



committee for
MONTGOMERY

2023 Legislative Breakfast

December 15, 2023

Bethesda North Marriott Hotel
& Conference Center

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CommitteeforMontgomery.org

2023 Annual Legislative Breakfast

Welcome

Shannon Babe-Thomas, Chair, Committee for Montgomery Board of Directors

Pledge of Allegiance

Elected Official Introductions

All Elected Officials please line-up by the podium to Introduce Name and Elected Office

Remarks

Hon. David Trone, US Representative, 6th Congressional District

Hon. Brooke Lierman, Comptroller of Maryland

Committee for Montgomery's 2024 Legislative Priorities

Kenneth Nelson, Legislative Issues, Committee for Montgomery

Remarks

Hon. Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Executive

Hon. Andrew Friedson, Montgomery County Council President

Hon. Ben Kramer, Chair, Montgomery County Senate Delegation

Hon. Julie Palakovich-Carr, Chair, Montgomery County House Delegation

Introduction

Steve Simon, Legislative Breakfast Chair, Committee for Montgomery

General Assembly Journalists Panel

Josh Kurtz, Founding Editor, Maryland Matters

Erin Cox, Washington Post

Will Ford, Maryland Matters

Lou Peck, MoCo 360

Closing Remarks

Shannon Babe-Thomas, Chair, Committee for Montgomery Board of Directors



Committee for Montgomery (CfM) is a coalition of leaders representing a broad cross section of Montgomery County business, labor, education, civic, arts, and community based organizations. Our mission is to advocate in Annapolis on issues of importance to Montgomery County and the state. CfM shapes its state legislative and budget priorities based on its goal of preserving and strengthening Montgomery County as a place to live, work and learn.

Committee for Montgomery Board of Directors

Chair - Shannon Babe-Thomas
Vice-Chair - Victoria Leonard
Secretary - Alan Bowser
Treasurer - Tim Price
Immediate Past Chair- Marjorie Goldman
Breakfast- Steve Simon
Legislative Issues- Kenneth Nelson

Board of Directors

Alan Bowser, MC Civic Federation
Anita Neal Powell, Lincoln Park Historical Foundation
Barbara Ebel, Director MD Reemployment Programs
Bonnie Casper, Long & Foster
Brad Stewart, Montgomery College
Brian Levine, MC Chamber of Commerce
C. William Frick, The Frick Firm, LLC
Carmen Larsen, Aquas, Inc
Christine Handy, MCAAP/MCBOA
Dana Pauley, Leadership Montgomery
Daniel Koroma, Friends of White Oak
Edward Cooper, Total Wine and More
Elaine Chang, MCPS Partnership Unit
Fred Evans, MCPSRA
Gabe Martinez-Cabrera, Literary Council MC
Gilberto Zeleya, UFCW
Hoan Dang, Asian American Political Alliance
Janice Freeman, African American Chambers
Jason Najjorm, Imagination Stage
Jennifer Martin, MCEA
Ken Nelson, Seneca Community Church
Lisa Blackwell-Brown, MCGEO Local 1994
Marjorie Goldman, JCA
Matthew Hoffman, Town of Kensington
Matthew Losak, Renters Alliance
Omar Lazo, Los Chorros Restaurant
Paula Ross, Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber
Raymond Sherbill, Lerch, Early & Brewer
Sally Murek, SEIU Local 500
Shane Rock, JCA
Shannon Babe-Thomas, Community Bridges
Samir Paul
Steve Simon, The Universities at Shady Grove
Victoria Leonard, LiUNA
William Roberts



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MONTGOMERY

2024 ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

The Committee for Montgomery (CfM) is a coalition of leaders representing a broad cross-section of Montgomery County business, labor, education, civic, arts, and community-based organizations. Our mission is to advocate in Annapolis on issues of importance to Montgomery County and the State. Through its membership, CfM represents more than 350,000 Montgomery County voters. CfM shapes its state legislative and budget priorities based on its goal of preserving and strengthening Montgomery County as a place to live, work and learn. At nearly 1.1 million residents, Montgomery County is the State's largest and most racially and ethnically diverse jurisdiction in Maryland. It is a dynamic, growing cultural center and engine of economic prosperity, and a thriving Maryland means a thriving Montgomery County.

Economic Development and Transportation

Core issue: Montgomery County needs a thriving economy and broadly shared prosperity to support well-paying jobs, investments in education, public safety, and health and human services. A supportive business climate is necessary to help Montgomery County be competitive with surrounding jurisdictions. Traffic congestion and lack of mass transit service to centers for business and education activities hampers State and County economic growth and hurts the well-being of our residents.

CfM Legislative Priorities: CfM calls for state action to fund comprehensive and multi-faceted solutions to our transportation concerns and to grow our local economy, in particular urging the State to:

- Support State funding for rapid transit (including on MD Route 355), pedestrian and bicycle safety programs, and other transportation projects throughout the County.
- Promote multi-modal transportation strategies to increase efficient access to jobs, schools, and commerce, including increasing public transportation and electric vehicle adoption.
- Ensure WMATA's financial well-being and support a reliable, safe Metrorail system.
- Increase daytime capacity for MARC service on the Brunswick Line and eliminate MARC route gaps.
- Address persistent transportation bottlenecks and limitations, including the American Legion Bridge and upper I-270 corridor.
- Support a strategic, coordinated, regional approach for pandemic and economic recovery, including highly impacted industries like arts/entertainment/hospitality.
- Strengthen policies, incentives, and aid packages that foster business growth and sustainability for all types of businesses – including small businesses, opportunity zones, incubators, and minority-owned businesses.
- Invest in minority business development as a vehicle that advances racial equity.
- Support the nonprofit sector as essential to our local economy.
- Obtain state funding to meet the need for high-demand or high-skill jobs in the County through strategic partnerships between education, business, labor, and non-profit institutions.

Education and Workforce Development

Core issue: Montgomery County is home to the largest and most diverse public school system in Maryland. The county also has a strong public higher education presence with Montgomery College and the Universities at Shady Grove. Our students and educators face widening race-and class-based gaps in outcomes, aging facilities and uneven access to opportunity, all exacerbated by the pandemic. We should cultivate a strong, creative, and educated, career-ready workforce through investments in expanded experiential offerings and support for students of all ages.

CfM Legislative Priorities: To address the countywide needs of our schools and students, especially because the current state surplus provides us with greater potential for investments in education, CfM will advocate for:

- Staffing shortages are a growing problem. We must make public education jobs, from administration and teacher to bus driver and food service worker, attractive career opportunities. Our students continue to experience widening race and class-based gaps in outcomes, uneven access to opportunity, and the persistent effects of the pandemic on learning, social development and wellbeing. We should cultivate a strong, healthy, creative, and educated citizenry and career-ready workforce through investments in expanded experiential offerings and support for students of all ages.
- Montgomery County's fair share of funding for the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which promises transformational investments in teacher compensation, community schools, career/technical education, early childhood education (including certification opportunities), and racial/linguistic/income equity. This is especially vital as we work to address learning disruption caused by the pandemic.
- Capital funding to upgrade Montgomery County Public Schools' aging school facilities, including security and HVAC systems.
- Promoting pathways and support for careers in public education to ensure retention of experienced educators and attraction of diverse, highly qualified applicants to work in our schools.
- Developing enrichment programs, internships, apprenticeships, and Career and Technical Education programs-including certification and micro-credential programs.
- Supporting capital funding requests for Montgomery College.
- Securing increased state operating funds for Montgomery College and the Universities at Shady Grove, especially to support (1) talent pipeline development for local private and governmental employers and (2) pathway programs with MCPS that will lead students to meaningful employment and outstanding career opportunities, in collaboration with business and industry.
- Supporting the designation of the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) as a "Community of Innovation" within the University System of Maryland and the State, helping to ensure a commitment to the resources, flexibility and support needed to build, measure and assess career pathways for students, across various industry sectors.
- Providing funding for professional learning for all instructional leaders and staff.
- Address the growing statewide shortage of teachers, paraeducators, and substitute teachers and paraeducators.

Climate and Environment

Core issue: Increasing greenhouse gas emissions and the destruction of forests and tree canopy lead to erratic and severe weather patterns, threaten our food and water supply, adversely affect the economy, reduce our quality of life, and disparately affect marginalized communities.

CfM Legislative Priorities: CfM urges aggressive action to mitigate and adapt to climate change by reducing carbon emissions and stewarding Maryland's precious natural resources, including:

Reducing the carbon footprint of residential and commercial buildings.

- Closing coal-fired power plants and supporting displaced workers while supporting the transition to zero-carbon energy production.
- Supporting industries reaching their net-zero carbon emissions goals.
- Protecting, replacing, and increasing tree canopy within the watershed after transit and infrastructure projects.
- Supporting the adoption and use of renewable energies like solar and wind, including educating and training the workforce necessary for those industries.
- Encouraging the adoption of electric vehicles both for personal use and in the public sector.
- Funding improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- Supporting new and existing state-wide waste reduction, reuse and recycling programs.
- Supporting public transit infrastructure and adoption.
- Restoring and expanding state stormwater management programs.

Social Justice

Core issue: Every person in Montgomery County and in Maryland deserves to live safely and free from inequitable treatment based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual preference, socioeconomic status, disability, age, or religion.

CfM Legislative Priorities: CfM will advocate for continued attention to issues of employment, criminal justice, social justice, and public safety, including:

- Improving access to resources needed for members of marginalized communities, including food, healthcare (including behavioral health and physical health), and housing security.
- Setting up an appropriate legal cannabis regulatory scheme to include education and clearly identified health warnings, and ameliorating the racialized criminal justice outcomes of the pre-legalization system.
- Reforming the criminal justice system to include early interventions with community partners and ensure juvenile preventive measures, programming, and sentencing to divert more youthful offenders from going into the adult system.
- Studying and proposing innovative solutions to gun violence, hate crimes, and other public safety issues, especially those issues that disproportionately affect marginalized communities or that present novel challenges based on new technologies.
- Ensuring that the State Board of Elections and local boards of elections are adequately funded to provide staffing, equipment, and public communication to ensure equal voting access to all Maryland voters.

Housing Affordability

Core issue: Housing affordability creates vibrant, stable, healthy, diverse communities. Affordable housing is central to the health, welfare and prosperity of all of our communities. Affordable housing makes it possible for Montgomery County to attract young talent, for racially and economically integrated communities to form and prosper, and for entrepreneurs to take risks knowing that they can afford their housing payment.

CfM Legislative Priorities: CfM urges state support for housing affordability initiatives, including:

- Urging the creation of State incentives – such as tax credits – for development, revitalization, and adaptive reuse to produce housing affordable for everyone, including senior residents and low- and moderate-income people.
- Urging the state legislature to promote housing stability and affordability.
- Urging the State to fully and efficiently distribute any remaining state and federal assistance meant to keep Marylanders in their homes during the pandemic.
- Funding Maryland’s historic renters’ right to counsel in eviction proceedings
- Increasing state funding for renter and landlord outreach and education.

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