

Pressley Media Group, LLC

Case Study

Crisis Communications



Maryland529



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Maryland Prepaid College Trust

Purchase one semester up to 4 years of college at today's prices and use your plan at any federally accredited college or university nationwide.

[Learn More](#)

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About Maryland 529

Maryland 529 is an independent, non-profit State Agency, overseen by a 11-member Board. We offer two, 529 college savings plans that are designed to help families give their children the freedom to pursue their dreams through saving for college, an apprenticeship, or trade school, and limit the accumulation of debt. In addition, we offer one disabilities savings program, to help families save for disability-related expenses to improve independence and quality of life for qualified Beneficiaries.

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About Maryland 529

“We are committed to doing this right and fixing an ongoing problem,”

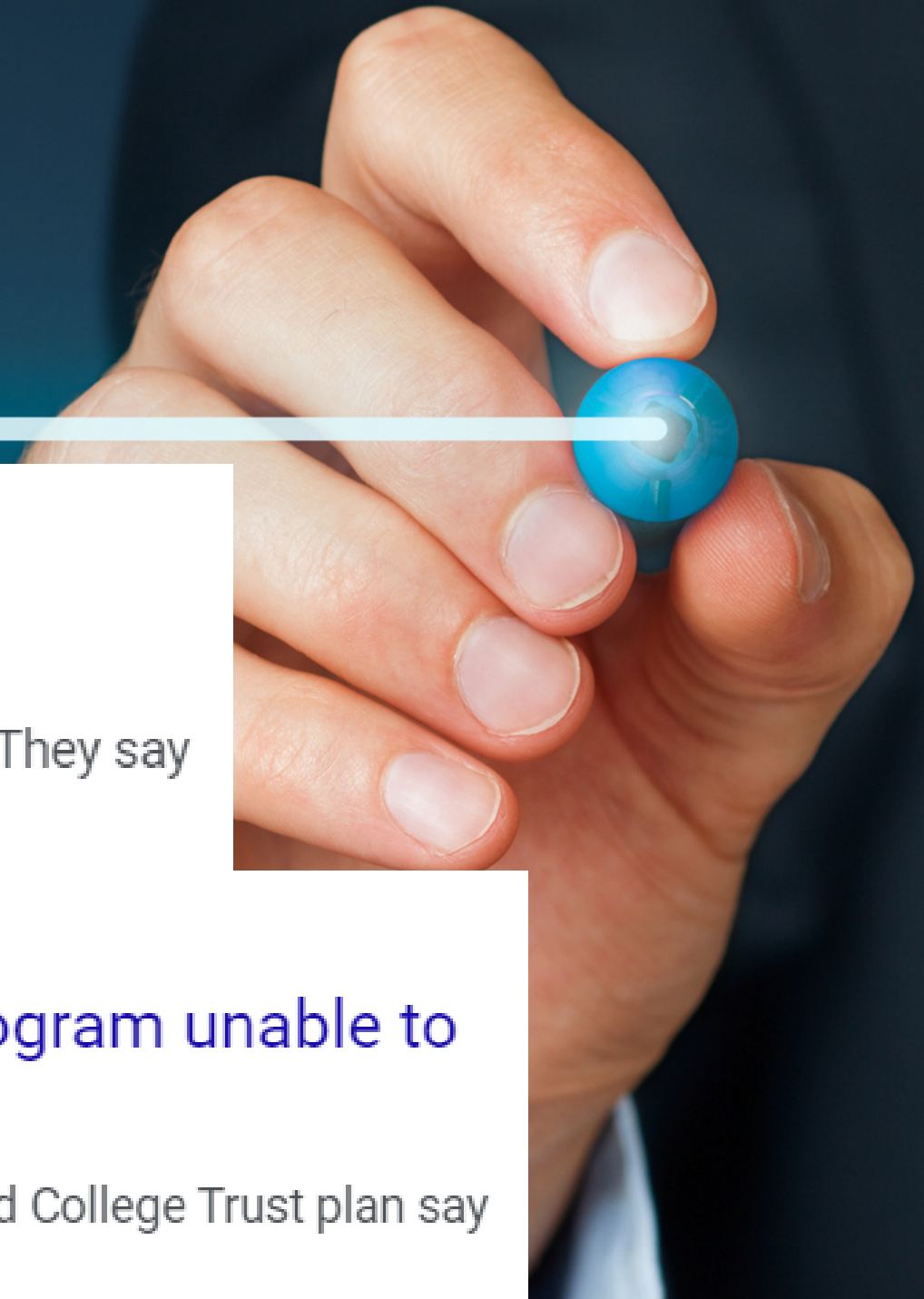
 Maryland Matters

Access to some college savings funds will be curtailed until at least Oct., official says

The head of Maryland's "529" college savings programs offered an update on efforts to correct an interest calculation problem.

Sep 30, 2022

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 The Washington Post

Maryland trust blocks access to college savings plans

Officials say some accounts have too much money and others have too little. They say they need time to sort it out.

Dec 21, 2022

 WMAR

Parents who invested in college savings program unable to access some funds

BALTIMORE — Parents who paid into the Maryland 529 Prepaid College Trust plan say they've been unable to access a portion of their funds to...

Jan 10, 2023

 Baltimore Sun

Embattled Maryland 529 leaders pledge to improve communication over prepaid college trust issues

Amid ongoing complaints from parents about the Maryland Prepaid College Trust, the Maryland 529 board will meet ahead of schedule on Monday.

Jan 24, 2023

Media Coverage

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Media Coverage

THE BALTIMORE SUN

Embattled Maryland 529 leaders pledge to improve communication over prepaid college trust issues

By Lia Russell

Baltimore Sun • Jan 24, 2023 at 6:38 pm

The top two officials of a state college funding agency pledged Tuesday to improve communication while resolving interest calculation issues that have plagued at least 500 account holders.

Maryland 529 Executive Director Anthony Savia and interim board chair Geoffrey Newman also told members of two state Senate committees that the agency would look to other states with 529 plans as models as it works to help families unable to access their Maryland Prepaid College Trust balances or whose accounts failed to accrue promised interest.

In addition, the agency has hired a liaison to work with lawmakers and contracted with Pressley Media Group to handle communications, Maryland 529 spokesperson Michelle Winner confirmed via email.

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PMG CREATED A CUSTOMIZED CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

A Crisis Communications Strategy to:

- include internal and external message development and execution;

THE BALTIMORE SUN



Dozens of parents donned red Thursday and attended a House Appropriations Committee meeting at the General Assembly in Annapolis for a hearing on Maryland's 529 college savings plans. (Lia Russell/Baltimore Sun)

FOX 5 NEWS

"It's disgraceful" | Lawmakers demand answers from Maryland 529 administrators

by Rebecca Pryor | Thu, January 19th 2023, 10:48 PM EST



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PMG CREATED A CUSTOMIZED CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

A Media Relations Strategy to:

- respond to media inquiries, control the narrative, and pivot to positive messaging about the MD529 program; and

 Maryland Matters

Ahead of board meeting, Maryland 529 director details accounting issues in memo to lawmakers

The director of Maryland 529, which runs the state's troubled college tuition savings program, offered new details late last week about the agency's flawed...

Jan 29, 2023




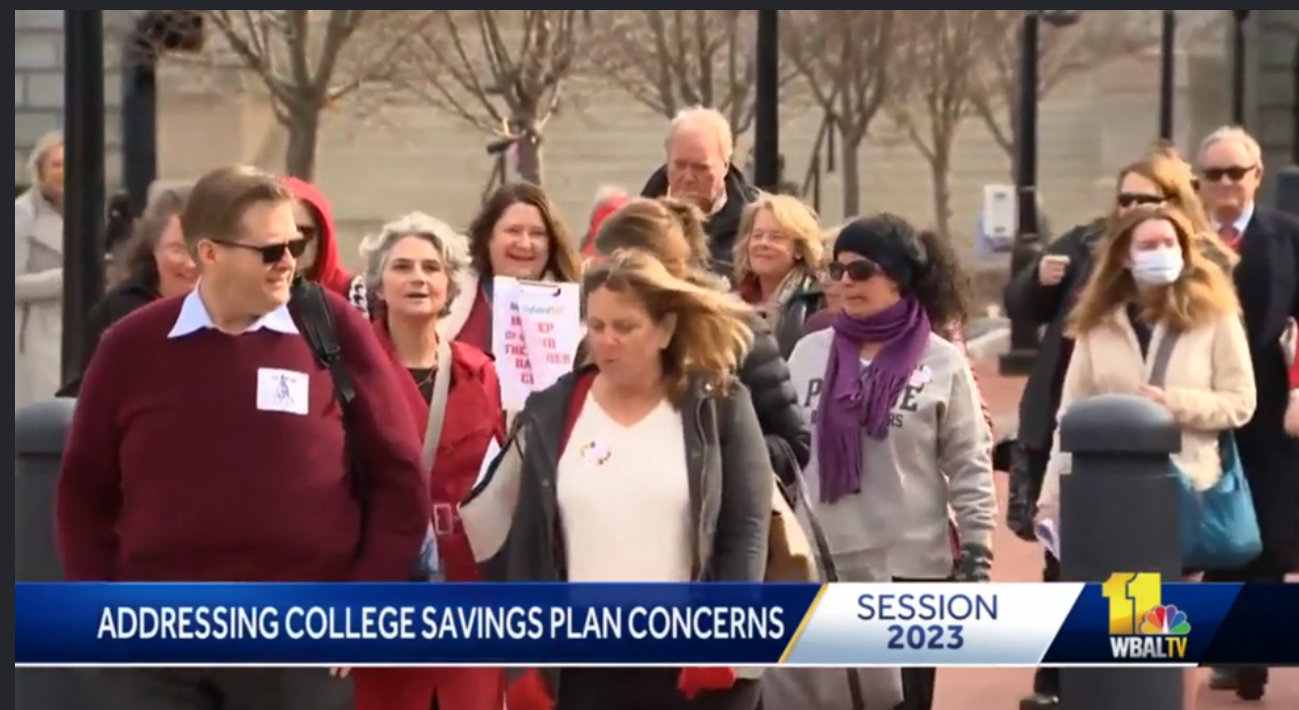
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PMG CREATED A CUSTOMIZED CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

A Public Relations Strategy to:

- address and allay concerns about the program, provide information to account holders on the resolution to current issues, and pivot to improved communication and way forward for the program and its stakeholders.

 Baltimore Sun



Public Relations Strategy:

- A customized Outreach and Engagement Plan

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PMG CREATED A CUSTOMIZED CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

A Media Relations Strategy to:

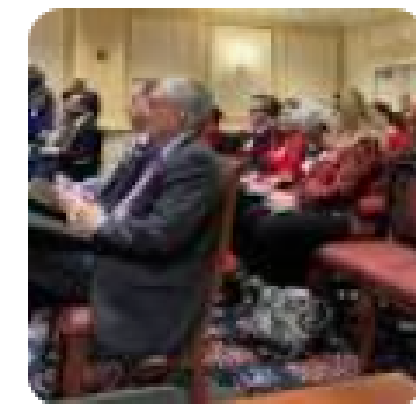
- respond to media inquiries, control the narrative, and pivot to positive messaging about the MD529 program; and

S Baltimore Sun

Maryland 529: Prepaid trust financially sound despite ongoing account errors

Despite its problems, Maryland 529's prepaid college trust added 400 accounts in the last three months of 2022, bringing the total to more than 31000.

Feb 23, 2023



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Project Timeline



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S Baltimore Sun

[Legislators seek to abolish Maryland 529 board, move college savings agency into state treasurer's office](#)

Democratic Del. Cathi Forbes of Baltimore County has introduced the bill to move Maryland 529 into the State Treasurer's office.

Mar 2, 2023

45 Fox Baltimore

[Former Maryland 529 employee says the embattled agency is "shortchanging" families](#)

As a former Maryland 529 customer service representative who eventually rose to a managerial role, for 16 years Spencer Fells was the friendly voice on the...

Mar 3, 2023

45 Fox Baltimore

[Maryland 529 parents beg lawmakers to refund money they say is missing from their accounts](#)

Maryland 529 account holders ask for ammendments be made tofor refunds to be included in.

Mar 21, 2023

S Baltimore Sun

[Lawmakers pass Maryland 529 college savings plan reform on last day of legislative session](#)

Maryland lawmakers approved a bill Monday evening that transfers control of a troubled state college savings agency to the office of State Treasurer Dereck...

Apr 10, 2023

S Baltimore Sun

[Gov. Wes Moore signs legislation shifting control of troubled Maryland 529 college savings agency to state treasurer](#)

Gov. Wes Moore signed legislation Monday afternoon that will transfer control of Maryland 529 to the Office of State Treasurer Dereck Davis, a milestone in...

Apr 24, 2023

Maryland's takeover of troubled 529 savings agency off to a rocky start, parents say

Parents with prepaid college savings accounts say the state treasurer's office lacks transparency and urgency



By [Danielle Douglas-Gabriel](#)

June 17, 2023 at 6:00 a.m. EDT