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Education, Energy, and the  
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Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and  
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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## The Senate of Maryland

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### Senate Bill 73 - Chesapeake Conservation Corps Program - Renaming

I am Senator Bryan Simonaire presenting a very Bi-partisan bill: SB 73.

It is a **true testament to Mike Miller** that you see both Democrats and Republicans supporting this bill.

This is **consensus legislation** we have worked on for months with the **Chesapeake Bay Trust**, the **Department of Natural Resources**, **legislators** and of course, we shared with the **Mike Miller family**.

This bill does two things:

1. **Names the 'Chesapeake Conservation Corps Program'** after **Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.**
2. Adds '**Climate**' to the Program's title.

**When discussing** the new title, we **considered its length**. We agreed this is appropriate for the formal title, but when necessary for space consideration, operationally we also allow for a shortened title.

This is a **common practice** in existing law as we see longer titles being referenced by shorter titles.

Additionally, when I looked at other naming programs and funds in statute, I **found longer titles** like the "Douglas J. J. Peters Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Conflicts Scholarship Fund" ... and it has worked well while providing honor to the individuals.

This bill is about **honoring a fellow member** of the General Assembly who **gave far more to it, than he ever wanted in return**.

Former Senate President Mike Miller served both in the **House of Delegates and the Senate** where he became the longest serving State Senate President in America.

His accomplishments would take too long to detail but I wanted to share a little of my interaction with him.

I **served with Mike for 13 years** and he was senate president when I first arrived in Annapolis.

I was **greener than green in the ways of politics** and probably was a **thorn in his side** for my first few years considering my initial mentors. However, over time as I watched him and learned, he gained my respect as I matured in the Senate.

Even if we **disagreed on issues at times**, we became friends in the political arena to point where I could ask his advice, and he'd freely give it.

Early on, as a gesture of good will, I started sending him those **nice little Christmas gift boxes** of cheese, nuts, candies and cakes to his house. A couple years later, he teased me saying “*I just want you to know, that I always had my wife taste them first to make sure you didn’t poison them*”.

**He was a character!**

I quickly learned that Mike had a **passion for his family, the senate** and making sure we left the world a better place than we found it.

Mike taught me what it meant to be a senator:

- Being respectful of each other
- Honoring the institution
- Work for the betterment of the people, and
- To always learn from history as it tends to repeat itself.

He would often say, “**I know my history**, I can tell you what is going to happen in this situation before it happens.”

**He was right**, more often than not!

**One of his many initiatives** he championed 15 years ago was the “Chesapeake Conservation Corps Program”. There have been additions and tweaks to the program, but by and large, it’s still the program he created.

Most recently, it’s **duties and funding were updated** in the “Climate Solutions Now Act”, so one of the changes in this bill is to **better reflect the program’s purpose** by adding the word ‘climate’ in its title.

**The other change**, is of course, is to add’ **Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.**’ to the title as it depicted his love for the environment and education.

**Back in 2020**, we rightly honored **former Speaker Busch** by creating the “**Michael Erin Busch Sports Fund**” in Maryland law. This bill works to honor Mike Miller in our statutes as well.

For these reasons, I ask for your favorable consideration.