



# ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY NAACP

Supporting local economic empowerment for all

| February 2021



## NAACP Congratulates VP Harris, Biden Administration

Joanne Bond

The Anne Arundel Chapter of the NAACP would like to congratulate Vice President Kamala Harris on her historic win as the first female, first African-American, and first Asian-American Vice President! She serves as an inspiration to us all, and is dedicated to the mission of the NAACP.

The Biden/Harris administration has made it clear that they will be making racial justice a priority. President Biden recently appointed Dr. Susan Rice to be Director of the United States Domestic Policy Council.

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The NAACP applauded this decision, saying, "This moment requires bold and meaningful action to end systemic racism...We are elated that the Biden administration has appointed Dr. Susan Rice to lead this august challenge. From her position within the White House, she can formulate and coordinate actions among cabinet members to eliminate systemic racism, root and branch, from within the government and ensure racial justice is at the forefront of every agency's agenda."

***"The Biden/Harris administration is off to a strong start to transforming our nation into a more just, equal society."***

*Derrick Johnson, President & CEO, NAACP*

The statement from January 21, 2021 continued, "With this announcement today, the Biden/Harris administration is off to a strong start to transforming our nation into a more just, equal society. And it can count on the NAACP's support every step of the way." Read the full statement at [naacp.org](https://naacp.org).

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**"The body is made is to be in motion"**

## A Message from the President

As I ponder what I should share with our membership in this greeting, I am watching the trial for the second impeachment of former President Trump. We are at a pivotal point in our history.

Our country is confronted with fundamental challenges to our democracy. Videos of the January 6, 2021 insurrection, played daily during the impeachment trial, have become the new tele-drama.

Clips of police officers being repeatedly chided with the taunts of “Traitor – Traitor – Traitor!” and African American police officers being called, “Nigger,” again and again! Not to mention, scenes of the Vice President, Senators, and Congressmen running for their lives.



*Jacqueline Allsup, President  
NAACP AACo Branch*

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***Today, during the impeachment trial, I heard someone ask, “Is this America?” I answer, “YES!”***

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This is America with its racist veil pulled back. The lifting of the veil has given us a unique glimpse into what motivates the aggressions that we as African Americans/people of color endure in America. America’s true racist undergirding was revealed and explains the dehumanization and marginalization at work, school, or in the healthcare system that Black folks suffer through every day. It explains the driving while Black, the walking while Black, and even the living while Black that has led to conflict after conflict with White Americans and the White establishment, including law enforcement.

January 6, 2021 was a day in history that will be remembered because it showed the reality that racism is eating the soul of America. Today, House Impeachment Managers are analyzing the actions of the insurrectionists and laying out their case for impeachment. What this is allowing us to see is the hidden picture of America in this “Dorian Gray” surreal moment. We are able to see that the America that many thought was so beautiful, actually has gnarly warts, deep scars, and festering scabs. Can you see the infection spreading? I see it! Do you?

No matter how ugly America has become, America is our country and the Anne Arundel County Branch of the NAACP is committed to helping America heal, especially here in our community.

To start this healing, I believe that we must prioritize the Maryland Black Caucus' Legislative Agenda (covered in this issue) that supports the repeal of the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights (LOEBR) and other police reforms, health equity (including the Maryland Health Equity Resource Act), adequate HBCU funding, environmental justice, voting rights, and other important bills and legislative matters.

We are in this together, and the Anne Arundel County Branch of the NAACP will continue to fight for human rights to ensure that everyone in Anne Arundel County has equal rights and equitable application of the law.

Please join us and become a member of our branch by signing up [here](#).

With gratitude,

Jacqueline Allsup, President

NAACP - Anne Arundel County Branch

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## Editorial: Judicial Reform Is Needed to Stop Voter Suppression

Claudia Barber

Voter suppression takes many forms and was covered widely in the news throughout the last presidential election. The frequent news reports reminded me of the unscrupulous tactics that were used against me during my 2016 candidacy for Circuit Court Judge. Now, legislation has been proposed that would end contested judicial election, which may be viewed as a form of voter suppression: Senate Bill 295, and House Bills 35 and 447.

Eliminating contested trial court judicial elections will suppress voter rights by removing the right to vote and replacing it with approval of who “the establishment” wants to be your circuit court judges.



Voter registration in Annapolis, Maryland

This is significant because judicial terms are 15 years long and, if this legislation passes, voters would only be able to "rubber stamp" judges who are nominated by the Judicial Nominating Commission. The problem is that racial politics are still in play in many counties across the State of Maryland. These racial politics play on prejudices and stereotypes.

Once nominated, the incumbent judges benefit unfairly from the perception that they were vetted by the nominating commissions (and, therefore are the better candidates), but no one is looking closely at the track record of the commissions. Those commissions aren't being held to an equity standard, either.

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***"Racial politics are still in play in many counties across the State of Maryland."***

Claudia Barber

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Commissions are unelected and operate without oversight or accountability. The bar associations voluntarily recommending judicial candidates also operate without input or transparency.

In 2016, Reverend Ricky Nelson Jones and I ran in a contested judicial election for Anne Arundel County Circuit Court judge in Maryland. There were many underhanded tactics used which seemed to be unveiled attempts to “put black people in their place.”

In other words, "How dare two Black attorneys think they are qualified to run for

judicial office?" In point of fact, the contested election was the only way to unveil the secrets of these unelected commissions.

At the time I filed my certificate of candidacy in 2016, the Anne Arundel County Circuit Court consisted of an all-white judiciary for more than a decade (2005-2016). For more than 368 years, there was never a woman of color appointed to this bench. The judicial nominating commission had no shame about keeping things this way when they only short-listed white applicants for more than a decade for judicial vacancies on this court.

Governors were complicit in this short listing of whites by stacking the judicial nominating commissions with majority white members. At that time, I was a sitting administrative law judge with 10 years of judicial experience and over 5000 judicial opinions to my credit. I believe that I had more experience than many, if not all, of the nominees selected.

The attacks became even more personal when an "ethics complaint" was filed with my employer by someone affiliated with the four sitting judges who were running on a slate together in the campaign. This complaint demanded that I be fired for violating the ethics rule against sitting judges running for partisan office.

However, running in a partisan primary is not running a partisan campaign. In fact, in Maryland, the only court that runs a truly partisan election is Orphans Court. It's generally understood that the partisan primary does not define the election as

partisan as Circuit Court judgeships are not partisan positions. Further, the ABA Judicial Code of Ethics commentary acknowledges that judges need not resign when running for judicial office.

Nevertheless, I was fired in large part because my employer yielded to the pressure of the complainant instead of analyzing the facts, including the approval from my former chief administrative law judge of my running a campaign for judicial election while employed as an administrative law judge.

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***"For more than 368 years, there was never a woman of color appointed to this bench."***

*Claudia Barber*

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I appealed my termination and the case is currently on appeal. The press had a field day, questioning my reputation in the newspapers on Ballotpedia. In my opinion, the election materials of the four sitting judges spread misinformation, which, I believe, contributed to my losing the election and the sullyng of my name.

Efforts to stop Black judicial candidates didn't stop with me. After experiencing similar challenges, Rev. Ricky Nelson Jones filed a lawsuit against Maryland's Administrative Office of Courts challenging the racial inequities in Anne Arundel County's judiciary system.

This fight for justice was not covered well by the press, who basically only acknowledged Rev. Jones as the candidate who sued the courts. While the discrimination that myself and Rev. Jones experienced while running for judicial office was a heavy cross to bear, at least we had the right to run for office despite being denied a nomination by what I believe is a racist nominating commission.

The one avenue that minorities have to access judicial positions may be closing soon, if a new bill (Senate Bill 295) to end contested judicial elections changes the existing law. If passed, the only way to become a judge will be to go through the Judicial Nominating Commissions who rarely recommend people of color to the bench. No longer will candidates have contested judicial elections as a means of breaking down racial barriers in the judiciary.

Legislators, especially those of color, should not eliminate contested judicial elections. Once the right to elect trial court judges in an open process is closed, voters will likely never get the right to vote in a contested judicial election ever again. This places too much control in the hands of "the establishment," mostly white governors and legislators. Voters, in reality, will be robbed of their opportunity to weigh in on who serves as their trial court judges.

They lose the right to decide who presides over critical matters - like sentencing and weighing the credibility of witnesses such as law enforcement officers - that greatly

impact the community. Voters would then only be able to vote yes or no to retain a judge, with no option to choose someone else.

The power to choose a judge is enormous. These judges decide if law enforcement should be held accountable for police misconduct. Over a 15-year term, Circuit Court judges will impact thousands of laws and thousands of lives. They can and will set precedents that will stay in place for decades.

Many have written about police reform since George Floyd's death, but judicial reform is also extremely important.



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Why are white judges telling the minority population what discrimination looks like and what is needed to prove a discrimination case? The wrong people are controlling the narrative.

White bureaucrats, White hearing officers and White judges have lowered the standard of proof and made it easier to find a case for sex discrimination and almost impossible to find a case of race discrimination. That is why having a diverse judiciary and government matters: it impacts perspective.

When a judicial system waits 368 years to place a woman of color, or a Hispanic, or a Native American, or an Asian American on its circuit court bench, that system has already shown you who they are. The bold practice of exclusion with no consequences is self-evident. The system has no shame - nor, is

it subject to any accountability. It takes pride in its legacy of abuse.

The judicial system in Anne Arundel County should be ashamed. Not only are Black women under-represented, but there are also no Black men on many circuit courts and few, if any, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian Americans, or Pacific Islanders. The same is true of other counties in Maryland, with some having no minority representation at all.

## ***"Why are white judges telling the minority population what discrimination looks like?"***

*Claudia Barber*

Judicial reform is long overdue. The Anne Arundel County Chapter of the NAACP should recommend a task force be established to inform how to eliminate implicit bias in the judicial nominating commission selection process. A key area of concern is that more transparency is needed to remove conflicts of interest and the appearance of impropriety that may arise when deciding on nomination recommendations.

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Another area of concern is establishing objective and consistent evaluation criteria. For example, every judicial nominee should be evaluated on their knowledge of sentencing disparities, explain how their record demonstrates that they have not contributed to such disparities, and show how they will work to proactively address this matter if selected for the judicial position. I have never been asked this question on an interview before any judicial nominating commission.

In 2017, Governor Hogan appointed the first African American female to Anne Arundel County Circuit Court. In my opinion, after Judge Elizabeth Morris' appointment, the governor's circuit court judicial nominating committee and the appellate judicial nominating committee went right back to practicing exclusionary tactics when short-listing applicants for the trial court and appellate benches in Anne Arundel County.

This conclusion is supported by the fact that **zero** people of color were short listed for circuit court and court of appeals or court of special appeals vacancies from 2018 to 2020. It should be noted that many of the applicants of color had significantly more experience than the White nominees selected for referral to the Governor.

Despite this pitiful track record and the obvious lack of diversity in the Maryland judiciary, the chief judge of the Court of Appeals of Maryland, Mary Ellen Barbera, has endorsed the elimination of contested

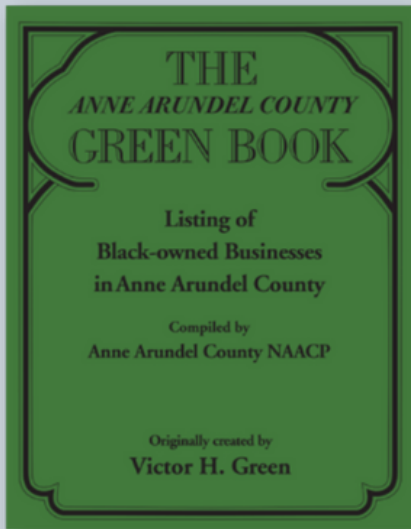
judicial elections. Year after year, Chief Judge Barbera brings in a few African American judges from various jurisdictions around the State who were nominated to encourage legislators to co-sponsor legislation or support eliminating contested judicial elections. Chief Judge Barbera is now seeking to make her case before the Maryland legislature again this year. She appeared in January before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee in support of Senate Bill 295. Similar bills are also before the House Judiciary Committee. Testimony will be taken on House Bills 0035 and 447 on February 24, 2021. All are encouraged to write your legislator to set the record straight about the importance of keeping contested judicial elections.

Black bar associations, in particular, should be above this manipulation and not endorse any of the above proposed legislation. Why? Having the right judges on the trial bench (regardless their race) is critically important to ensure equal justice under the law. Diversity matters! Tell your legislator to vote no to the elimination of contested judicial elections.



*Claudia Barber is a former judicial candidate for judge on the Circuit Court of Anne Arundel County.*

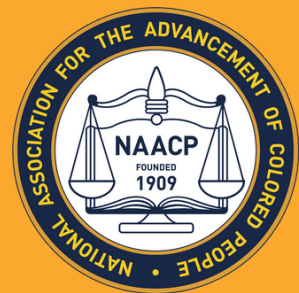
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## NEVER MISS A **MEETING**



The Anne Arundel County branch of the NAACP holds monthly member meetings via Zoom. Email [president@annearundelcountynaacp.org](mailto:president@annearundelcountynaacp.org) to find out more.

Not a member yet? [Join us today!](#)

## NAACP Youth & College Division Report

Joanne Bond

The mission of the NAACP Youth & College Division shall be to:

- Inform youth of the problems affecting African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities;
- To advance the economic, education, social and political status of African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities and their harmonious cooperation with other peoples;
- To stimulate an appreciation of the African Diaspora and other people of color's contribution to civilization; and
- To develop an intelligent, militant effective youth leadership.

We celebrate the 2021 leaders of the Anne Arundel County NAACP Youth and College Division:

- President Harold Mo Lloyd
- First Vice President Nikolas Mejia
- Second Vice President Jamar Turner
- Assistant Treasurer Micheala Whalen
- Secretary Armani Jackson
- Assistant Secretary Kyree Stinson



AACo NAACP Youth & College Division leaders Harold Mo Lloyd, Nikolas Mejia, Jamar Turner, Micheala Whalen, Armani Jackson, & Kyree Stinson



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## Maryland Delegation Calls for Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccines



In January, members of the Maryland Congressional Delegation, including U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen and Ben Cardin and Congressmen Steny H. Hoyer, C.A. “Dutch” Ruppersberger, John Sarbanes, Kweisi Mfume, Anthony Brown, Jamie Raskin and David Trone, released [the following statement](#) after a conference call with Maryland Department of Health Acting Secretary Dennis Schrader about the state’s COVID-19 vaccine distribution efforts:

“A robust vaccination strategy is critical to our efforts to defeat COVID-19 in Maryland. But according to the CDC, Maryland’s COVID-19 vaccine distribution system [ranks](#) as one of the worst-performing statewide efforts in the country. [Early data](#) also suggests that Maryland has immunized communities of color at significantly lower rates. These issues must be addressed by the State at once.”

“Many of our shared constituents have expressed concern, confusion, and frustration about Maryland’s vaccine rollout.”

“The State must provide more clear, accessible, and transparent information to Marylanders about the vaccine distribution system and work collaboratively with county and local jurisdictions to ensure that Marylanders can access the COVID-19 vaccine in a fair and timely manner.”

***“To that end, we urge the State to put forward an effective strategy to tackle the current distribution challenges and disparities in access.”***

“While the Maryland Congressional Delegation continues to work alongside the Biden Administration to boost the federal supply and streamline its deployment, the State must step up its efforts to keep Maryland communities safe, communicate with our constituents, and ensure equitable and efficient distribution of the vaccine.”

Maryland's Vaccine Rollout [By the Numbers](#):

- Ranked 47th in vaccine administration, with only 47.3 percent of its received doses administered
- Black Marylanders make up only 16.5% of vaccinations, they make up 33.1% of cases, 36% of deaths, and 29.6% of the total population.
- Hispanic Marylanders make up only 4.9% of vaccinations, but 19.5% of cases, 9.6% of deaths, and 10.6% of the total population.

## AACo Dept. of Health's Community-Based Programs to Reduce Health Inequities

Krystle Coldiron

The Anne Arundel County Department of Health's newly released report, "Equitable Vaccination Plan for Anne Arundel County, Maryland," shows that the virus has most negatively impacted communities of color.

Black residents have nearly the lowest rates of vaccination among any ethnic group in the county. Nationally, the Black vaccination rate is three times lower than Whites.

To improve the health outcomes for people of color and address the racial and ethnic disparities in COVID-19 vaccinations among Black and Hispanic residents, the Department has created community-based programs targeting several areas: communication, transportation, and community engagement.

Beginning in March, the Department will hold vaccination pre-registration sign-up events co-hosted with community leaders, faith leaders, and nonprofits.

A new Community Health Ambassador Program will fund community organizations to hire peers to host health education talks, lead door-knocking campaigns, and provide pre-registration support.

Starting in April, vaccination clinics will be deployed five days a week at prioritized locations in racial and ethnic minority communities and in ZIP codes with the

highest rates of COVID-19 and other health conditions.

The Department's new Office of Health Equity and Racial Justice will also lead weekly Q & A sessions to address residents' questions and concerns, including weekend and evening times to provide equitable access for working community members.

For more information, please call 410-222-7256 or email [covid19info@aacounty.org](mailto:covid19info@aacounty.org).

*Krystle Coldiron is the Director of the Office of Assessment & Planning at the Anne Arundel County Health Department.*



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In addition to teaching jewelry making, Dyon makes jewelry for sale. Her pieces are made of beads, wire, wood, paint, and recycled materials.

Each piece is handcrafted and hand painted with love.

## The 33rd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards

Joanne Bond

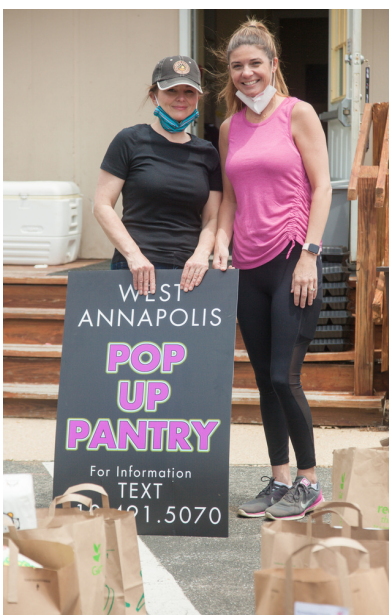
The 33rd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Awards Program aired virtually on Friday, January 15, 2021. Among the 13 honorees acknowledged at the event are:

**Diana Love**, Founder of the West Annapolis Pop Up Pantry, who was awarded the Peace Maker Award for providing food relief to over 150,000 Anne Arundel citizens during the COVID-19 crisis. Together with community partners, she raised more than \$100,000 in one month to provide food and aid for coronavirus crisis response.

**Amy Marshall**, who supported the pantry by offering her short-term rental property as a storage and distribution site and was also given the Peace Maker Award. Each weekend, the pantry hosts a food drive that serves roughly 315 families and 1,400 people.

**Speaker Adrienne Jones**, who was honored with the Courageous Leadership Award for her efforts as Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates. She is the first African-American and the first woman to serve in this position in Maryland. A delegate since 1997, she served as Speaker Pro Tempore in the Maryland House of Delegates for 16 years, before being selected as speaker in 2019.

**Delorma “Dee” Goodwyn**, the winner of the Dream Keepers Award for her 30 years volunteering for civil rights and social causes in Anne Arundel County. This includes her work on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee Board of Directors, the Annapolis Human Relations Committee, the Anne Arundel County Personnel Board, and the Caucus of African American Leaders. She is active with the Racial Equity in Media Consortium, a group of elected officials, religious leaders and organizations that promote racial equity in the media.



*Honorees Diana Love, Amy Marshall, Speaker Adrienne Jones, and Delorma "Dee" Goodwyn*

As the largest celebration of Dr. King's birthday in Anne Arundel County, this was the first year the event was held virtually. The U.S. Naval Academy Gospel Choir performed during the program. The program concluded with a viewing of the award-winning short film *The Dream Revisited: Civil Rights In Perspective*, which was followed by a virtual discussion by local leaders and activists on the question, "Is Dr. King's dream being nurtured in Anne Arundel County Today?"



Also on January 15, NAACP branch members appeared on [Fox45's Town Hall](#), "Your Voice, Your Future: Where are we on MLK's Dream?"

## ***"There is so much work to be done."***

*Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett (D-32)*

The panel featured Judge Claudia Barber, Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett (D-32), Harold Lloyd III (President of the NAACP Youth and College Division), Bishop Antonio Palmer of Kingdom Celebration Center in Odenton, and Carl Snowden, author and former civil rights director for the Maryland Attorney General's office.

The panelists spoke about what topics that need to be addressed in order to live up to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's dream— from policing to economic inequality to COVID-19.

"There is so much work to be done," Delegate Bartlett said. "We have to be in the room to hold the conversation."

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## Speaker Adrienne Jones Announces The Black Legislative Agenda

Achsah Callahan

During the current legislative session, Maryland House Speaker Adrienne Jones is championing the Black Agenda: a series of policy changes to help Maryland create pathways to a more equitable and inclusive state and deconstruct racist policies causing racial inequities.



*Maryland House Speaker Adrienne Jones*

The Black Agenda includes legislation sponsored by various members of the House Democratic caucus and has five areas of focus:

- Creating an equal path to homeownership for more Black Marylanders;
- Addressing underlying health conditions that stem from systemic medical and social inequities;
- Encouraging entrepreneurship through access to capital and assets;
- Emphasizing diversity on corporate boards; and
- Increasing minority business participation in public contracts.

Speaker Jones spoke to the Washington Post about the Black Agenda, saying, "Let's put it this way: The 106 speakers before me, they would not put [this] as a priority. Historically, there has been a White agenda."

"When we strengthen the Black and Brown community it makes a stronger economy for everyone — everyone benefits," Jones said.

## NAACP Maryland State Conference Legislative Priorities

Steven Waddy

On January 16th, the NAACP Maryland State Conference (MSC) released their Maryland legislative agenda. The Agenda covers the issue areas of health, education, police reform and public safety, family and juvenile justice, labor, and voting rights.

The Agenda was developed following discussions with individual members, state legislators, and non-governmental groups.

The NAACP joined the Maryland Coalition for Justice and Police Accountability following the death of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor. This coalition developed five reforms of Maryland law that would increase police accountability. These reforms are:

- Repeal the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights (LEOBR).
- Restore control of the Baltimore City Police Department to Baltimore City residents.
- Make investigations into police misconduct transparent.
- Limit the use of force by law enforcement.
- Remove police from our children's schools.





The State Conference Political Action Chair Rev. Kobi Little will be leading the NAACP's lobbying efforts in Annapolis this session. He has developed many relationships within Annapolis and across the State to be an effective lobbyist for the NAACP's agenda.

As the Anne Arundel County branch Political Action Chair, I will assist President Allsup in providing testimony on bills that affect the county.

This session of the Maryland General Assembly

will be entirely different than any other session in history. The State House is closed to the general public in order to stop the spread of the coronavirus. In order to submit testimony, you must have a [MYMGA](#) account where you can track legislation.

The legislature has released videos on how to sign up for hearings to provide testimony. Each committee controls its timing on when to submit testimony, often requiring witnesses to sign up at least two business days before the hearing.

## City of Annapolis' Public Safety Team: "We'll Be Around"

Rhonda Pindell-Charles, Esq.

In 1972 (my high school graduation year), one of the biggest musical hits was The Spinners' song *I'll Be Around*. There were three repeated verses in the song:

*"Whenever you call me, I'll be there"*

*"Whenever you want me, I'll be there"*

*"Whenever you need me, I'll be there."*

I've been thinking of the song when I consider the work of our City's Public Safety Standing Committee, which includes Alderman Fred Paone, Alderman DaJuan Gay, and I.

By law, "the Public Safety Committee shall consider matters affecting public safety in the City," including all proposed amendments to Title 11 (Public Peace, Morals and Welfare) and Title 12 (Vehicles and Traffic) of the City Code.

This pandemic has made our work even much more challenging and appreciated. But still, the Public Safety Committee is committed to working as "One Annapolis," an Annapolis that values everyone. Through our work, we continue to value and respect the around-the-clock service of our Fire Department (AFD), Police Department (APD), and Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

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***"Whenever you call me, I'll be there."***

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Although public access to our fire stations is limited during the pandemic and public education programs have been suspended, the Fire Department has maintained operations on a daily basis.

We continue to conduct fire safety inspections of public buildings and businesses. Our SAFE station program operates for people suffering from addiction and substance abuse, and people needing assistance can still report to a fire station.

Importantly, we continue to work with all partners, including crisis response, the health department, hospitals, and recovery centers, to combat ongoing substance use disorder incidents and the COVID-19 pandemic.

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***"Whenever you want me, I'll be there."***

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Our Police Department has also continued operating daily. They are focused on and committed to community policing, supporting partnerships and problem-solving techniques to address conditions that give rise to crime.

In this vein, APD has added another staffer, including a community member, to their successful Positive Impact Program/People Effectively Encouraging People (PIP/PEEP) reentry team. APD is also taking a lead in our two community-based Resource Centers, which will be opening soon in our Harbour House and Robinwood communities.

Other new and evolving community policing endeavors include our Crisis Intervention Team, increased involvement in youth and school programs, food pantry outreach, the Chief's Lecture Series, enhanced cold case investigations, and a revised Neighbor Enhancement Team.

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***"Whenever you need me, I'll be there."***

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Throughout the pandemic, our Office of Emergency Management has continued operating on a daily basis, taking on the herculean task of serving as our City's Pandemic Coordinator.

We know that COVID-19 has disproportionately affected black and brown people, especially elderly people of color, many of whom reside in independent senior housing facilities, face transportation and mobility challenges, and have limited experience with technology.

On January 29, we launched a partnership with Anne Arundel Medical Center (AAMC) to implement an aggressive, in-house outreach campaign at Bowman Place and the Morris H. Blum Senior Highrise to highlight the benefits of the vaccine, respond to inquiries, assist with registration, and more.

This vaccine effort is an enormous undertaking, and it will require all of us to practice love, patience, and flexibility.

Until then, please continue to wear a mask, wash your hands, and keep your distance from others outside your household.

As The Spinners famously sang almost 50 years ago, our City's Public Safety Team wants to tell you, "We'll be around."



*Rhonda Pindell-Charles, Esq. is the Chair of the Annapolis City Council's Public Safety Standing Committee*



## AAEDC Launches Inclusive Ventures Program

Joanne Bond



The Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC) recently announced the new Inclusive Ventures Program (IVP) for small business owners who are BIPOC (black, indigenous, person of color), women, and veterans with immediate plans to grow to the next level.

Although the 2021 application period has closed, you can read more about the program [here](#).

## 2nd Annual Minority Money Matters Event

Joanne Bond

On Sunday, February 28, 2021 from 2:00 to 5:00 pm, the Anne Arundel County Branch of the NAACP and Work Life Behavioral Health LLC will partner together again for the 2nd Annual Minority Money Matters event.

The theme of this year's event is entitled, **Financial Stability and Success in the Age of COVID.**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's event will be held virtually via Zoom. The topics that will be covered during this informative session will include:

- College Savings Strategies
- Estate Planning
- Banking Lending Process
- Homeownership
- Entrepreneurship

This event is **free** and open to people of all ages looking to create financial stability for themselves and for future generations.

Reserving a free ticket today will allow you to join the meeting for live discussion and interactions. A Zoom link will be sent to all registered attendees two days prior to the event.

If you're a female or minority business owner interested in being a vendor, please contact [LaToya Nkongolo](#) or [Antonio Downing](#).

Learn more and register [here!](#)



**FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND  
SUCCESS IN THE AGE OF COVID**

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28  
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*2nd Annual*  
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Anne Arundel County NAACP

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## Coke sets diversity targets, financial penalties for outside lawyers

Joanne Bond

Coca-Cola said it will require diversity among law firms who bill it for work in the United States — and reduce payments if they don't comply.

Bradley Gayton is the Atlanta-based beverage giant's General Counsel, a recent hire from the top ranks of Ford. He disclosed the changes in a letter Thursday to law firms the company uses.

"Quite simply, we are no longer interested in discussing motivations, programs, or excuses for little to no progress — it's the results that we are demanding and will measure going forward," wrote Gayton. He also told *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* that he hopes other major companies make similar moves to "change the trajectory" of diversity in the field.

The specific targets and penalties come after many Fortune 500 companies pledged to address racial inequality more aggressively in the wake of last year's widespread Black Lives Matter protests.

Coke said it will require quarterly reporting about the makeup of legal teams that do work for it and self identify as American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Black, women, Hispanic/Latinx, LGBTQ+, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, or persons with disabilities.

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***"We are no longer interested in discussing motivations, programs, or excuses for little to no progress"***

*Bradley Gayton, Senior Vice President & Global General Counsel, Coca-Cola Company*

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For those working on new matters for Coke, "...at least 30% of each of billed associate and partner time will be from diverse attorneys, and of such amounts at least half will be from Black attorneys."

It said the percentages, which are roughly equal to those of the U.S. population overall, will be adjusted over time to eventually hit at least 50% of billed time coming from diverse attorneys, with half from Black attorneys.

Firms that fail to meet the targets will be



docked 30% of their fees, and those who continue to come up short may no longer be considered for Coke work. It's common for big law firms to stress on their websites how much they value inclusion and diversity. Yet U.S. law firms tend to be far less diverse than the nation as a whole, according to a 2019 report by the *National Association for Law Placement*. About one-fourth of law firm associates are people of color, according to the report. Less than 5% of all associates were Black, compared with more than 13% of the overall U.S. population. Among law firm partners, just under 2% were Black and less than 10% of all partners were people of color.

Coca-Cola's new directive toward more equitable legal representation is a good step forward. The newsletter team supports this initiative and hopes business and government procurement offices follow.



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## The Birth of Alkebulan Shule

Alkebulan Board of Directors



In the Spring of 2020, as the Global COVID-19 pandemic began to spread and public access to in-person services and businesses shut down, a group of community advocates gathered virtually to brainstorm, specifically, about how to improve local conditions through Afro-centric education.

This group was composed of pastors, educators, lawyers, and other community members and was an outgrowth of a larger meeting held earlier in the year that was a collective of African American elected officials, pastors, and community advocates.

During the virtual meeting, there was general agreement that the community was not adequately educated about the significant role that African Americans have played in the development of Anne Arundel County, the State of Maryland and the world. The group understood that the marginalization of

African Americans across every sector of society has left deep wounds resulting in generational trauma that often leads to low self-esteem among African American youth and is impeding our youth from reaching their full potential.

Systemic racism is intrinsic in educational systems around the world and the marginalization of African Americans and those from the African Diaspora can be found everywhere, including Anne Arundel County.

The history of our county makes this marginalization even more onerous as its roots are strong and run deep. Our county was the home of the second largest slave port in the United States and has a long and enduring history of racism on all levels of society.

Therefore, one might not be surprised that in 2018 Anne Arundel County had the highest number of hate crimes in the State of Maryland and the second highest in 2019.

As the group discussed the gaps in education caused by systemic racism, protests across the country surrounding the deaths of Ahmaud Aubrey, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor grew in intensity. One could feel the heaviness in the air. The need to address generational trauma became even more apparent as the protests intensified. The question remained “How could supplemental education help improve our county?”

The answer was complex but self-evident. Education is healing! It enhances one’s sense of self-worth and helps bind communities through participation and open exchange.

White America has denied African Americans the dignity of knowing our contribution to the greatness of this country and to the world. To add insult to injury, many White Americans are unwilling to acknowledge that racism continues to exist. This further exacerbates generational trauma in African American communities, while also exacerbating the state of delusion in White America.

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***“In 2018, Anne Arundel County had the highest number of hate crimes in the State of Maryland and the second highest in 2019.”***

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To create a bridge to the truth, Alkebulan Shule was formed. Alkebulan is the oldest name for Africa and literally means “**Mother of mankind.**” The word “shule” means “school” in Swahili.

The naming of the school with words that have ancient meaning manifests the intention to approach course subjects from an Afro-centric rather than Euro-centric perspective.

Alkebulan Shule will speak truth to power by highlighting the significant contributions made by Africans, African Americans, and those in the African Diaspora.

This truth will help build healthy community. It will also bolster mental health and well-being, as well as encourage self-determination and forward movement.



Alkebulan Shule believes that history will bear witness that the systemic racism of “today” is extremely relevant, has a significant and contemporaneous impact on African Americans and other people of color and is just as dangerous and devastating as racism of the "past."

Education creates a bridge between the past, the present day, and the future. This connection is needed because both the oppressors and those victimized must be informed about how racism throughout history has negatively impacted the social development of our society. By not fully understanding the historical connection to the past, our society will repeat this vicious cycle of racism and oppression, again and again!

Alternatively, education will heal our community by learning the true narrative of African civilizations and their descendants. Education gives individuals and groups the power to speak out having confidence in the accuracy behind one’s belief system.

Alkebulan Shule stands to say that it is not just the “Negro” who has been “miseducated” in America, **everyone is miseducated**. The White power structure has consistently manipulated history to ensure compliance to and acceptance of the fictionalized alternate reality created to continue to subjugate people of color not just in America but around the world. Education is the key to change!

Alkebulan Shule provides classes, workshops, and community forums. The shule will also help connect students to their ancestors

through DNA results as well as rites-of-passage programs. Alkebulan Shule is committed to providing meaningful educational opportunities that will help heal the deep racial divide that is very present in Anne Arundel County.

## ***"Education is the key to change."***

Alkebulan Shule welcomes everyone and looks forward to building a bridge to the truth!

Classes are held the first Saturday of each month and utilizes a virtual platform to bring the lessons of Africa and the world into your home to provoke meaningful discussions with your family and friends.

Please join us by registering on [www.Alkebulan.org](http://www.Alkebulan.org). Donations are welcome.



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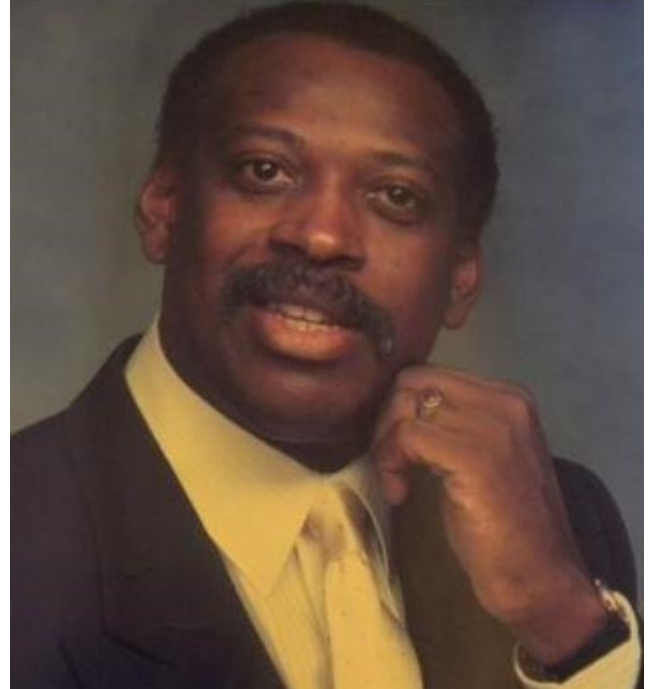
## In Memoriam



*Keith Jones*

The AACo NAACP was saddened to learn of the recent passing of **Keith Jones**, owner of Chick and Ruth's Delly on Main Street in Downtown Annapolis. Mr. Jones acquired ownership of the iconic restaurant in 2017.

Mr. Jones was a Stanford University graduate and former basketball star who played against NBA superstar Michael Jordan. Mr. Jones is survived by a son. His wife, a former family care physician, preceded him in death.



*Dr. Preston Hebron, Jr.*

**Dr. Preston Hebron, Jr.**, a former Anne Arundel County school teacher, Vice Principal, and Principal, passed away January 26, 2021.

He worked at Jones, Tyler Heights, Parole, Severna Park, and Jessup Elementary schools from 1968-1993.

He is a former member of St. Marks United Methodist Church near Arundel Mills, Maryland.



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**Newsletter Team:**

Claudia Barber, Joanne Bond, Achsah Callahan, Vickie Gipson, & Laura Scruggs

**Corrections:**

In the December issue of this newsletter, it was stated in error that Delegate Mike Rogers (D-32) is the current Treasurer of the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus. Delegate Rogers is the Financial Secretary Vice Treasurer. Delegate Ron Watson is the Treasurer.



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