



Senator Joanne C. Benson's 202 Coalition Newsletter

District 24's Senatorial Advocate in Annapolis

RESOURCE GUIDE - APRIL 2020



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From Senator Joanne C. Benson

April 1, 2020

COVID-19 is a highly contagious respiratory disease that spreads easily from person to person. It lives on some surfaces for days. It can be picked up from touch or contaminated surfaces and may lead to serious illness or death.

For some, the symptoms are a fever of 100.4 F, a cough, sneezing and/or a shortness of breath. There are reported cases where some people have lost their sense of taste and smell. More concerning, some people are asymptomatic – they have none of the symptoms – but they are carriers of COVID-19. At this point, there is no cure - no vaccine.

I am strongly suggesting that we pray as often as we can for the passing of this pandemic. Wash your hands frequently, cough or sneeze into your elbow, take vitamins to boost your immune systems, and STAY HOME unless it is an emergency. Pay close attention to your body. Call your doctor or 311 if you have any questions. Let's stay calm and wait. This too shall pass.

To contact Senator Joanne c. Benson, call: 301-858-3148

Legislative Priorities



Senate Bill 606

(HB 917) - Criminal Law-Hate Crimes - Basis - (2nd Lt. Richard Collins, III's Law):

In 2017, 2nd Lt. Richard Collins III was murdered while visiting the University of Maryland. He was targeted due to the color of his skin. This bill will address this issue of by clarifying that hate can be one of the factors for crime but does not have to be the sole factor to secure a conviction under the hate crime statute.

Senate Bill 641

(HB 1097) - Maryland Wage and Hour Law and Maryland Wage and Collection Law (Maryland Wage Protection Act):

This bill ensures that workers who work an honest day's work are given their fair pay. It seeks to close loopholes in Maryland's wage law by protecting employees from retaliation; promoting transparency by requiring that paystubs to contain information how, and prohibit employers from misclassifying employees as independent contractors.

Senate Bill 833

(HB 1527) - Adult Protective Services - Vulnerable Adults Registry - Investigation and Records of Abuse and Neglect and Workgroup Study:

In an effort to protect some of our most vulnerable citizens, this bill seeks to create a statewide elder abuse registry. The registry would be similar to the existing confidential and centralized statewide child abuse and neglect database.

Senate Bill 1024

(HB 938) - Home Energy Assistance - Critical Medical Needs Program - Power to the People Pilot Program:

This bill seeks to expand access to the Critical Medical Needs Program for individuals all over the State of Maryland who are critically ill and seek assistance from energy and efficiency programs.

Senate Bill 952

Health Insurance - Requirements for Establishing Step Therapy Protocol and Requesting Exceptions

This bill expands patient access by ensuring appropriate, common sense guardrails are applied to step therapy to help patients receive the most effective treatments as quickly as possible.

PG 410-20

Prince George's County - County Income Tax Credit - Credit for Primary and Specialty Health Care Providers:

Capitol Heights has been identified as a health enterprise zone that lacks access to primary care services & resources for health services. This bill aims to allow the Prince George's County Council to authorize a primary or specialty health care provider to claim a tax credit if they reside in Prince George's County and are employed by a medical practice within the 20743 area.

Stimulus Bill FAQ

What is the stimulus bill?

Lawmakers passed a \$2 trillion bill to address recent economic struggles. The bill will send money directly to individuals based on specific income criteria based on 2019 or 2018 tax return information.

Who will receive money and how much?

- Individuals who made less than \$75,000 will receive \$1,200
- Married couples who made less than \$150,000 will receive \$2,400
- Parents would see an additional \$500 for each child under age 17

If you receive social security...

- If you do not exceed listed income limits listed above, you are eligible
- If you don't make enough to file a tax return, you will receive a check as long as you receive an SSA-1099 form
- The check will be delivered the same way you usually get Social Security payments
- If you receive disability checks from Social Security, you are eligible for the special payment

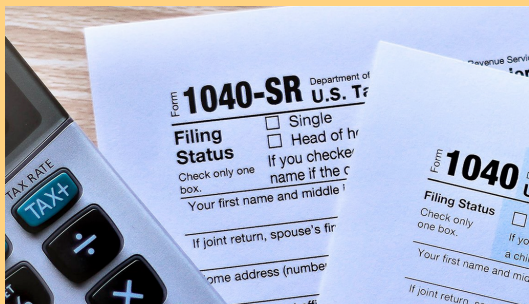
How much money will you receive?

To calculate an estimate of how much you will receive from this bill, visit The Washington Post calculator at:

[washingtonpost.com/graphics/business/coronavirus-stimulus-check-calculator/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/business/coronavirus-stimulus-check-calculator/)

For more information on the stimulus bill, visit:

[nytimes.com/article/coronavirus-stimulus-package-questions-answers.html](https://www.nytimes.com/article/coronavirus-stimulus-package-questions-answers.html)



Well-Connected Program

Are you missing going to social activities at your local senior center? If you can't get out of the house, the Well-Connected program is a great way to bring engaging activities to your home. Well-Connected is an award-winning program offering FREE interactive activities, education, support groups, and friendly conversations with other seniors over the phone or online.

To learn more, visit covia.org/services/well-connected/ or call 877-797-7299



Free Telephone Topics

Telephone Topics presented by Mather offers a wide range of interesting discussions and programs over the phone for free. Topics include: wellness, education, music, and more.

To view the upcoming Telephone Topics schedule, visit, mather.com/neighborhood-programs/telephone-topics.

To register or for more information, call (888) 600.2560 or contact teltopics@mather.com

Senior Call Check Program

The Senior Call Check program is a free resource to MD residents over 65. The program is designed to keep older adults safe while aging in their homes. Participants receive an automated call every other day at a time of their choosing. If the calls go unanswered, a love one is notified in case something went wrong. The Call Check Program also offers FREE daily calls/messages regarding COVID-19 support and updates. For more information, visit aging.maryland.gov/Pages/senior-call-check.aspx

To register, call 1-866-502-4325



COVID-19 Scams

It's important to be aware of tactics scammers use related to coronavirus. Here are a few things to look out for:

- (1) There are no door-to-door tests or vaccines being offered.
- (2) Utility companies or banks will never call for personal information.
- (3) The Social Security Administration doesn't call asking for money.
- (4) No one will be calling you asking for banking information to deposit your stimulus check.

To learn more, visit www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/ or call (410) 576-6300.

Evictions and Foreclosures

An Administrative Order issued by the State of Maryland Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals:



All evictions or foreclosures will be suspended until further notice. There may be no evictions for any reason.

Food Assistance

Find details and updates at: capitalareafoodbank.org/COVID19response



Contact the Hunger LifeLine at: hungerlifeline@capitalareafoodbank.org
202-644-9807

Extensions and Utility Assistance

- The Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation announced that the 2020 deadline to submit Annual Reports and Personal Property Tax Returns will be automatically extended to July 15
- Pepco and BGE have announced they are "suspending service disconnections and waiving new late payment fees through at least May 1."
- Washington Gas will be suspending disconnections and waiving late fees until the end of the crisis.
- WSSC Water have also announced that they will be suspending all water service shutoffs for those facing financial difficulties.



Price Gouging Prohibited

Maryland has announced an executive order that prohibited price gouging on the following items:

- Food/beverages
- Cleaning products
- Medicine
- Fuel
- Water
- Delivery services

Residents who have concerns are encouraged to contact the Maryland Attorney General's Office of Consumer Protection. You can file a complaint by calling 410.528.8662

Scholarships Are Now Available

Financial assistance to attend a college is available for District 24 residents who (1) have graduated high school, (2) will be graduating or receiving a GED this Spring and attending college or graduate school in the fall, or (3) current college students. Awardees will be chosen in early summer. Applications and supporting documents are due by *Friday, May 8, 2020*.

All scholarship information can be found at: www.joannecbenson.com under the *Scholarship* tab.

For information on additional Delegate Scholarships, please contact District 24's three Delegates.

2020 Maryland Census

What is it?

The census counts each living person in the US. It serves as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy.

How does the census work?

Data is collected through various types of surveys. Federal funds are dispersed based on the number of people reported living in each state/county/community.

Why does the census matter?

- Determines how services and critical programs are funded
- Impacts legislative districts and representation in Congress
- Affect school construction, economic development, and emergency planning

The 2020 Maryland Census can be completed by

(1) Phone: 844-330-2020

(2) Online: <https://my2020census.gov/>

(3) Mail:

U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 E 10th Street
Jeffersonville, IN 47132

