



# **Ross Report**

Prince George's County, 22nd District

Dear Constituents,

As I write to you we are nearly half way through the legislative session and things are beginning to take shape. There are a number of important pieces of legislation currently being debated, including the following:

[\\$60 Million Reserve Fund Transfer \(MC/PG 127-09\)](#)

[Federal Funds coming to Prince George's County](#)

[DC United Stadium \(HB 1282\)](#)

[Death Penalty \(HB 316\)](#)

[Disability History and Awareness Month \(HB 281\)](#)

[Drunk Driving Legislation](#)

[Constituent Casework](#)

[Community News](#)

## **\$60 Million Reserve Fund Transfer, Tax Increase Avoided**

I have introduced emergency legislation in an effort to reduce Prince George's County's projected \$132 million deficit and prevent a tax increase on already-struggling homeowners. The legislation will divert \$60 million over two years from the Maryland Park and Planning Commission reserve fund into the County budget. [Click here](#) to read an article explaining how the legislation will work. For additional information, read the full bill text here: [MC/PG 127-09](#).

## **Federal Stimulus Money coming to Prince George's County**

Governor Martin O'Malley announced last week that he will use federal stimulus money to prevent class size increases and employee furloughs from hitting Prince George's County Public Schools. Working closely with the State House and Senate Delegations, the Governor announced that approximately \$40 million in state aid will be restored for the Fiscal Year 2010 budget. This is in addition to \$30.8 million that will go to the Prince George's County School system directly from the Federal Stimulus bill in the form of increased Title 1 and Special Ed assistance. County Schools will be able to continue to reach new heights with the investment we have made in education in Prince George's County. [Click here](#) for more information regarding the Stimulus bill.

## **Soccer Stadium**

[House Bill 1282](#) would authorize the Maryland Stadium Authority to build a Major League Soccer Stadium in Prince George's County. Read [this article](#) for more information. I am looking at all the information as this plan moves forward. I ask that you take part in the survey below and share your feelings with me on this subject.

**Poll: What do you think about the proposed stadium? [Click here](#) to provide feedback.**

## **Death Penalty**

State lawmakers in Annapolis have begun discussion on a bill to repeal the death penalty in Maryland. Governor O'Malley led a rally last week in Annapolis urging lawmakers to support the repeal. The bill was heard before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee last week and the full Senate met yesterday and today to discuss the bill. The bill that came out of the Senate fell short of a full repeal but limits the use of the death penalty to cases with either DNA evidence, a video taped confession, or a video clearly showing the defendant committing the crime. The hearing for the House version of the bill (HB 316) will take place in the Judiciary Committee on March 17. As I have said before, I will vote to repeal the death penalty in Maryland. Click here to view the [House bill](#).

## **Disability Awareness Month**

Our efforts to proclaim October as Disability History and Awareness Month in Maryland took a step forward last week following a hearing in the House Health and Government Operations Committee. Numerous citizens were in Annapolis to show their support for this important piece of legislation, including the Governor's Secretary of Disabilities Catherine Raggio. I am confident that we will accomplish this goal either through legislative or executive action. Recognizing disabilities is important as it will promote understanding and will help us appreciate the challenges facing millions of Americans. To read more follow this link to [House Bill 281](#).

## **Drunk Driving Legislation**

Following the recommendations of a panel of law enforcement and transportation officials, community members and the judiciary, Governor O'Malley introduced five bills which take significant steps to implement their recommendations. The bills reported out of the Judiciary Committee were [HB 299](#) (Underage Drinking), [HB 301](#) (Probation before Judgment for Repeat Offenders), and [HB 305](#) (Alcohol Restrictions on Drivers Licenses). These bills will save lives and reduce drunk driving in Maryland. I will be voting in favor of the bills.

## **Constituent Casework**

My office is available to assist you with problems and needs that may arise in your community. Visit my [website](#) and let me know how I can be of service to you.

## **Community News**

### **Prince George's Students Improve on AP Exams**

More Prince George's County students are gaining access to college-level AP classes and are improving at rates that are faster than state and national averages. Advanced Placement data released by the College Board show that students in Prince George's County are exceeding state and national trends for improvement and we can thank the hard working teachers in our schools for this great news. The College Board reported a 46.9% increase in the number of students taking AP exams in the County, versus 44.2% nationally, from 2007 - 2008. Congratulations to our students and teachers for this accomplishment.

### **Greenbelt Guard Member Recognized for Participation at Inauguration**

Army National Guard Sgt. Dana M. Raines of Greenbelt participated in the 56th Presidential Inauguration on January 20th, assisting D.C. authorities with crowd management, traffic control and emergency services operations. Raines is a light-wheeled vehicle mechanic with the 729th Forward Support Squadron in Cheltenham. She is the daughter of Norma E. Fletcher of Greenbelt and a 2000 graduate from Bowie High School. Thank you to Sgt. Raines for helping to make the momentous occasion safe for all who attended.

### **Local Artist nominated for Grammy**

Congratulations to Greenbelt's own James McKinney who was nominated for a 2009 Grammy Award for Best Urban/Alternative Performance! McKinney co-wrote and produced "Loving You (Music)" for Bowie-based artist Wayna. The multi-talented McKinney is a classically trained vocalist, published author and is currently the music teacher at the Greenbelt Children's Center. We offer our warm commendations on this exciting and prestigious nomination.

As always, please continue to contact my office with your concerns.

Sincerely,

Delegate Justin Ross

---

By Authority, Friends of Justin Ross, Jane Ross, Treasurer

