

Maryland Politics Weekly Round-Up: February 14-20

Posted by [Zach Hill](#) On 02/20/2021

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — The Relief Act of 2021 was officially passed, scoring a major bipartisan victory in Maryland politics. Meanwhile, the Maryland GOP announced their own COVID relief measures in a series of legislation. Now, with the 2021 General Assembly session approaching the two-month mark, more and more bills are moving through the House and Senate.

Stories of the Week

- Governor Hogan signed the Relief Act of 2021 into action on Monday. The relief will provide over \$1 billion in tax and stimulus aid to Maryland citizens to help with recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This bill marks a major victory for Hogan, who has championed it since the beginning of the year.
- The Maryland House GOP also announced a COVID relief package containing several bills focusing on local oversight and business relief. Some of the prominent bills included were: HB 1083, which adds additional oversight of local boards when imposing covid restrictions, HB 1084 which will provide civil immunity to small businesses and non-profits who fail to maintain all health guidelines and other tax relief measures for retirees and small businesses.

Bills to Watch

HB 130 - Commission on LGBTQ Affairs: This Bill would establish an LGBTQ affairs commission as part of the governor's community initiatives office. This office would act as a liaison between the state government and the LGBTQ community and provide policy reports on what legislation is needed to curb discrimination faced by these groups.

Status: Third Reading Passed and has been referred to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

HB 237 - Early Literacy and Dyslexia Practices – Assistance and Guidance: this Bill Would Require the Maryland Department of Education to create a handbook by June of 2022 that would guide educators on practices to improve early literacy for students with dyslexia.

Status: Passed Third Reading and is now referred to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

HB 398 - Election Law – Time off for Employee Voting: Requiring Employers to grant employees a 2-hour absence to go vote. This Also Protects employees from financial or professional punishment for leaving work to vote.

Status: Third Reading Passed Referred to senate Finance Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

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