



Retirement News Highlights

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New members take office as General Assembly's 2023 session kicks off

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Newly elected District 3 Del. Karen Simpson, D, takes a photograph of her name in the roll call voting display in the House of Delegates chamber on Wednesday, the first day of the 2023 legislative session in Annapolis.

Members of the Maryland General Assembly, including the 15 lawmakers who make up Frederick County's delegation, were sworn into office in Annapolis on Wednesday as the 2023 legislative session commenced.

The state Senate reelected Sen. Bill Ferguson, D-Baltimore city, as its president, and the House of Delegates reelected Del. Adrienne Jones, D-Baltimore County, as its speaker.

The Maryland House Republican Caucus elected Del. Jesse Pippy, R-Frederick, to serve as the minority whip in the House of Delegates.

"Our members have such a wide variety of backgrounds and talents, and I look forward to working on their behalf," Pippy was quoted as saying in a Facebook post on the Maryland House Republican Caucus's official page.

Pippy isn't the only Frederick County delegation member who will serve in a leadership role during the session.

Del. Ken Kerr, D-Frederick, will be the chair of the subcommittee on government operations and health facilities, which is part of the House's Health and Government Operations Committee.

Sen. Karen Lewis Young, D-Frederick, wrote in a Facebook post that she became the first woman elected to represent a Western Maryland county in the state Senate.

Lewis Young, who previously served as a Frederick delegate, succeeded her husband, former Sen. Ron Young, in the District 3 Senate seat.

The two chambers convened around noon. After the newly elected lawmakers were sworn in, the presiding officer of each chamber recognized the distinguished guests at the first day of the session.

In the Senate, the visitors included Gov.-elect Wes Moore and Lt. Gov.-elect Aruna Miller, who are expected to be sworn into office on Jan. 18, U.S. Sen Ben Cardin and several state and county leaders, including Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater.

Between the two chambers, lawmakers introduced more than 250 bills on Wednesday, though none of them were from lawmakers who represent Frederick County.

State senators have until Feb. 6 to file bills, while delegates will have until Feb. 10. The state legislature will consider thousands of bills over the course of the 90-day session.

Legislative plans

Lewis Young plans to reintroduce two bills, one of which would establish a pilot program in Frederick County for court-ordered mental health treatment. The other would require an assistant state's attorney to meet with a victim of "sexually assaultive behavior" if the Office of the State's Attorney opts not to charge an alleged suspect or dismisses the charges against them.

Lewis Young expects to introduce more than a dozen other bills, including one to create a task force to study — and make recommendations for reducing — emergency room wait times, according to a spreadsheet of proposals she shared with the News-Post.

As the chair of the Frederick County delegation, Pippy will be responsible for managing bills the delegation sponsors. He also plans to introduce two bills he has sponsored before — one relating to the punishment for visual surveillance with prurient intent and another about the punishment for indecent exposure in front of a child younger than 14, he wrote in an email to the News-Post.

Kerr plans to reintroduce a bill to create a system for people to access state services, he wrote in an email. He also plans to propose bills to get patients faster appeals if a prior authorization has been denied, to permit trained civilians to issue tickets to drivers caught speeding on camera, to allow state officials to audit large private equity-owned nursing facilities and more, he wrote in an email.

Sen. William "Bill" Folden, R-Frederick, plans to introduce bills about voting with mail-in and electronic ballots, assault against first responders and public access to elected officials' human resources files, his chief of staff wrote in an email.

Folden also plans to reintroduce a bill from 2018 that would reserve the left-most lanes on roads with three or more lanes for overtaking and passing other vehicles.

Del. April Miller, R-Frederick, wrote in an email that she plans to focus on education and parents' rights, public safety, health care, mitigating the impacts of inflation and improving the economy. She didn't list any specific bills that she plans to introduce or co-sign.

Del. Karen Simpson, D-Frederick, plans to file a bill to remove time restrictions for state employees to file Equal Employment Opportunity complaints and a bill to "allow the contributions of former members of any Maryland State Pension and Retirement system to earn interest while they are employed by any participating employer and unable to withdraw their accumulated contributions," she wrote in an email.

Del. Christopher "Eric" Bouchat, R-Frederick and Carroll, wrote that he plans to introduce one bill, considering this will be his first session. The bill would require that a witness be impeached and their testimony be stricken if they commit forgery during a trial.

Bouchat also touted his committee appointment.

"It is the hardest of all and has the most intelligent members," Bouchat wrote of the Judiciary Committee, on which he and three other Frederick County delegation members will serve.

Del. Chris Tomlinson, R-Frederick and Carroll, plans to cross file a bill in the House for Sen. Chris West, R-Baltimore County, to create a work group to study policing in Maryland, Tomlinson wrote in an email. The work group would be expected to make recommendations about salary levels, benefits and training for police officers.

Tomlinson also plans to introduce a bill that would require municipalities to report election results to the State Board of Elections or their county elections board, he wrote.

Del. Barrie Ciliberti, R-Frederick, is expected to reintroduce two bills. One would make assaulting a medical care worker a felony charge of second-degree assault and the other would prevent women from ending a pregnancy within a certain number of hours after receiving an ultrasound, his chief of staff wrote in an email.

Sens. Paul Corderman and Justin Ready and Dels. William Valentine, Kris Fair and April Rose did not respond to multiple emails this week from the News-Post asking what legislation they plan to introduce during the session.

A legislative aide for Del. William Wivell, R-Frederick and Washington, responded by emailing a link to the General Assembly's meeting calendar for Thursday, but didn't mention any bills the delegate plans to introduce or co-sign.

Both chambers are scheduled to reconvene Thursday at 10 a.m.

The Frederick County delegation plans to host its first virtual meeting at 9 a.m. on Friday.

The meeting will be streamed online. A link to watch will be available on the General Assembly's website, mgaleg.maryland.gov, under the "Meetings" tab.

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