

General Assembly Adjourns - Planning Begins for 2025

The Maryland General Assembly Adjourned April 8, 2024. During the annual 90 day Session, legislators considered 2,711 bills and 14 joint resolutions. Some of the highlights include:

The FY 2025 Budget – adopting a spending plan for the next fiscal year is the only action the legislature must constitutionally approve during the legislative session. The House and Senate announced agreement on a \$63 billion budget less than a week ahead of the end of session deadline.

Among the other legislative initiatives approved by the General Assembly and of interest to our clients were: online data privacy, sale and re-sale of sports and entertainment tickets, fire arm liability, gift cards, housing, renter’s rights and real property, tobacco tax increases, juvenile justice reform and regulation of senior housing referral agencies.

Proposals that failed to advance but are likely to return in the 2025 session include earned wage access, commercial lending with repayment terms based on the business’ sales or revenue, civil liability damages caps, security system technician licensing, police reform and i-gaming.



Maryland State Capitol Building

Maryland Primary Election Results

The Maryland primary election was held May 14 with early voting that began on May 2. As was widely expected, President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump each received the overwhelming support of the voters in their campaigns for the White House. Both Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump won all the delegates running to support them at the national party conventions.

Biden received 87.14 percent of the democrats and there was a protest vote for “uncommitted” with 9.75 percent. Trump won 77.34 percent of the republicans while Ambassador Haley earned 22.66 percent.

The race to succeed U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin was more surprising. Prince George’s County Executive Angela Alsobrooks prevailed over Rep. David Trone 53.6% to 42.81 percent of the vote. Mr. Trone invested heavily in the race using his own personal wealth as an owner of “Total Wine & More” a national retail chain. Mr. Trone reported spending more than \$63 million on the race.

In addition to the race for U. S. Senate, there were three open Congressional seats that were closely watched because control of the U.S. House of Representatives is so closely divided. Mr. Trone vacated his seat in Congress to run for Senate while John Sarbanes and C.A. “Dutch” Ruppertsburger announced plans to retire.

In the crowded race to succeed Mr. Sarbanes, State Senator Sarah Elfreth will move ahead to the general election to face Robert Steinberger. Ms. Elfreth is favored to win the seat where 81,428 Democrats voted in the primary election compared to 34,879 Republicans.

In the 2nd congressional district, democrat Johnny Olszewski, Baltimore County Executive, won his party nomination and will run against republican Kim Klacik. Ms. Klacik is an African American businesswoman and political commentator. The district tilts heavily democrat. Ms. Klacik faces an uphill battle with party registration of 264,496 democrats, 150,038 republicans and 101,941 unaffiliated.

In the contest to succeed David Trone in the 6th District, Democrat April McClain Delaney will run against Republican State Delegate Neil Parrott. Ms. Delaney is the wife of former Congressman John Delaney. She is a lawyer and served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce. Mr. Parrott is serving in his third term as a Delegate in the Maryland General Assembly. He is an engineer who has worked for the State Highway Administration and City of Frederick.

The 6th Congressional District is a “purple” competitive district with a narrow democratic party registration advantage.



Governor Wes. Moore and Speaker Adrienne Jones address the press immediately prior to bill signings on April 25, 2024

Frank Boston Among Top 10 Highest Earning Maryland Lobbyists

Frank Boston is once again among the highest earning lobbyists in Maryland, as reported by Maryland Matters, the well-respected, non-profit and non-partisan news site. Frank was fifth among the top 10 lobbyists in one of the 2023 annual rankings.

The most recent annual reporting period runs from November 1, 2022 to October 31, 2023 and tracked 701 Maryland lobbyists registered with the State Ethics Commission. Data is not yet available for the period that includes the 2024 legislative session.

Nearly 1,500 businesses, trade groups, associations and unions reported spending \$77.6 million during the reporting year.

Of the 701 registered lobbyists, 195 earned at least \$50,000 and compensation increased 7 percent year over year.

Approximately 10 percent of the registered lobbyists earned at least \$250,000 during the reporting period.

Registered Maryland lobbyists are regulated by the State Ethics Commission. Registration is required for persons paid to influence executive action taken by an employee or official of the executive branch or legislative action (or non-action) to introduce, sponsor, consider debate, pass or defeat legislation under consideration by the Maryland General Assembly.

There is also a provision of law requiring registration of grass roots lobbying activity where a person, group or entity spends \$2000 or more for the purpose of communicating or influencing legislative or executive action.



Frank D. Boston, III



Sen. Ariana Kelly, pictured above with Gov. Wes. Moore, Speaker Adrienne Jones and Senate President Bill Ferguson, was appointed to serve as Executive Director of the Maryland Commission for Women.

Dates of Interest and Vacant State Senate Seats

Sen. Ariana Kelly has resigned her seat representing District 16. She is leaving the Senate to accept an appointment to serve as executive director of the Maryland Commission for Women.

Kelly served in the House of Delegates for 12 years and in the Senate since 2023. She was appointed to the seat after her predecessor was appointed to serve as Maryland Secretary of State.

Del. Sara Love is expected to apply for the vacancy.

Another potential Senate vacancy is on the horizon. If Sen. Elfreth is elected to Congress this coming November, a replacement will be appointed for 2025

Dates of Interest for the 2025 General Assembly Session:

Pre-filed Legislation: November 20, 2024

First Day of Session: Jan. 8, 2025

Last Day of Session: April 7, 2025

Baltimore City Elections

May 14 was also primary election day for Baltimore City offices including Mayor and all members of the City Council. Winners of the Democratic Party are expected to win their general election races.

Mayor Brandon Scott was victorious in his rematch with former Mayor Sheila Dixon – 52.78% to 38.88%. City Council President Nick Mosby was not as fortunate. Councilman Zeke Cohen decisively defeated Mosby. The Council President race was between three major candidates. Cohen earned 50.92%. Mosby received 23.26% and former City Councilperson Shannon Sneed finished in second place with 25.83%

Mark Parker won the City Council District 1 primary to replace Zeke Cohen. Paris Gray is the winner in District 8 replacing Kristerfer Burnett who did not run for reelection. In District 11 incumbent Eric Costello was narrowly defeated by Zac Blanchard. The margin of victory was 48 votes. District 12 Councilman Robert Stokes lost in his bid for reelection to Jermaine Jones.

Both Council President Mosby and Councilman Costello were regarded as strong advocates for business interests and public safety. With incoming Council President Cohen and the departure of Costello business advocates will need to be alert for progressive proposals.