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The Senate of Maryland

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

April 21, 2022

Dear Friend,

Thank you for contacting me during the 444th Session of the Maryland General Assembly. I always appreciate hearing from my constituents on matters of importance to them and their families.

There were almost 2,500 bills introduced this session. As you know, the State Budget is the most important piece of legislation passed during each legislative session. The General Assembly passed a fiscally responsible \$61 billion budget that invests heavily in Maryland values, including \$7.9B for Maryland public schools, \$14B in Medicaid funding to provide health care coverage to 1.5 million residents with \$27M set aside for expanded dental coverage, and over \$2 billion set aside for the Rainy Day Fund.

I am happy to report that due to the good budget outlook this year, I was able to secure over \$4 million from the Capital Budget in State money for local projects within the 8th District. This includes \$3 million for improvements and renovations for Holt Park and Center for the Arts in the Overlea/Fullerton community, as well as \$750,000 for new bleachers at Parkville High School, \$150,000 for the Harford Park Community Center, \$150,000 for Hamiltowne Park, and \$50,000 for the Baltimore County Game and Fish Protective Association.

During this session, my colleagues and I worked hard to pass several pieces of legislation to improve the lives of everyday Marylanders. One of the most pressing issues these past few months has been combating inflation and ensuring that our most vulnerable populations are taken care of. To that end, the Senate of Maryland, the Maryland House of Delegates, and Governor Hogan came together across party lines to enact nearly \$2 billion in economic support for Maryland's working families, retirees, and small businesses. At a time when Maryland has a historic surplus and a balanced budget, we invested in vulnerable populations who have spent a lifetime caring for others in a way that is fiscally sustainable and responsible.

That tax relief package (SB405/HB1468) included \$1.55 billion in relief for retirees 65 and older making up to \$100,000 in retirement income, and married couples making up to \$150,000. As a result, 80% of Maryland's retirees will receive substantial relief or pay no state income taxes at all. We also used \$100 million in State funds to suspend Maryland's gas tax for 30 days to provide

short-term relief to Marylanders as prices at the gas pump increased quickly due to the events in Ukraine (SB1010/HB1486).

Also included in the tax relief package was \$115.6 million in 'Family Budget Boosters' including sales tax exemptions for child care products such as diapers, car seats, and baby bottles, and several health products. As part of this package of bills, I was proud to introduce and help pass Senate Bill 571, which will make all oral hygiene products exempt from sales and use tax. Not only will this promote good oral hygiene and save money for Maryland citizens, this will save the state money in the long term by reducing hospital visits for diseases caused by poor oral hygiene.

I introduced several other bills that passed the General Assembly this year and are awaiting the Governor's signature. One specific bill I am particularly proud of is Senate Bill 826, which is creating a Microloan program for Maryland Watermen's that will provide loans to qualified commercial fishermen to continue operations in the State. Under the bill, watermen who make a majority of their income on the water are eligible to receive loans ranging from \$7,000 to \$15,000. This will help one of Maryland's oldest trades to continue to survive, even when facing difficult conditions in a given season.

I also had the pleasure of co-sponsoring and supporting several bills submitted by my colleagues. These bills included:

- Senate Bill 353, which requires all health care providers to limit the cost of prescription insulin drugs to no more than \$30 for a 30 day supply for a covered individual. This will help many Marylanders afford needed medical supplies.
- Senate Bill 241, which establishes 9-8-8 as the universal telephone number for the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline. Setting up a universal hotline for mental health crises will get more people access to critical mental health treatment they may not be aware of.

The Governor will have a few bill signings over the next few months, and I look forward to him signing these crucial pieces of legislation into law. Once again, I thank you for contacting me during this past session. It is a great honor to serve you and your family as your representative in the State Senate. If you have any questions about this letter, or if I can ever help you or your family, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,



Kathy Klausmeier
State Senator