayne Stanton. **Lewisdale:** Reeda Butler and Laverne Williams.

New Carrollton: Tamba Mayah and Cynthia Poles-Suite. **Riverdale:** Marty Newman and Amity Pope.

For the complete list of Senator Pinsky’s latest 22nd district scholarship recipients, check www.senatorpinsky.org.

Higher Education: Stopping the Bottom-Feeders

College costs continue to rise, but not nearly as high – or as quickly – as the debts students are accumulating.

The crushing burden of student loans, some analysts fear, could generate a level of devastation that rivals the subprime mortgage meltdown.

Worse still, many students don’t even have a degree or a job to show for their debt. The for-profit colleges they’ve attended essentially took their money and ran, leaving them without the means to retire their debt obligations.

These for-profit colleges,

both those that exist only online and those with campuses, are exacerbating the student loan crisis.

That’s why Senator Paul

Pinsky has been

working to protect Maryland students

from the bottom-feeders out to make money at student expense.

That effort has begun to pay dividends. Lawmakers in Annapolis have passed legislation introduced by Senator Pinsky that will regulate online colleges doing business in Maryland.

The new legislation requires “guarantee fund” safety nets that can be used to repay students in cases where the colleges they attend do not

For-profit colleges are exacerbating the student loan crisis and exploiting far too many students. New Maryland legislation offers real protection.

deliver on the educational services they’ve promised.

The new legislation also requires that for-profit colleges must meet basic accreditation standards, follow a set of specified higher education “good practices,” and have a refund policy in place.

Around Our District: New Looks Aplenty

Despite our national economic slowdown, communities in the 22nd district are continuing to show growth and new vitality.

In **New Carrollton**, for instance, town officials recently requested funding support for lights at Beckett Field. Their

goal: to create recreational opportunities for local youth.

Senator Paul Pinsky and the district delegation were able to meet that request by having state funds shifted. The delegation has also been able to accommodate a request to expand the **Riverdale Park** town hall to include space for community groups.

Over in Hyattsville, the commercial section of the Arts District has been so successful that parking has

become a serious problem.

The addition of another new restaurant, **Spice 6**, to **Busboys and Poets** and the other existing eateries — as well as the growing popularity of the **YES Organic Market** — has significantly increased traffic flow.

To relieve the growing

parking squeeze and better connect **Franklin’s Brew Pub** to the EYA project, planners have proposed a structured parking facility on the property diagonally opposite the back of the YES parking lot. Our state senator and delegates have acquired some seed money to pursue this project.

Another new locally owned addition to our area, the **Town Center Market** on Queensbury Road, sits across from the railroad crossing in Riverdale Park. Carrying small food items, fresh coffee, wine

and beer, and Internet access, the store is owned by Pete Spiropolous and his family.

On the education front, the new **Greenbelt Middle School** will be opening this fall and adding a Gifted and Talented component.

Earlier this spring, Senator Pinsky attended the groundbreaking for the new **Hyattsville Elementary School** behind Nicholas Orem Middle School.

And Senator Pinsky was also on hand for the 95th anniversary celebration of the almost **original Hyattsville Elementary School**.

Also celebrated: the retirement of the school’s principal, **Jean Washburn**, a long-time 22nd district resident.

And speaking of retirements, **Carrollton Elementary School’s John Enkiri** is also retiring, after 40 years of dedicated service to Prince George’s County students.

Parking relief for Hyattsville now on the drawing boards

Balancing Maryland's Budget: Who Should Pay?

Maryland's General Assembly adjourned in April without completing the budget process, and lawmakers had to return in May to finish the work. They did.

But balancing the budget in the midst of the nation's worst economic downturn since the Great Depression proved to be a tough slog.

Why so tough? This year's budget debate put stark choices before our state lawmakers. Among them: Should the state make additional cuts in vital services like education and public safety to balance the budget?

Or should the state look to raise new revenue?

And where should we look for that new revenue? If we're going to have new taxes, who should be asked



to pay more?

At the special session in May, lawmakers — for a change — got these questions for the most part right. They did not slash the public services so vital to average Maryland families.

Lawmakers chose instead to raise revenue — from those Marylanders most able to afford a tax increase.

“The new income tax will fall on the top 14 percent of wage-earners,” says Senator Pinsky. “We were able to keep current taxes level for those Marylanders on fixed incomes and those just keeping their head above water.”

Maryland families making

just over \$150,000 or individuals making just over \$100,000, will see a quarter percent increase in their

Even with Maryland's new tax hike on high incomes, the wealthy in the state will be paying far less in taxes than New York's wealthy.

marginal rate while most other taxpayers making higher incomes will see another 0.25 percent increase.

For Maryland's richest families, the combined state and local income tax rate remains considerably below the rate in New York.

A couple in New York City reporting \$1 million in income will pay 12.7 percent of that in 2012 state and local income taxes.

A Maryland couple making that same million will pay, at most, no more than 8.95 percent of its 2012 in state and local income tax.

Senator Pinsky will next year renew his efforts to narrow that gap and make our taxes more progressive.

Stat Watch

The six heirs to the Wal-Mart empire possess a combined wealth of some \$90 billion, the equivalent to the wealth of the entire bottom 30 percent of U.S. society, about 95 million people.

For ongoing coverage of America's great economic divide, check *Too Much*, an Institute for Policy Studies online weekly on excess and inequality.

You can sign up at toomuchonline.org.

On the Environmental Front, Real Solid Progress

Our environment ended up a big winner in the 2012 legislative session in Annapolis, and Senator Paul Pinsky played a variety of key roles in our state's latest green advances.

The senator served as the Senate floor leader — the lawmaker who presents and defends pending legislation before the full Senate — on three top environmental initiatives.

One effort, the “septics bill” backed by Governor Martin O'Malley, aimed to limit out-of-

-control growth in rural areas.

Another sought to increase the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund to help underwrite the construction of the wastewater treatment plants our state needs to ensure that only clean water drains into the bay.

The third jumpstarts local efforts to finance storm water remediation and watershed protection.

Each of three initiatives faced serious opposition, and opponents did have enough clout to weaken some provisions of

the proposals. But most environmental activists see the three bills passed as major steps forward in the ongoing drive to clean up the Chesapeake Bay and our state's overall environment.

Still another environmental success in the 2012 session: Lawmakers permanently banned arsenic from chicken feed, a longstanding practice only recently discontinued by the industry.

Senator Pinsky led the push for a permanent ban that carries the force of law.

**Why Wait? Sign Up
Now for E-News**

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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Senator Paul Pinsky
4318 Woodberry Street
Hyattsville, MD 20782

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An Annapolis Scorecard: The 2012 Session

Bill	Description	Senator Pinsky Position	Legislative Action
Ethics Law	Requires legislator ethics disclosures to be available to the public online beginning in 2013.	Supported by Senator Pinsky	Passed into law
Combined Reporting	Shuts down the tax dodge used by big corporations to avoid paying state taxes.	Sponsored by Senator Pinsky	Failed in Senate Committee
Septics/Smart Growth	Protects state green space by limiting the septic systems that developers can install in subdivisions in rural areas.	Co-sponsored by Senator Pinsky	Passed into law
Utility Customer Information Release	Releases personal customer utility information to third party electric or gas suppliers.	Opposed by Senator Pinsky	Passed House, failed in Senate
Offshore Wind Farms	Creates clean energy credits to enable the building of wind farms 11 miles off coast of Ocean City.	Supported by Senator Pinsky	Passed House, failed in Senate Committee
Millionaires Tax	Restores higher tax rate for millionaires that expired in 2010.	Co-sponsored by Senator Pinsky	Not voted by Senate Committee
Disposable Bag Bill	Authorizes county to impose a fee on disposable bags at grocery stores and encourages use of reusable bags.	Sponsored by Senator Pinsky	Failed in House Committee
Utility Surcharge	Imposes automatic \$2/month fee on utility bills for infrastructure repairs.	Opposed by Senator Pinsky	Failed in Senate
School Dropout Age	Raises the school dropout age to 18 by 2017.	Co-sponsored by Senator Pinsky	Passed into law
Income Tax Increase	Raises income tax for top 13.7% of Maryland filers by 0.25% for couples earning over \$150,000.	Supported by Senator Pinsky	Passed into law during special session
Arsenic in Chicken Feed	Bans the addition of arsenic to chicken feed.	Sponsored by Senator Pinsky	Passed into law