

TO CONTACT  
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### Getting Help in Annapolis

Need some advice or support on a problem you're having with a state agency?

If you need help on a state matter, please feel free to give Senator Paul Pinsky's staff a call.

You can reach the senator's office by the phone number above or, via e-mail, at [Paul.Pinsky@senate.state.md.us](mailto:Paul.Pinsky@senate.state.md.us).

Currently staffing Senator Pinsky's office: administrative aide Pamela Shurkin and legislative aide David Kahn.

# Annapolis Advocate

Paul Pinsky, your senator in the 22nd district

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## Dear Neighbor: A Look Back at the 2008 Session

**T**his year's legislative session in Annapolis seemed to last forever. And it did. Sort of.

We started in special session back in October and spent nearly four weeks trying to solve the state's budget crisis. We then went back into session for the normal three months from January until April.

So is our state now better off after all this legislating? My take: We took "two steps forward and one step back."

On the plus side: The state faced up to budget reality. We do have a structural shortfall, one not created by our current governor. Raising taxes is just about the least popular thing an elected official ever wants to do, but Gov. O'Malley didn't flinch. Unlike his predecessor, he did what was needed to be done.

And the governor approached new taxes the right way, by going after those taxpayers who aren't paying their fair tax share.

I was gratified that the governor, after meeting with a group of progressive senators that I helped organize, asked the special session to raise the personal income tax rate on Maryland's wealthiest and close the loophole that lets big companies totally avoid paying income tax.

Unfortunately, lawmakers ultimately left the corporate tax loophole open and only slightly raised taxes on our state's wealthy, who pay far less of their income in taxes than the wealthy in states comparable to Maryland economically.

**In the end, the special session** came up with a compromise that solves our immediate budget problems, but leaves the long-term picture unresolved.

This compromise did have some positive features. I was able, for instance, to help facilitate an increase in statewide school funding that will offer real help to local schools.

In the regular session that

began in January, we made some serious progress, particularly on the foreclosure crisis.

On the environmental front, we took action to protect the Chesapeake, increase energy efficiency, and support clean energy.

**We had our disappointments, too.** Lawmakers failed to pass the Global Warming Solutions Act. And they defeated a bill that would have prohibited drivers from using hand-held cell phones.

The session also refused to pass civil union legislation or cap what Maryland corporations can deduct off their taxes for outrageously excessive CEO pay.

Our state is considered a "liberal" state. But we're not living up to that label. With your help, I'll continue to push the legislature and governor to work harder to meet your expectations. Our state can do better. And should.

*Paul*

## Maryland's Unexpected 'Wynn'-Lose Scenario

**W**hat's the difference between an elected leader and a politician? For an answer, consider the behavior of Albert Wynn.

Voters in this winter's Democratic primary opted to replace Congressman Wynn with long-time progressive activist Donna Edwards. After his loss, Wynn decided to leave congress six months early to start a job with a big lobbying firm. His decision to exit early allows him to kick start a lucrative new career

lobbying the very institution he abandoned.

Wynn's decision left Maryland with two choices, neither of them good. Maryland could either leave Wynn's seat vacant until next January, a choice that would leave the constituents of Wynn's district without representation for six months, or hold a special election that would cost taxpayers millions.

**The legislature**, making the best of an unfortunate situation, has been able to clean up some

of the mess – and some of the additional cost – by streamlining the voting process. On June 14, voters in the 22nd district who live in the district Wynn has so abruptly vacated will have an opportunity to put Donna Edwards in office early.

That's a positive development. On issues of the economy, war, and limiting the power of special interests, Edwards will be a strong, clear voice. She will be what Albert Wynn never became: an elected *leader*.

## The Local Scene: A Step Ahead on P.G. Hospital

### The War . . .

. . . in Iraq may not be an explicit "state" issue. But this war affects everyone in Maryland.

The war's impact starts with the unnecessary loss of lives of our servicemen and women.

"As soldiers, military personnel follow orders," notes Senator Paul Pinsky. "Unfortunately, these orders have been coming from an inept, incompetent White House that has fed this country a steady diet of lies and misinformation."

Meanwhile, the billions spent to fight this war — and fatten the pockets of the private contractors servicing it — could be far better spent on health care, education, and badly needed mass transportation in our own country.

People need to continue to speak out against this war, Senator Pinsky believes, in every possible venue.

Earlier this spring, 25,000 West Coast longshoremen did their speaking out by staging a one-day strike to protest the continuing fighting. For details online, check: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKzLEjzvtfM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKzLEjzvtfM)

Recent state action has taken the Prince George's Hospital off the "critical" list.

At least for now, we can rate the hospital's condition as moderately "stable."

In April, after two years of negotiations, policy makers agreed to set up a joint state-county management board for the hospital.

Officials also agreed to provide transitional funding and

develop a plan to sell the hospital to a "reputable" private health company.

That may prove somewhat difficult. Reputable private companies

have been hard to find in American health care today. Still, the recent county-state

agreements should provide some badly needed breathing space for P.G. Hospital and begin to restore confidence to a facility where dedicated health professionals have

never stopped trying to do their best, amid some chronic trying circumstances.



## Citizen Panel Offers Wisdom – and Scholarships!

Each year, Senator Paul Pinsky pulls together a committee of community volunteers from across the 22nd district to decide which local young people should receive state funds for college under the senatorial scholarship program.

This year the committee volunteers recommended 68 recipients from close to 100 applicants.



Among the 22 committee members: **Michael Abitong** (Hyattsville), **Steven McKenzie** (Berwyn Heights), and **Amity Pope** (Riverdale), all former scholarship awardees. Since completing college, Amity has been giving back the investment made in her education by teaching in area public schools. Other panel members included: **Rae Brooks** and **Liz Gaines** of

Greenbelt, **Dorothy Brown** of Lanham, and **Theresa Creel, Debbie Franklin,**

**Robert Croslin, Mark Mataluf, Kay Stauder, and Tom Paolucci** of Hyattsville.

Also serving: **Nora Fachiano** and **Laverne Williams** of Lewisdale, **Jim Greenberg** and **Lisa Jackson** of University Park and **Theresa Laughlin** and **David Williams** of Berwyn Heights.

Completing the committee: **Jane Michalek, Cynthia Pole-Suite, and Sarah Potter Robbins**, all of New Carrollton, and **Felix Yeoman** of Glendale.

A complete scholarship recipient list appears online at [senatorpinsky.org](http://senatorpinsky.org).

## Community Groups On Tap for New State Support

Bringing back state resources to help local community-based groups has been a top priority for Senator Paul Pinsky and the rest of the 22nd district state legislative delegation.

In 2008, the delegation was able to get that job done, and now a variety of local groups will be benefiting.

The **Lanham Boys and Girls Club**, a group that offers positive activities for hundreds of youngsters, will shortly be receiving needed assistance in

upgrading its sports facility. Senator Paul Pinsky helped obtain \$250,000 from the state to rehab the club and add some new services.

Senator Pinsky also steered legislation through to passage that will provide \$150,000 for planning a new community center in the **town of New Carrollton**.

And add still another local group to the list of 22nd district nonprofits that will now be able to improve the services they offer: The **Maryland Multicultural Youth Center**

in Riverdale, a successful partnership between the University of Maryland and the Latin American Youth Center, will be receiving \$250,000, enough to renovate the facility and expand services.

Helping local nonprofits gain access to state resources has been a top priority for the 22nd district's legislators.

## The Environment: Real But Incomplete Progress

The 2008 legislative session in Annapolis saw a major focus on the environment and energy. At the center of those efforts stood Governor Martin O'Malley — and Senator Paul Pinsky.

The governor, in his second year in office, advanced bills to clean up the Chesapeake Bay and help Marylanders switch to clean energy. He also put his support behind the sweeping anti-global warming initiative that Senator Pinsky has been championing.

Senator Pinsky, as chair of the Senate environmental subcommittee, helped fine-tune the governor's legislation and served as both the lead sponsor on the Global Warming Solutions Act and the Senate floor leader on the governor's environmental bills.

The legislative session didn't end in a full victory for the "greens." But key victories did emerge. Below, a quick recap.

**Chesapeake 2010.** Under the newly enacted "2010" act, a multi-cabinet group will set priorities for Bay clean-up, basing decisions on the most cost-effective steps for reducing nitrogen and phosphorous.

Lawmakers didn't approve funding at a high enough level to make all the progress we need to make. Still, this legislation should help see to it that clean-up money is invested where it will do the most good.

**"Critical Areas" restrictions on development.** To restore the Chesapeake Bay, we need to protect water quality and wildlife in sensitive development areas. Allowing unfettered development right up to the shorelines of streams, rivers, and the bay can have disastrous impacts.

Some environmental protection laws already on the books are being ignored. Wealthy landowners have been known

to knock down trees and build right next to the shoreline — in clear violation of the law, only to receive a hand-slap and a minor fine.

The passage of this new Critical Areas bill will give local counties and towns, as well as the state, more authority to stop such environmental destruction.

**Global Warming Solutions Act.** This bill, sponsored



by Senator Pinsky, would have required Maryland to join California and New Jersey and sharply reduce greenhouse gases emitted in the state. Specifically, Maryland would have had to reduce gases that contribute to climate change and dangerous rises in sea level by 25 percent by 2020 and 90 percent by 2050.

The bill passed the Senate and was close to passing in the House until manufacturing interests, using scare tactics that jobs would be lost if the bill passed, successfully blocked the legislation in the waning hours of the session.

Why does this bill need to pass? One reason: A new report says that rising sea levels could cover 415 square miles of beaches and coastal land in the Chesapeake Bay area.

**No Net Loss of Trees.**

Also sponsored by Sen. Pinsky, this successful legislation requires the governor to propose legislation for the 2009 session that creates a policy of no net loss of forests.

A task force will develop a plan that keeps Maryland's total number of trees and forests constant. Any new development must retain or replace an equal number of trees.

**Energy Investment**

**Fund.** This new state initiative will invest money generated from Maryland electric companies back towards energy efficiency and conservation programs.

The legislation may also be used to expand alternative, clean energies. This fund emerged from ideas in the Healthy Air Act, a bill that Senator Pinsky sponsored two years ago.

**Expansion of Alternative Energy.** The legis-

lature agreed to increase the percentage of renewable (solar, wind, geothermal) energy sources that Maryland companies must use by 2022 from 9.5 percent of energy to 20 percent.

This policy will help create a market for renewable types of energy that, in the long run, will be cheaper to consumers and less harmful to the environment.

**Energy Conservation and Efficiency.** This bill sets a state goal of achieving a reduction in "peak demand" of electricity by 15 percent in the year 2015.

Electric companies must provide residential customers and businesses with a cost-effective plan to reduce energy consumption that takes into account the impact on jobs and rates.

### Did You Know?

Trade unions used to have a much greater presence in American life. In the 1950s, over a third of America's working people belonged to unions. The current percentage of American workers in unions: about 11 percent.

How much of a difference does this weaker union presence make?

Consider this: In the quarter-century after World War II, a period when unions played a strong role in America's economic life, the incomes of typical American families, after inflation, doubled.

Over the last 25 years, a period of declining union membership, average weekly wages in the United States — after inflation — have actually dropped.

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This *Annapolis Advocate* makes up just part of Senator Paul Pinsky's ongoing effort to keep 22<sup>nd</sup> district residents informed. Paul also writes a monthly email newsletter. To subscribe, e-mail "update-request@senatorpinsky.org" with "subscribe" in the subject field.

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## An Annapolis Scorecard: The 2008 Session

Bill	Description	Sen. Pinsky Position	Legislative Action
<b>Global Warming Solutions</b>	Would have mandated major statewide greenhouse gas reductions.	Introduced by Sen. Pinsky	Passed Senate, died in House committee
<b>Excessive CEO Compensation</b>	Would have prohibited companies from claiming huge CEO payoffs as "legitimate business expenses."	Sponsored by Sen. Pinsky	Died in committee
<b>Restricting School Information from Military Recruiters</b>	Will give parents an opportunity to prevent schools from forwarding personal family info to the military for recruiting purposes.	Introduced by Sen. Pinsky	Passed into law
<b>Postpone Phosphate Ban</b>	Will postpone the date that detergents in Maryland must be phosphate-free.	Opposed by Sen. Pinsky	Passed into law
<b>Millionaire Tax</b>	Will create a new, higher income tax rate on Maryland's wealthiest taxpayers and remove a new tax on computer services.	Supported by Sen. Pinsky	Passed into law
<b>Direct Shipping of Wine</b>	Would have allowed direct shipping of wine to consumers.	Supported by Sen. Pinsky	Died in committee
<b>Civil Marriage</b>	Would have expanded opportunities for civil marriage to any two otherwise qualified individuals.	Co-sponsored by Sen. Pinsky	Died in committee
<b>Cell Phones and Driving</b>	Would have required hands-free cell phones and prohibited text messaging while driving.	Supported by Sen. Pinsky	Bill failed
<b>Reducing Textbook Costs</b>	Would have reduced textbook prices at state colleges and universities.	Supported – and drafted — by Sen. Pinsky	Passed both chambers, died on session's end
<b>'Clean Money' Campaign Financing</b>	Would have reduced special interest influence in Maryland elections.	Introduced by Sen. Pinsky	Held up in senate committee
<b>Death Penalty</b>	Would have repealed the death penalty and replaced it with life imprisonment.	Supported by Sen. Pinsky	Defeated in committee