

Just like that, the 2023 Legislative Session is over.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) has completed a complex and nerve-racking legislative session in Annapolis. In 2022 LWVMD couldn't believe how many volunteers signed up to join our teams and tackle this important work, yet, there were even more of you this year.

The League celebrates the record number of volunteers who have attended legislative training, team meetings, one-on-one calls, and workshops. Because of that record, we could track, testify, and lift up more testimony than ever before.

Below is a highlight of the bills that LWVMD followed, supported, or opposed.* While this list isn't all-encompassing, it represents some of the most important bills the League worked on and those we are most proud of this session.

While this session did not see all the bills the League wanted or thought were necessary for Maryland to make it to the finish line, you will see outstanding bills that did get passed. These bills will impact and improve many Marylanders. LWVMD hopes it reminds you why you do this work.

*Please keep in mind that many of these bills are crossfiled. In the interest of brevity, we are giving you a brief overview of what happened in one committee. We encourage all readers to explore the history of any bill they are interested in further. If you want to learn why the League supported or opposed the bill, please visit our testimony page [here](#).

Administration of Justice

SB33/HB47 - Correctional Services - Medical Parole - Life Imprisonment - Repeals the gubernatorial approval in decision-making for the Maryland Parole Commission to grant parole to inmates serving life imprisonment. This bill was heard in Judicial Proceedings and was passed by the Senate. It was referred to the House Judiciary Committee but did not get voted out.

HB133 - Court Proceedings - Remote Public Access and Participation - Requires each court in the State to provide remote audio-visual public access to public court proceedings while authorizing presiding judges to determine whether to prohibit broadcasting for a specific case. This bill was heard in Judiciary but did not make it out of committee.

SB93/HB96 - Juvenile Court - Jurisdiction (Youth Equity & Safety Act) - Alters the jurisdiction of the juvenile court by repealing provisions specifying that the juvenile court

does not have jurisdiction over a child alleged to have committed a crime. This bill was heard in Judicial Proceedings but did not make it out of committee.

SB195/HB1282 - Orphan's Court Judges - Election - Requires the candidate for judge of the Orphan's Court to appear on the ballot without party designation. This bill was heard in Judicial Proceedings and passed the Senate. It was assigned to the House Judiciary Committee but was not voted out.

SB132 - State's Attorney, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Register of Wills, Sheriff, and Judge of the Orphan's Court - Nonpartisan Elections - Requires the listed offices to be elected on a nonpartisan basis and establishes procedures for the nomination and election. This bill was heard in Education, Energy, and the Environment but did not make it out of committee.

HB358 - Juvenile Felony Database - LWVMD OPPOSED this bill. Develops, updates, maintains, and publishes online a searchable database of all offenses committed by juveniles that would be considered felonies if committed by adults. This bill was heard in Judiciary but did not make it out of committee.

SB540/HB772 - Human Relations - Civil Rights Enforcement - Powers of the Attorney General - Authorizes the Attorney General to investigate, prosecute, and remediate civil rights violations. Empower the Attorney General to intervene and obtain relief in civil actions. This bill passed both chambers and has been sent to the Governor.

SB658/HB771 - Human Relations - Patterns and Practices of Civil Rights Violations - Remedies - Allows the Attorney General to investigate and initiate civil action to remedy unlawful patterns or practices committed by government officials. Also provides subpoena power in investigations. This bill was heard in Judicial Proceedings but did not make it out of committees.

HB749/SB115 - Juvenile Court - Concurrent Jurisdiction - Juvenile Offenses on Military Installations - Establishes that jurisdiction of the juvenile court is concurrent of a federal court sitting in the State over proceedings involving violations of federal laws on military installations if the federal court waves exclusive jurisdiction and the crime is also a crime under State law. This bill has passed both Chambers and has been sent to the Governor.

SB15 - Juvenile Law - Child in Need of Supervision - Mandatory Petition (NyKayla Strawder Memorial Act) - Requires an intake officer to file a petition alleging that a child under the age of 13 is either delinquent or a child is in need of supervision if the child is committed an act that results in the death of a victim. This bill was heard in Judicial Proceedings and passed the Senate. It was assigned to the House Judiciary Committee but was not voted out.

Campaign Finance Bills

SB111/HB411 - Draft Committees and Exploratory Committees - Applies campaign finance requirements for a political committee formed to encourage candidates to run or to assess their success. Establishes protocols on how the draft and exploratory committees must report contributed funds and in-kind donations and how those funds are used after campaigns have concluded. This bill passed out of the Senate and was assigned to the House Ways and Means Committee, but it did not make it out of committee.

HB192/SB269 - Cryptocurrency - Campaign Finance Prohibitions Disclosure by Financial Institutions - Prohibits any person under campaign finance regulations from making or accepting monetary donations or contributions using any currency other than United States currency. Prohibits those acting on behalf of a campaign finance entity from making or accepting anything other than US currency and allows the State Administrator of Elections to investigate potential violations. This bill passed both chambers and was signed by the Governor.

HB176 - Local Public Campaign Financing - Expansion to Additional Offices - Allows a system of public campaign financing for the office of State's Attorney, Sheriff, Register of Wills, Judge, and Clerk of the Circuit Court, Judge of the Orphan's Court, or an elected member of the county board of education after the governing body of the county implemented a system of public campaign financing for elective offices in the executive or legislative branches. This bill was heard in Ways and Means but did not make it out of committee.

Civics

SB271 - Maryland Civic Engagement Program - Establishes the Maryland Civic Excellence Program to recognize students and public schools that promote the civic readiness and engagement of students in Maryland public schools.

Education

SB324 - Credit for Student Bus Transportation Expenses - LWVMD OPPOSED this bill. Establishes a task force to study nonpublic student bus transportation to collect information from each local board and how they can reduce the use of passenger vehicles for the transportation of nonpublic school students. This bill was heard and passed in

Budget and Taxation. It passed over to Rules and Executive Nominations but did not make it out of committee.

HB359 - Education - Interscholastic and Intramural Junior Varsity and Varsity Teams and Sports - Designation Based on Sex - LWVMD OPPOSED this bill. Requires interscholastic and intramural junior varsity and varsity athletic teams and school sports to be designated based on biological sex. This bill was heard in Ways and Means, but did not make it out of committee.

HB495/SB350 - Early Childhood Development - Child Care Scholarship Program - Funding - Prohibits the State Department of Education from increasing the copayment levels, reducing the reimbursement rates, reducing the income eligibility requirements, or implementing an enrollment freeze. This bill passed through both chambers and was passed by the Governor.

HB737 - Alternative Education Options - Right to Learn and Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today Programs - LWVMD OPPOSED this bill. Requires that based on star ratings, schools that are failings notify parents and provide them with options. Establishes the Right to Learn Program and other programs. This bill was heard in Ways and Means but did not make it out of committee.

SB389 - Dual Language Education - Teacher Certification - Requires regulations for certifications of and renewal of a certificate for dual language teachers in public schools by the School Board. This bill was heard in Education, Energy, and the Environment but did not make it out of committee.

HB1098 - Education - English Learners and Dual Language Immersion Programs - Funding and Establishment - Provides additional monies for English learners and establishes the Dual Language Immersion Program. This bill was heard in Appropriations but did not make it out of committee.

HB1164 - Public Schools - Expanded American History - Development of Content Standards and Implementation - Requires the State Board of Education to develop content standards for expanded American history and for local school systems to implement those standards. This bill was heard in Ways and Means but did not make it out of committee.

HB649 - Primary and Secondary Education - Education Savings Account Program - Established - LWVMD OPPOSED this bill. Establishes the Education Savings Account program administered by the State Department of Education to provide grants to the account of the parents of eligible students. This bill was heard in appropriations but did not make it out of committee.

SB522/HB740 - Education - Accountability and Implementation Board - Membership - LWVMD OPPOSED this bill. Alters the membership and qualifications of members of the Accountability and Implementation Board. This bill was heard in Education, Energy, and the Environment but did not make it out of committee.

HB1267/SB814 - Promise Schools - Establishment - LWVMD OPPOSED this bill. Requires the State Department of Education to designate ten community schools that are identified as low-performing. This bill was heard in Ways and Means but did not make it out of committee.

HB1211 - Education - Compensatory Education - Maryland Neighborhood Tier System Calculation - Alters and adds definitions related to the calculations of the compensatory education funding amount. This bill would require the State Department of Education to monitor the actions of the county boards and establish the Maryland Neighborhood Tier System. The bill was heard in Appropriations but did not make it out of committee.

HB185 - Corporal Punishment - Prohibit - Prohibits the State Board of Education from issuing a certificate of approval to noncollegiate educational institutions that do not have a policy prohibiting the administration of corporal punishment. Passed and signed by the Governor.

The LWVMD Education Team also signed many letters of support and opposition. Many of these opportunities came through our work with our coalition partners at Coalition to Reform School Discipline (CRSD). Through our partnership with CRSD, we could sign on to an additional fourteen bills. These included opposing such bills as reporting arrests of students and expanding the Truancy Reduction Pilot Program. We also supported bills revising policies on bullying, harassment, and intimidation.

Elections

SB39/HB114 - Affiliating with a Party - Unaffiliated Voters - Allows an individual to change their voter registration to affiliate with a political party by 5 pm on the day before early voting begins. This bill was heard in Education, Energy, and the Environment but did not make it out of committee.

SB89/HB177 - Publications of Proposed Laws - State Board of Elections and local Board of Elections must post complete text of proposed language or enactments relating to ballot questions at least 65 days before the general election. This bill was heard in Education, Energy, and the Environment but did not make it out of the committee.

SB329 - Casting General Election Ballot in Multiple States - LWVMD OPPOSED this bill. Prohibits a person from willfully or knowingly casting a ballot in the general election in more than one state. This bill was heard in Education, Energy, and the Environment but did not make it out of committee.

HB417 - General Assembly - Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office - Requires a special election to be held at the same time as state primary and general elections that are held in the second year of the term to fill a vacancy in the office of a Delegate or Senator if the vacancy occurs on or before the date that is 55 days before the deadline for filing certificates of candidacy. This bill was heard in Ways and Means but did not make it out of committee.

SB379/HB535 - Election Law - Ballot Issuance, Processing, and Reporting Procedures and 2024 Primary Date - Mandates that the local board of elections sends, no later than 43 days before an election, a ballot to voters who have made a request and qualify. Alters the procedure for canvassing and curing of errors on absentee and provisional ballots, prohibits the tabulation of absentee ballot vote totals before the polls open, and changes the Primary Election date to the second Tuesday in May. This bill passed both chambers and was signed by the Governor.

HB642/SB339 - Election Law - Recounts - Procedures - Requires the petitioner to select the method for recounting. Limits the recount methods that the State Administered must approve. This bill was heard in Ways and Means but did not make it out of Ways and Means.

HB645/SB488 - Election Law - Electronic Ballot Return System - Study and Request for Proposals - LWVMD OPPOSED this bill. It Requires the Department of Legislative Services to complete a study on creating an electronic ballot return system and then request proposals on those systems. This bill was heard in Ways and Means but did not make it out of committee.

HB1092 - Election Law - Early Voting - Number of Days - LWVMD OPPOSED this bill. Changes the number of early voting days from eight to four days before primary and general elections. This bill was heard in Ways and Means but did not make it out of committee.

HB1112 - Election Law - Registered Voter List and Petitions (Ballot Petition Modernization Act) - This bill would allow a person signing a petition to do so electronically and to use any mark associated with their signature. It would also allow signatures on petitions to be validated instead of automatically invalidated. This bill was heard in Ways and Means but did not make it out of committee.

HB1200/SB925 - Elections - Election Judges - Minimum Compensation - Establishes a minimum compensation of \$50 and daily pay of \$250 for early voting and election day. It will also mandate the State Board of Elections to reimburse local boards \$50 for returning judges. This bill passed both chambers and was signed by the Governor.

HB1216/SB750 - Election Law - Voting - Proof of Identity - LWVMD OPPOSED this bill. Allows an election judge to mandate a voter to vote provisionally if they can't provide ID, allowing election judge to mandate ID. This bill was heard in Ways and Means but did not make it out of committee.

Environment

SB224/HB230 - Clean Trucks Act of 2023 - Department of the Environment must adopt regulations before December 1, 2023, requiring the sale of new zero-emission medium-and heavy-duty vehicles. This bill passed both chambers and was signed by the Governor.

SB526/HB723 - Natural Resources - Forest Preservation and Retention - Alters the definition of "qualified conservation" for purposes of provisions of law related to forest mitigation banks. Also changes the calculating methods of forest afforestation, reforestation, and preservation requirements. This bill was passed by both chambers and was sent to the Governor.

SB689/HB904 - Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions - Alterations and Requirements (Energy Savings Act) - Changes the goals and requirements of specific energy efficiency programs to include certain greenhouse gas emissions reductions from electric and gas companies. Also establishes a rebate program through the EmPOWER Maryland Program. This bill was heard in Education, Energy, and the Environment, but did not make it out of committee.

Ethics

SB35/HB58 - Maryland State Agency Transparency Act 2023 - Enhances the requirements under the Open Meetings Act for the State Ethics Commission and requires the Department of Information Technology to provide the technical staff, support, and equipment necessary to live stream meetings. This bill passed both chambers and was signed by the Governor.

Firearms

HB159 - Warrantless Arrest - Straw Purchase Participant - Establishes the crime of knowingly being a participant in the straw purchase of a regulated firearm to the list of crimes subject to a warrantless arrest. This bill was heard by the Judiciary Committee and passed by the House. It was sent to Judicial Proceedings in the Senate but did not make it out of committee.

Healthcare

SB202 - Prescription Drug Affordability Board - Upper Payment Limits - Reestablishing the requirement that the Prescription Drug Affordability Board draft a plan to implement a process to set upper payment limits for prescription drug products. This bill passed both Chambers and was signed by the Governor.

SB187/HB454 - Health Occupations - Licenses, Certificates, and Registrations - Immigrants - Prohibits a health occupation board from requiring that an applicant provide proof that the applicant is lawfully present in the United States or has a Social Security number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number. Both Chambers passed this bill and has been sent to the Governor.

HB933/SB845 - End-of-Life Options Act (The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings and the Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass Act) - Authorizing an individual to request aid in dying. This bill would also include requirements in those requests, such as consultants with physicians, mental health assessments, etc. This bill was heard in Health and Government Operations but did not make it out of committee.

HB970 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Hospitals - Dental Services - requiring acute care hospitals participating in Maryland Medical Assistance to develop a plan to provide an operating room for dental services. This bill was heard in Health and Government Operations but did not make it out of committee.

HB283/SB460 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Gender-Affirming Treatment (Trans Health Equity Act) - Requires the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to provide gender-affirming treatment in a nondiscriminatory manner, current with clinical standards, and allowing the health care provider to determine the appropriateness of care. This bill has passed both Chambers and has been sent to the Governor.

SB404/HB333 - Financial Assistance - Medical Bill Reimbursement Process - Requires the reimbursement of out-of-pocket costs paid by patients eligible for free care. Also institutes a fee of \$50,000 per violation if a hospital refuses to provide that refund. This bill has passed both Chambers and has been sent to the Governor.

HB588/SB365 - Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program (Access to Care Act) - Alters the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange Fund to establish funding for establishing the Qualified Resident Enrollment Program and allow qualified residents to obtain coverage. This bill was heard in Health and Government Operations and passed by the House. It was assigned to the Senate Finance Committee but did not make it out.

HB596/SB511 - Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023 - Repealing the cap on grants for the Maryland Transit Administration under the Maryland Senior Rides Program and on the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program. This bill has passed both chambers and has been sent to the Governor.

HB705/SB798 - Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Freedom - A constitutional amendment that would codify the right of every person to have the right to reproductive freedom. This bill has passed both Chambers and has been sent to the Governor. If signed, it will appear on the next ballot.

HB808/SB859 - Reproductive Health Protection Act - Prohibits a judge from requiring a person to give a statement, testify, or produce evidence for a case involving an alleged violation of a law in another state relating to health care in that State. This bill has passed both chambers and has been sent to the Governor.

HB812/SB786 - Health - Reproductive Health Services - Protected Information and Insurance Requirements - Regulates the disclosure of information that is legally protected healthcare by those that keep records, health information, etc. This bill has passed both chambers and has been sent to the Governor.

Housing

HB150 - Housing and Community Development - Adaptive Reuse - Allows existing buildings to be reused, retrofitted, and repurposed to develop new affordable multifamily housing in specific financial assistance programs. This bill passed through both chambers and was signed by the Governor.

HB151 - Residential Leases - Notification of Rent Increases - Requires that landlords notify tenants, in writing, before increasing rent. This bill passed both chambers and was signed into law by the Governor.

HB562 - Human Services - Temporary Cash Assistance - Housing Allowance - Requires local social service departments to provide a housing allowance to those who are receiving temporary cash assistance or transitional support services and are not receiving housing subsidies. This bill was heard in appropriations but did not make it out of committee.

Police Accountability

HB1071 - Criminal Law and Procedure - Cannabis - Fine for Smoking in Public, Stops, and Searches - Prohibits law enforcement officers from stopping and/or searching a person or property based on the odor of cannabis. Alters the maximum fines for smoking cannabis in public. This bill has passed both chambers and was sent to the Governor.

SB285 - County PAB - Investigation of Complaints of Police Misconduct - Authorizes local governing bodies of a county, including Baltimore City, to authorize police accountability boards to exercise investigatory and subpoena powers. Also allows PABs to investigate concurrently with law enforcement agencies. This bill was heard in Judicial Proceedings but did not make it out of committee.

SB290/HB857 - Office of Attorney General - Independent Investigations Division - Authority to Prosecute - Expands the authority of the Attorney General to not only investigate police-involved incidents resulting in serious bodily injury to an individual but

also, when warranted, actually to prosecute. Passed the Senate and House and signed by the Governor.

Transportation

HB9/SB19 - Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses - Requires that equity be considered when State transportation plans, reports, and any goals are developed. The Department of Transportation conducts transit equity analyses and consults with affected communities before announcing or proposing significant changes or plans. This bill was passed through both chambers, was passed, enrolled, and sent to the Governor.

SB16/HB70 - SAFE Roads Act 2023 - Department of Transportation would have to recommend and implement design elements for pedestrian and bicycle safety with any new or improvement project. It would also require the State Highway Administration to submit reports on pedestrian and bicycle safety data. This bill was heard in Judicial Proceedings but did not make it out of committee.

SB412/HB74 - Transportation - Maryland Rail Authority - Establishment (Maryland Rail Investment Act of 2023) - Establishes and gives power and duty to the Maryland Rail Authority. This authority would act on behalf of the Department of Transportation with respect to certain railroad facilities and projects. This bill was heard in Finance but did not make it out of committee.