

ROBBYN LEWIS
Legislative District 46
Baltimore City

Health and Government Operations
Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Dear Constituent:

It is my honor to represent the 46th Legislative District in the Maryland General Assembly. Our 90-day annual legislative session has just ended, and I'd like to update you about the important work we've done on your behalf.

I introduced ten bills this session. Thanks to the unflagging efforts of our bill partners, General Assembly Staff and my allies in the House and Senate, seven of my bills passed the House of Delegates and four will go to the Governor's desk to be signed into law.

This year, I and my colleagues passed a strong, progressive agenda that protects our environment, invests in our schools, improves our public health and strengthens our city. We:

- Brought \$9.75 million in state funding back to District 46
- Secured \$850 million for Kirwan Commission recommendations
- Raised the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2026
- Passed the first statewide Styrofoam ban
- Established a Prescription Drug Affordability Board & protected the Affordable Care Act
- Brought Maryland to 50% clean, renewable energy by 2030 & one step closer to 100%
- Demanded accountability from city and state agencies and elected officials

With this letter, I've compiled a list of important legislation: **My Bills, Baltimore City Bills, Public Health & Healthcare, Environment & Public Transit and Education.**

Thank you again, and have a great year.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robbyn Lewis'.

Delegate Robbyn Lewis
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My Bills

In addition to the five bills below, I also introduced legislation to expand liability protections for donated food, increase healthcare provider access to prescription drug data, inform patients about hospital fees and rethink the way we provide behavioral healthcare to vulnerable populations.

- **PASSED - HB1233 - Maryland Healthy Children Act:** This important bill will help over 2,000 children in Maryland who are exposed to lead in housing every year. Lead is a dangerous toxin that hurts children's healthy development and has been shown to decrease academic achievement and lifetime income. HB1233 lowers the threshold for lead remediation and case management services so that we can catch lead exposure earlier and protect kids from irreversible harm at higher levels.
- **PASSED - HB130 - Study of Dedicated Bus Lanes:** This bill will improve the quality of Baltimore City's local bus service. As the only car-free legislator in the General Assembly, I know firsthand that reliable access to transportation is crucial to people's employment, health and education. Under HB130, the Maryland Transit Administration and Baltimore City Department of Transportation must work together to develop a plan for the enforcement of our dedicated lanes in Baltimore City.
- **PASSED - HB551 - Distilleries at Farmer's Markets:** This bill will help distillers in District 46 and throughout the state, by increasing the number of special events and removing the limit of farmer's markets a distillery may participate in.
- **PASSED - HB404/SB303 - Practice of Acupuncture:** This bill updates education requirements to practice Acupuncture in Maryland and modernizes the allowed practices allowed by the Board.
- **Special Mention - HB308 - Rapid Health Impact Assessments in the Public Service Commission:** This bill would require the Public Service Commission to take rapid Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) into account when considering new energy projects. HIAs are a commonsense, important step to reduce health hazards and promote health equity. Although HB308 didn't pass this year, it is the first HIA bill ever to move favorably out of the House of Delegates. Rest assured, we will keep fighting to take human health into account when we make big decisions in Maryland.

Bringing Home the Bacon

Team 46 worked hard this session to bring a total of \$9.75 million in state funding back home to build and improve 13 projects all over the 46th district. These dollars will help bring community development projects to life: the Cherry Hill Town Center, improvements to Rash Field Park and Garrett Park, funding for the arts, athletic field construction, and building renovations.

National Aquarium	\$2,000,000.00
Helping Up Mission	\$1,900,000.00
Baltimore Police Department	\$1,500,000.00
Port Discovery Children’s Museum	\$1,000,000.00
Waterfront Partnership	\$1,000,000.00
Ronald McDonald House Charities Maryland	\$500,000.00
Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation	\$500,000.00
Junior Achievement of Central Maryland	\$350,000.00
Greater Baybrook Alliance	\$325,000.00
Catholic Charities of Baltimore	\$250,000.00
Chesapeake Shakespeare Company	\$150,000.00
South Baltimore Learning Center	\$150,000.00
Westport Community Economic Development Corporation	\$125,000.00
TOTAL:	\$9,750,000.00

Baltimore City Bills

We worked on a number of important bills this year to improve Baltimore City. Some of these dealt with serious and difficult subjects and were controversial – even among the Delegates and Senators. I appreciate everyone who called, wrote, texted and tweeted their views on these important, community issues.

PASSED - HB1094/SB793 - Community Safety and Strengthening Act (Johns Hopkins Police Force): I opposed this bill for two main reasons: first, because I believe it is wrong to use public resources for private benefit; and second, because the expansion of policing will not solve our public safety challenges. As a public health professional with years of experience in and around the world, I know that policing will not solve our public safety problems. Public safety is a function of when social determinants drive health and behavior, and we must address root causes, not only symptoms.

This bill doubles down on the same failed policies – over policing, diverting scarce public resources to private ends, underinvesting in evidence-based public health approaches, fear mongering and worse – that helped bring us to this point. For these reasons, I could not support

Hopkins in their effort to further isolate their campuses with an independent police force and voted against the bill whenever I was given the opportunity.

PASSED - HB161/SB96 - The Water Taxpayer Protection Act of 2019: This groundbreaking bill prohibits the City of Baltimore from seizing homes and churches due to unpaid water bills. No one should lose their home because of an unpaid bill. Period. The House and Senate voted unanimously to pass this, and I'm glad we've put an end to this practice.

PASSED - HB1428 - UMMS Board of Directors Ethics & Performance Audit: There is no excuse for the recently uncovered unethical conduct by the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) Board of Directors. That's why I co-sponsored this emergency bill that will increase ethics standards and require a yearly independent audit for the UMMS Board. We must demand accountability from our city leadership, especially from our anchor institutions – and this bill is a step in the right direction.

Special Mention - The future of the Preakness Stakes was also at the front of debate in the City Delegation. The Stronach Group, which owns and maintains Pimlico among other racetracks in Maryland, has invested nearly 80% of state funds to Laurel, rather than the historic Pimlico track in Baltimore. Pimlico has a century of history in Baltimore and it would be tragic for the Preakness to have to move from its home. We have successfully **blocked** the Stronach Group's efforts to allocate more funds to their tracks in Laurel and Bowie, and I will continue to fight for investments in the surrounding neighborhoods and to keep this treasure in Baltimore.

Healthcare & Public Health

This year, I was assigned to a new committee in the House of Delegates: Health and Government Operations. During this session, I championed legislative efforts to improve human health and reduce the rising cost of healthcare in Maryland.

Healthcare

- **PASSED - HB768/SB759 - Prescription Drug Affordability Board:** This bill addresses soaring prescription drug prices – one of the most stressful and expensive aspects of Marylander's lives – and state healthcare spending. This bill establishes a public watchdog agency to ensure prescription drugs in Maryland are affordable and fair.
- **PASSED – HB1120/SB946 - Retired State Employee Prescription Drug Plan:** Due to last year's Federal tax cut, many state retirees were faced with unaffordable prescription drug costs. SB946 limits out-of-pocket costs for retirees, their spouses and families and creates a new state program to increase access to life-sustaining drugs that are not affordable under Medicare Part D.
- **PASSED - HB697 - Health Insurance Consumer Protection:** This bill will defend the legal guardrails that the Affordable Care Act established.

- **PASSED - HB814 - Protect Maryland Health Care Act of 2019:** This bill will expand access to coverage, despite attempts at the federal level to sabotage the Affordable Care Act and deny health care to hard-working people, including those with pre-existing conditions.

Public Health

- **PASSED - HB116/SB846 - Medication Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorders in Detention Centers:** Opioid overdoses are killing Marylanders more than gun deaths, HIV and car crashes combined. Particularly vulnerable are incarcerated populations, who are 40-130x more likely to die from an overdose than the general population. The evidence shows that Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) saves lives and is far more effective than counseling alone. It is the standard of care – but detention centers do not currently provide this life-saving treatment. This important bill has the potential to save thousands of lives, rectify a violation of basic rights to access healthcare treatment in detention and make communities safer and healthier by disrupting the cycle of incarceration and substance use.
- **PASSED - HB 796 - Maternal Mortality Review Program:** This bill directs local health teams to examine the causes of maternal mortality and determine how to best address them. In 2016, 89% of maternal deaths in Maryland were preventable, with black women nearly 3 times more likely to die than white women. Establishing these local review programs will help address issues such as drug overdose, infant deaths and violence.
- **PASSED - HB1169/SB895 - Tobacco 21:** Maryland is now the 10th state to raise the legal age from 18 to 21 for purchasing tobacco products, which includes cigarettes, e-cigarettes and vapes. 94% of adult smokers started before age 21 – raising the legal age means fewer kids will be able addicted at a young age. This bill marks a milestone for decreasing tobacco-related deaths and disabilities. It was a priority for the Legislative Black Caucus, of which I am a member.
- **Special Mention - HB399/SB311 - End of Life Option Act:** This bill would have enabled terminally ill adults to request a prescription allowing them to end their own lives with dignity. I had to think long and hard about this bill, but I support the right of people to choose to end their lives on their own terms. This bill passed the House but failed in the Senate.

Environment & Transportation

I strongly believe everyone deserves uncontaminated water, breathable air and a healthy environment. There were so many innovative and unprecedented bills brought to the floor this year. Although not all of them passed this time, we will keep working. I hope you'll help me to keep the momentum going.

PASSED - HB109 – Styrofoam Ban: My colleague and district-mate, Delegate Brooke Lierman, has been fighting to pass this bill for years. It is the first of its kind in the country, and it phases out EPS foam (Styrofoam) use in Maryland. I co-sponsored this bill and am so proud to see it pass!

PASSED - HB885 - Vision Zero: This bill establishes a statewide program to achieve zero deaths due to car crashes. Vision Zero efforts have already been adopted in several states and 4 countries, and it is estimated that hundreds of lives can be saved through these policies every year.

PASSED - HB1158/SB516 - Clean Energy Jobs Act will require Maryland to generate 50% clean energy by 2030 and establishes a cost-benefit study to assess increasing the RPS to 100% by 2040. This bill will also fund workforce development programs in the clean and renewable energy sector to build partnerships across Maryland and create thousands of new jobs.

HB961/SB548 - Removing Trash Incinerators from the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard: Maryland is the only state that considers trash incinerators as “clean energy” and funds it with taxpayer money. Burning trash is the top air polluter in Maryland and emits more greenhouse gases than coal plants. I co-sponsored this bill and published an op-ed in *The Daily Record* supporting it. Although it failed, I will continue to work on this issue.

HB771/SB630 - Regional Transportation Authority Study: Baltimore City freshman delegate and former Maryland Transit Administration official, Delegate Tony Bridges, introduced this bill to explore options to create more effective planning and oversight of our transit system.

HB1117 - Extension of MARC Service: This bill would require the Maryland Transit Administration to plan expanded and more frequent commuter rail service. As the price of housing in Maryland continues to rise, the need for convenient and reliable public transit does as well. Although this bill failed, I will urge MDOT to look into this issue more closely.

Education

Access to high-quality education for all Marylanders is imperative for keeping Maryland competitive and is an important economic justice issue. On February 14th, The Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education published their long-awaited report with funding recommendations.

PASSED - HB1413/SB1030 - Blueprint for Maryland’s Future provides \$850 million in funding to public schools over the next two years per Kirwan Commission recommendations and will help us to revitalize our public school system.

The bill subsidizes teacher salary increases and provides additional support for students in struggling school districts. It also expands pre-K programs. It will take ten years to fully implement the Kirwan Commission’s recommendations, but this is a vital first step that I fully support.

BLOCKED - HB1373 - School Resource Officers - Firearms: This poorly conceived bill would have armed School Resource Officers in our public schools. I feel very strongly that guns have no place in our schools. My colleagues and I blocked this bill in the Baltimore City House Delegation.

PASSED - HB338/SB218 - Summer SNAP for Children Act will provide additional funding to the benefits received under the Food Stamp Program for children (SNAP). I am committed to reducing and eliminating hunger in the city and beyond. During the school year, students from these households already receive free or reduced-price school lunches, but in the summer, these children are far more likely to experience food insecurity. This supplement would be used to increase benefits by at least \$30 per child in June, July, and August and \$10 per child in December.