

MMC SB0588 Written Testimony Mar 10 26.pdf

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Position: FAV



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION
Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

March 10, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Request for **FAVORABLE Report** – SB0588 – Natural Resources – Complimentary Fishing and Hunting Licenses – Alterations

Dear Chair Feldman and distinguished members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition¹ (MMC), I write to ask for a **FAVORABLE report** by the Committee on **SB0588 – Natural Resources – Complimentary Fishing and Hunting Licenses – Alterations**, sponsored by Senator Bryan Simonaire.

Senator Simonaire's bill addresses, under specific situations, free or complimentary fishing, hunting, and recreational oyster licenses, such as:

- Complimentary hunting and fishing licenses to game and fishing department enforcement officers from other states. Maryland is not the first state to offer such reciprocity licenses. Throughout the nation, many neighboring states offer complimentary hunting and fishing licenses. Adjacent to Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia are just a few examples.
- Changing the language from "shall" to "may", providing the Department of Natural Resources more flexibility with who should or should not receive a complementary recreational oyster lifetime license.
- Adding criteria for issuing complementary recreational oyster license for specific out-of-state residents.
- Adding the requirement to publish statistical reports that track the number of licenses sold, and the number of complimentary and lifetime complimentary licenses issued.

Licensing is a privilege, not a right. It's essential that those entrusted to issue complimentary licenses have a clear understanding of who is and who is not eligible for them.

¹ See attached list of member organizations.

Subject: Request FAVORABLE Report – SB0588 – Natural Resources – Complimentary Fishing and Hunting Licenses
– Alterations

The Maryland Military Coalition **strongly supports** SB0588 and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report from the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of 21 prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups. It represents over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers and survivors. For further information please visit our [website](#).

We want to thank Senator Simonaire for sponsoring this legislation and supporting the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

David Lutzow

David Lutzow

Senior Master Sergeant (Ret), U.S. Air Force

Director



Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition

Air Force Sergeants Association

American Military Society

American Minority Veterans Research Project

Association of the United States Navy

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

Disabled American Veterans

Fleet Reserve Association of Annapolis

Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A

Maryland Air National Guard Retirees' Association

National Active and Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Military Officers Association of America

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Military Order of the World Wars

Montford Point Marines of America

National Association of Black Veterans

National Active and Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

Reserve Organization of America

Society of Military Widows

Veterans of Foreign Wars

AMENDMENT_SB0588-463126-1.pdf

Uploaded by: Kara Contino

Position: FAV



SB0588/463126/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

12 FEB 26
11:27:58

BY: Senator Simonaire
(To be offered in the Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee)

AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL 588

(First Reading File Bill)

On page 3, in line 8, strike “**SUBPARAGRAPHS (II) AND (III)**” and substitute “**SUBPARAGRAPH (II)**”; in line 10, strike the brackets; in the same line, strike the colon; in line 11, strike “**1.**”; in the same line, strike “**A**”; in lines 12, 13, and 16, strike “**A.**”, “**B.**”, and “**C.**”, respectively, and substitute “**1.**”, “**2.**”, and “**3.**”, respectively; in line 16, strike the semicolon and substitute a period; and strike beginning with “**AND**” in line 17 down through “**VETERANS.**” in line 30.

On page 4, in line 1, strike “**(III)**” and substitute “**(II)**”; strike in their entirety lines 3 through 5, inclusive; and strike beginning with “**BLIND**” in line 7 down through “**A**” in line 8 and substitute “**:**”

(I) **BLIND; AND**

(II) **A**”.

REPRINT_SB0588-463126-1.pdf

Uploaded by: Kara Contino

Position: FAV

SENATE BILL 588

M2

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By: **Senator Simonaire**

Introduced and read first time: February 5, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – Complimentary Fishing and Hunting Licenses – Alterations**

3 FOR the purpose of altering certain requirements and authorizations for the issuance of
4 certain complimentary fishing and hunting licenses; requiring the Department of
5 Natural Resources to compile certain statistics relating to complimentary hunting
6 licenses at a certain time each year; and generally relating to complimentary hunting
7 and fishing licenses.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
9 Article – Natural Resources
10 Section 4–607(a)(1), 4–745(e), 4–1004.1(a) and (e)(2), 10–301(l), 10–301.3, and
11 10–303
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

14 BY adding to
15 Article – Natural Resources
16 Section 4–1004.1(e)(4)
17 Annotated Code of Maryland
18 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

19 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
20 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

21 **Article – Natural Resources**

22 4–607.

23 (a) (1) The Department may issue annually a complimentary angler’s license
24 to the President of the United States, the governor of any state, and any official **OR**

2 REPRINT OF SENATE BILL 588 as amended by SB0588/463126/1 02/12/26 at 11:27 AM

1 ENFORCEMENT OFFICER of the game and fish department of any other state THAT
2 RECIPROCALLY OFFERS A COMPLIMENTARY ANGLER'S LICENSE.

3 4-745.

4 (e) (1) In this subsection, "former prisoner of war" means a person who, while
5 an active service member, was forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by an enemy
6 government or its agents, or a hostile force, during a period of armed conflict.

7 (2) The Department may issue a lifetime complimentary Chesapeake Bay
8 and coastal sport fishing license to any Maryland resident who certifies that the resident
9 is:

10 (i) A former prisoner of war;

11 (ii) An American veteran who the U.S. Department of Veterans
12 Affairs determines is unemployable; or

13 (iii) A 100% service connected disabled American veteran.

14 (3) The Department may issue a lifetime complimentary Chesapeake Bay
15 and coastal sport fishing license to an out-of-state person:

16 (i) Who certifies that the person is:

17 1. A former prisoner of war;

18 2. An American veteran who the U.S. Department of
19 Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable; or

20 3. A 100% service connected disabled American veteran; and

21 (ii) Whose state of residence extends similar privileges to former
22 prisoners of war, American veterans who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
23 determines are unemployable, or 100% service connected disabled American veterans of
24 this State.

25 (4) A complimentary Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license is
26 not transferable AND SHALL BE ISSUED WITHOUT A FEE.

27 (5) The Department may issue annually a complimentary Chesapeake Bay
28 and coastal sport fishing license to the President of the United States, the governor of any
29 state, and any official OR ENFORCEMENT OFFICER of the game and fish department of
30 any other state THAT RECIPROCALLY OFFERS A COMPLIMENTARY SPORT FISHING
31 LICENSE.

3 REPRINT OF SENATE BILL 588 as amended by SB0588/463126/1 02/12/26 at 11:27 AM

1 (6) Not more than 20 complimentary Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport
 2 fishing licenses for each state other than Maryland shall be outstanding at any time.

3 4-1004.1.

4 (a) In this section, "former prisoner of war" means [an individual] **A PERSON**
 5 who, while [serving in the active military, naval, or air service of the United States] **AN**
 6 **ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER**, was forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by an
 7 enemy government or its agents, or a hostile force, during a period of armed conflict.

8 (e) (2) (I) ~~[The] SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPHS (H) AND (H) SUBPARAGRAPH (II)~~
OF THIS
 9 **PARAGRAPH**, THE Department [shall] **MAY** issue a **LIFETIME** complimentary recreational
 10 oyster license to ~~the~~

11 ~~a~~ **A** resident of the State who certifies that the resident is:

12 [(i)] ~~A~~ **1.** A former prisoner of war;

13 [(ii)] ~~B~~ **2.** An American veteran who [is determined to be
 14 unemployable by] the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs **DETERMINES IS**
 15 **UNEMPLOYABLE; OR**

16 [(iii)] ~~C~~ **3.** A 100% service-connected disabled American veteran; [or

17 (iv) Blind] ~~AND~~

18 ~~2. ANY RESIDENT OF ANY OTHER STATE WHO CERTIFIES~~
 19 ~~THAT THE PERSON IS:~~

20 ~~A. A FORMER PRISONER OF WAR;~~

21 ~~B. AN AMERICAN VETERAN WHO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT~~
 22 ~~OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DETERMINES IS UNEMPLOYABLE; OR~~

23 ~~C. A 100% SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED AMERICAN~~
 24 ~~VETERAN.~~

25 ~~(H) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ISSUE A LIFETIME~~
 26 ~~COMPLIMENTARY RECREATIONAL OYSTER LICENSE UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I) 2 OF~~
 27 ~~THIS PARAGRAPH IF THE OTHER STATE EXTENDS RECIPROCAL PRIVILEGES TO~~
 28 ~~FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR, AMERICAN VETERANS WHO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT~~
 29 ~~OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DETERMINES ARE UNEMPLOYABLE, OR 100%~~
 30 ~~SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS.~~

4 REPRINT OF SENATE BILL 588 as amended by SB0588/463126/1 02/12/26 at 11:27 AM

1 ~~(iii)~~ (ii) A LIFETIME COMPLIMENTARY RECREATIONAL OYSTER
 2 LICENSE IS NOT TRANSFERRABLE AND SHALL BE ISSUED WITHOUT A FEE.

3 ~~(iv) NOT MORE THAN 20 LIFETIME COMPLIMENTARY~~
 4 ~~RECREATIONAL OYSTER LICENSES FOR EACH STATE OTHER THAN MARYLAND~~
 5 ~~SHALL BE OUTSTANDING AT ANY TIME.~~

6 (4) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ISSUE AN ANNUAL COMPLIMENTARY
 7 RECREATIONAL OYSTER LICENSE WITHOUT A FEE TO A PERSON THAT IS ~~BLIND,~~
 8 ~~REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE PERSON IS OR IS NOT A:~~

(i) BLIND; AND

(ii) A RESIDENT OF THE STATE.

9 10-301.

10 (l) When the Department has adequate computer capability, the Department
 11 shall compile statistics after the close of the hunting season each year concerning [the]:

12 (1) THE sale of hunting licenses for the previous season, including the
 13 names, addresses, counties of residence, and ages of the persons who purchased the hunting
 14 licenses and the types of hunting licenses sold;

15 (2) THE NUMBER OF ANNUAL COMPLIMENTARY HUNTING LICENSES
 16 ISSUED FOR THE PREVIOUS SEASON, INCLUDING THE NAMES, OCCUPATIONS, AND
 17 STATES OF RESIDENCE OF THE PERSONS WHO WERE ISSUED THE ANNUAL
 18 COMPLIMENTARY HUNTING LICENSES;

19 (3) THE NUMBER OF LIFETIME COMPLIMENTARY HUNTING LICENSES
 20 ISSUED FOR THE PREVIOUS SEASON AND IN TOTAL, INCLUDING THE NAMES,
 21 ELIGIBILITY CATEGORIES, AND STATES OF RESIDENCE OF THE PERSONS WHO WERE
 22 ISSUED THE LIFETIME COMPLIMENTARY HUNTING LICENSES; AND

23 (4) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HUNTING LICENSES THAT ARE NO
 24 LONGER ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT THAT REMAIN VALID.

25 10-301.3.

26 (a) There is a commemorative lifetime hunting license.

27 (b) The Department shall issue a limited number of commemorative lifetime
 28 hunting licenses to certain nonprofit organizations, consistent with eligibility criteria
 29 developed by the Department, until December 31, 2011.

30 (c) [Nonprofit organizations issued hunting licenses under this section may, in
 31 cooperation with the Department, market and sell the hunting licenses] **EXCEPT FOR THE**

5 REPRINT OF SENATE BILL 588 as amended by SB0588/463126/1 02/12/26 at 11:27 AM

1 INITIAL SALE BY A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION, A COMMEMORATIVE LIFETIME

2 HUNTING LICENSE IS NOT TRANSFERRABLE.

3 (d) [All proceeds from sales of hunting licenses under this section shall be used
4 by the Department to fund conservation law enforcement by the Natural Resources Police
5 Force.

6 (e) The Department may adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of this
7 section.

8 10-303.

9 (a) (1) The Department [annually] may issue ANNUALLY a complimentary
10 hunting license to the President of the United States, the governor of any state, or [an]
11 ANY official or [an] enforcement officer of the game and fish management agency of
12 [another] ANY OTHER state which reciprocally offers complimentary hunting licenses.

13 (2) (i) Subject to the requirements of § 10-301.1 of this subtitle, the
14 Department may issue a lifetime complimentary hunting license to a Maryland resident
15 who certifies that the resident is:

16 1. A former prisoner of war;

17 2. An American veteran who the U.S. Department of
18 Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable; or

19 3. A 100% service connected disabled American veteran.

20 (ii) Subject to the requirements of § 10-301.1 of this subtitle, the
21 Department may issue a lifetime complimentary hunting license to an out-of-state person:

22 1. Who certifies that the person is:

23 A. A former prisoner of war;

24 B. An American veteran who the U.S. Department of
25 Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable; or

26 C. A 100% service connected disabled American veteran; and

27 2. Whose state of residence extends similar privileges to
28 former prisoners of war, American veterans who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
29 determines are unemployable, or 100% service connected disabled American veterans of
30 this State.

6 REPRINT OF SENATE BILL 588 as amended by SB0588/463126/1 02/12/26 at 11:27 AM

1 (3) A complimentary **HUNTING** license is not transferable **AND SHALL BE**
2 **ISSUED WITHOUT A FEE.**

3 (b) For the purposes of this section, “former prisoner of war” means a person who,
4 while an active service member, was forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by an
5 enemy government or its agents, or a hostile force, during a period of armed conflict.

6 (c) **NOT MORE THAN 20 COMPLIMENTARY HUNTING LICENSES FOR EACH**
7 **STATE OTHER THAN MARYLAND SHALL BE OUTSTANDING AT ANY TIME.**

8 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
9 1, 2026.

SB 588 Senator Simonaire_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Kara Contino

Position: FAV

BRYAN W. SIMONAIRE
Legislative District 31
Anne Arundel County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB 588 – Repeal the commemorative lifetime hunting license

I am Senator Bryan Simonaire presenting SB 588.

I have worked with the *Department of Natural Resources* on this consensus legislation.

As amended, the bill does 3 main things:

1. This bill primarily standardizes our numerous complimentary licensing sections in the *Natural Resources* article, so we have a consistent and equitable policy, and clarifies certain items that are silent in other sections,
2. It updates DNR's existing hunting reporting to provide statistics for complimentary and lifetime hunting licenses granted in the previous year, and
3. It repeals an obsolete commemorative lifetime hunting license program that hasn't been active for 15 years, and according to DNR, it has no intention of reviving.

So, to provide a little more detail:

1. There are three main complimentary licenses: Hunting, Fishing and Recreational Oystering. Each have little differences, such as, one says '*shall issue*'; the other says, '*may issue*'. The Department wants it to consistently say '*may issue*' as there may be situations where they are not allowed to give complimentary licenses. Another example is the number of outstanding complimentary licenses allowed from other states.

2. The second item provides reporting insight into how many complimentary and lifetime licenses are being issued, and
3. The final part of this bill simply repeals an old complimentary lifetime license program that was only active for one year and has been obsolete since 2011 with no plans to re-establish it.

For all these reasons, I ask for your favorable consideration.

Complimentary License	Section	May Issue	Reciprocal	20 Limit	No Fee	Blind	Lifetime	Terms
Angler	4-607	✓	Revise	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chesapeake Sport Fishing	4-475	✓	Revise	✓	Add	✓	✓	✓
Oyster	4-1004.1	Revise	N/A*	N/A*	Add	Clarify	Clarify	Revise
Hunting	10-303	✓	✓	Add	Add	UDP	✓	✓

✓ - Means Exist Currently

Revise: Revises existing provision to standardize with other sections.

Add: Adds new provision to standardize with other sections.

Clarify: Clarifies existing provision to standardize with other sections.

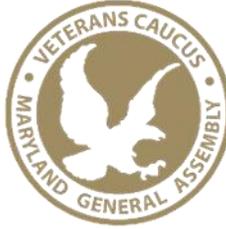
UDP: Existing *Universal Disability Pass* may apply to Blind.

Notes: * - DNR has long standing policy not granting out-of-state oyster licensing.

VeteransCaucusLegislationSupportLetter_SB588.pdf

Uploaded by: Veterans Caucus Maryland

Position: FAV



MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
VETERANS CAUCUS

March 6, 2026

Senator Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB588, Natural Resources – Complimentary Fishing and Hunting Licenses – Alterations
Hearing Date: March 10, 2026

Dear Chairman Feldman,

Please let this letter serve as notice of the support of the Maryland General Assembly Veterans Caucus for Senate Bill 588.

After review by our respective legislative committee, the Veterans Caucus believes that the above-mentioned legislation would provide a valuable benefit to the veterans of the State of Maryland and requests a favorable report.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin F. Brooks".

Senator Benjamin Brooks
Senate Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Rogers".

Delegate Mike Rogers
House Chair

cc: Senator Bryan Simonaire

HOM Testimony for SB 588 re Complimentary Fishing

Uploaded by: william miles

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 501
Huntingtown, Maryland 20639

March 10, 2026

**HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY AND THE
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 588 (Natural Resources – Complimentary Fishing & Hunting
Licenses)**

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND, LLC represent the interests of Maryland's hunting community at both the State and local level. Few realize that hunters underwrite 100% of all wildlife management/research costs through their purchase of hunting license fees/ equipment. For the record, hunters do so willingly b/c of **American System of Conservation Funding**, a user-pay model celebrating its 85th Anniversary which also underscores the noble story of hunters as America's original conservationists.

Steve Keithley, Founder (301/785-4774 [sssbkeith@comcast.net])
Bill Miles, Advocate (443/404-7449 [billmilesmd@comcast.net])

The Hunters of Maryland, LLC supports Senator Simonaire's Senate Bill 588 for the following reasons:

RECOGNIZES SERVICE, SACRIFICE, AND ACHIEVEMENT: Extending complimentary hunting licenses to eligible recipients is a meaningful way to honor public service, sacrifice, and notable achievement. It reflects Maryland's longstanding outdoor heritage and affirms our respect for those who have given of themselves in service to others.

STRENGTHENS RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND REACTIVATION (THE "3 R's"): Senate Bill 588 aligns with the nationally recognized "3 R's" movement—recruitment, retention, and reactivation of hunters. Encouraging new participants and re-engaging inactive hunters strengthens Maryland's conservation community and increases federal Wildlife Restoration funding through the Pittman-Robertson Act. A strong and growing hunting population directly supports wildlife conservation and habitat management.

PROMOTES EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY: For some individuals who would otherwise qualify under Senate Bill 588, cost can be a barrier to participation. Providing targeted complimentary licenses: (1) removes economic barriers; (2) expands opportunities to participate in hunting; and (3) enhances diversity and inclusion within Maryland's outdoor community.

ADMINISTRATION: Senate Bill 588 clearly defines eligibility criteria, caps the number of licenses issued annually, requires full compliance with all existing hunting laws and regulations, and preserves oversight authority within the Department of Natural Resources. The bill is structured, limited, and responsible.

MINIMAL FISCAL IMPACT: Because the number of complimentary licenses is narrowly defined and limited by statute, the fiscal impact will be minimal.

CONCLUSION: The Hunters of Maryland, LLC view Senate Bill 588 as sound public policy. It benefits eligible recipients, strengthens conservation funding, and reinforces Maryland's commitment to outdoor heritage. It also underscores an important principle affirmed by Chapters 295 and 296 of the Acts of 2021: in Maryland, the RIGHT TO FISH AND HUNT is recognized in statute and valued as part of our shared tradition.

SB0588_DNR_SWA_EEE_3-10-26.pdf

Uploaded by: Lydia McPherson

Position: FWA



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

March 10, 2026

BILL NUMBER: SENATE BILL 588 - FIRST READER

SHORT TITLE: NATURAL RESOURCES - COMPLIMENTARY FISHING AND HUNTING LICENSES - ALTERATIONS

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION

Senate Bill 588 creates a complimentary sport fishing license privilege for enforcement officers of game and fish departments of other states that reciprocally offer a complimentary sport fishing license to the enforcement officers of the Maryland Natural Resources Police. The Department supports this aspect of the bill as it may provide additional opportunities for Natural Resources Police officers to receive complimentary licenses in other states.

This reciprocally already exists for hunting licenses, and therefore, this bill creates more consistency between Maryland's complimentary fishing and hunting license provisions. Furthermore, the number of complimentary fishing licenses that the Department may issue is already capped at 20 licenses per state. Senate Bill 588 also creates the same cap of 20 licenses per state for hunting licenses, and the Department supports this additional consistency.

Lastly, the Department is supportive of amendments to remove the provisions of Senate Bill 588 affecting Natural Resources Article, §4-1004.1, Annotated Code of Maryland that pertain to offering complimentary recreational oyster licenses to various categories of nonresidents. Nonresidents have been prohibited from harvesting oysters in Maryland for more than a century, and the Department does not support making any changes to that restriction at this time.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Department of Natural Resources currently issues a number of complimentary hunting and fishing licenses under Natural Resources Article, §§4-607, 4-745, 4-1004.1, and 10-303.

BILL EXPLANATION

Senate Bill 588 modifies complimentary sport fishing and hunting license privileges.

Contact: Lydia McPherson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
lydia.mcpherson1@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-875-7785 (cell)