

GOVERNOR WES MOORE'S 2025 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Two storms have hit Maryland's shores at the same time. First, COVID funding from the federal government papered over a major inherited structural deficit. We are now facing the worst budget crisis in at least twenty years – worse than that of the Great Recession. Second, we will see a stark new policy direction from the Trump administration and an unpredictable Republican-controlled government, with the potential to implement policies that could hurt Maryland's economy.

We didn't create these twin challenges, but we will work through them together. In partnership with the General Assembly, it's our responsibility to weather the storm and set us on the path to a more prosperous future. We cannot simply tax or spend our way out of these twin challenges – we need to grow.

That is why this year, the Governor's Agenda aims to create an economy that grows the middle class and gives everyone the chance to reach the next rung on the economic ladder. The governor is introducing nine bills this year that each advance this critical mission.

Governor Moore has put forward commonsense policies to create new jobs, build new pathways to employment for workers of all backgrounds, and ensure that more Marylanders can access work, wages, and wealth. The governor's agenda elevates key administration priorities to connect more Marylanders to opportunity, from ensuring Maryland has the best public schools in the country to elevating apprenticeships. At the same time, the governor's policies will support business growth and build out the sectors of our economy that Maryland stands to win.

The following is a brief summary of the Governor's Legislative Agenda for the 2025 Session.

The DECADE Act (SB 427, HB 498) seeks to sharpen the tools in the State's economic development tool box by revamping, relocating, and rebranding key business development programs. In cases where programs have not met return on investment standards, the bill repeals programs and repurposes their funding to higher impact approaches. It would also support Maryland's workforce participation rate by altering the Child Care Capital Support Revolving Loan Fund to prioritize the expansion of child care slots available. This legislation is part of a three-tiered approach to economic development which also includes a reorganization of the Department of Commerce and the Governor's recent Executive Order on Strengthening Maryland's Business Climate to Bolster Economic Competitiveness Economic Growth.



The Housing for Jobs Act (SB 430, HB 503) aims to release constraints on the State's economic growth by addressing the largest line item on Marylanders' budgets: housing costs. The legislation seeks to tackle this housing affordability and supply crisis by setting goals for regions and local jurisdictions to maintain sufficient housing to support jobs available in the region. Under the proposal, areas with insufficient housing supply will default to approving housing developments that satisfy locally-established criteria unless there are negative impacts that outweigh the impacts of insufficient housing. This bill seeks to create consistency and reliability necessary to balance community and employer needs with solutions to the housing crisis.

The ENERGIZE MD Act (SB 434, HB 505) aims to accelerate clean energy development, address cost, reliability, and supply-demand challenges while positioning Maryland as a national leader in sustainability, reducing energy costs for residents, and driving economic growth. This bill reforms Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard to incorporate nuclear energy, establishes a procurement framework to support the development of nuclear power, and modernizes our solar and offshore wind generation process to promote sustainable growth and competitiveness.

The Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act (SB 429, HB 504) maintains our statewide commitment to provide the best schools in the country for every student while proposing common-sense recommendations to eliminate the state's teacher workforce shortage and address implementation issues laid bare by the pandemic. To address the workforce shortage, the bill would pause the implementation of collaborative time and reinvest significant funding in teacher recruitment and workforce development programs and new Collaborative Time Innovation (CTI) grants to allow local school districts to pilot collaborative time strategies for deployment when the workforce needs have been met. The legislation also freezes the growth in community schools funding to allow time for changes to community school governance structures and expanding the allowable uses of funds. To support the state's early literacy initiative, it would establish an Academic Excellence Program to support teachers and LEAs implement the new policies. The bill also strengthens MSDE's ability to provide technical assistance and oversight of collaborative time and community schools funding.

The RAISE Act (SB 431, HB 501) seeks to expand on the goal of activating Maryland's workforce by offering non-college career pathways through high-quality, registered apprenticeships. The legislation establishes the Maryland Office of Apprenticeship Development, creates two new programs to help both employers and workers participate in Registered Apprenticeship programs, offers pathways to automatic licensure for apprentices, and other enhancements. The RAISE Act is inspired by the work of the Apprenticeship 2030 Commission and brings together key stakeholders to expand workforce opportunities.

The Expungement Reform Act (SB 432, HB 499) seeks to take legislative action to expand on Governor Moore's 2024 Executive Clemency Order to ensure all Marylanders have better pathways to work, wages, and wealth. Criminal records create numerous barriers, fueling and reinforcing cycles of poverty, and even old and minor records can make it difficult for someone to gain employment, housing, education, and licensing prospects. Providing individuals who served their time and fulfilled their rehabilitation requirements the opportunity to expunge charges from their criminal records will transform lives. This legislation expands the list of expungeable charges, removes additional convictions included within the Cannabis Pardons from public view on Judiciary Case Search, and allows individuals who completed their probation or parole to be eligible for expungement even if they had a technical violation.

The Model Employer Act (SB 433, HB 502) establishes the Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy (ODEAP) within the Department of Disabilities (MDOD). Marylanders with disabilities have been historically under-utilized in the workforce compared to their non-disabled peers. Building on the stated purpose for creating a cabinet-level Department of Disabilities in 2004, this legislation strengthens and enhances MDOD's coordinating functions and its cross-agency work to implement policies and strategies that support employment, job training, and career-readiness of individuals with disabilities. Included is the creation of a State as a Model Employer (SAME) Initiative which will build upon and expand Maryland's past noteworthy efforts to hire, retain, and promote people with disabilities including disabled veterans. Under this new initiative, ODEAP will provide technical assistance to State government agencies on disability hiring and retention practices; conduct outreach to people with disabilities (including those not eligible for DORS services) who may be interested in State employment; provide grants to State agencies to subsidize certain accommodations for new hires; support the disability hiring and retention plans for State agencies; and reports to the Governor and General Assembly on progress under the initiative.

The Chesapeake Bay Legacy Act (SB 428, HB 506) offers a comprehensive plan to address Bay restoration efforts focusing on key areas such as agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, and permitting. With Maryland leading the Chesapeake Executive Council chaired by Governor Moore, the State has a unique opportunity to lead in protecting the Chesapeake Bay. This bill establishes programs for farmers to adopt best practices for conservation, modernizes programs to protect water and promote operational certainty, and establishes a collaborative permitting process to expedite restoration efforts.

The Procurement Reform Act (SB 426, HB 500) seeks to modernize the State's procurement process to enhance efficiencies, accountability, competition, and access to state contracts by small businesses. The bill is the result of a collaborative effort between state agencies and key stakeholders to ensure that the State's procurement is fair, accessible, and equitable while ensuring that the State is a good steward of taxpayers dollars.

