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Bioscience Leaders on Growth of Sector



Heated Debate over Teacher Pay Raise



Salesianum Wins Basketball State Title

photo by fauxels on Pexel



Business

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



BIOSCIENCE LEADERS PRIME LEGISLATORS ON GROWTH OF SECTOR

BY BETSY PRICE

The First State's growing biosciences industry has its roots in the 1992 creation of the Delaware Technology Park, state life sciences and technology advocates told a Senate committee Wednesday. Today, that sector of the economy is responsible for 11,000 jobs with \$2 billion in gross domestic product, said Mike Fleming, president of **DelawareBio**, which advocates for and offers support to life science companies.

The 30-year growth in biotech companies also has spurred a growth in investment resources and federal funding, Fleming said, as well as a 64% surge among those who earn degrees in fields related to bio businesses. A 2021 report from DelawareBio said that the state has seen a 65% growth of new startups in the biotech area.

"That has not historically been an area of strength for Delaware, small startup science and technology companies," he said. "We've been fortunate historically to be

home to big companies. I think what you're going to see increasingly is a transformation of our economy is moving to more shots on smaller companies, many of them led by folks who worked in the market or a company.

"That's the future of the state."

All of that means Delaware is well-positioned to see growth in advanced manufacturing of drugs and more related businesses, as well as additional startups, he told the Senate Banking, Business, Insurance and Technology committee.

BIOSCIENCES GROWTH

The **Delaware Technology Park**, a 501c3 nonprofit created by then-Gov. Mike Castle, was meant to promulgate the growth of technology businesses in the state in a partnership with the University of Delaware, the state and the private sector, said Mike Bowman, CEO of the technology park. It would go on to be one of

the strands in a web of university, government and business resources trying to turn bioscience ideas into marketable products and profits. The center first focused on advanced materials but then technology began moving toward life sciences, Bowman said.

The park once boasted one building; then five on the edge of UD's campus, and now it's moved into the Star Campus, Bowman said. During the time, he said, 150 companies have been started from scratch and four have gone public. About 16,000 jobs were created and about \$1 billion came through investment grants.

Along the way, the sector spawned DelawareBio and The National Institute for Innovation in Manufacturing Biopharmaceuticals at UD. Niimbl in 2021 received \$153 million federal funding to foster the manufacturing of drugs.

Delaware's growth in biosciences also involves UD's Office of Economic Innovation Partnership and the Small Business Development Center, Bowman said. The small business center helps start, scale and sustain small businesses, he said. The center alone has about 800 clients a year, 2,000 jobs and \$14 million capital, he said.

In recent years, talk about the industry has also lead to concerns about financial health and the SBDC has now partnered in the creation of a six-floor, 100,000-square-foot center of excellence at UD that will the College of Engineering, the College of Business, individual sciences such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and augmented reality.

It's allowed that group to help startups and it's allowed UD students to work in those business and come out of school with great resumes.

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TENANT RIGHT TO LAWYERS BILL HELD FOR CHANGES BY COMMITTEE

BY SAM HAUT

The Senate Housing & Land Use committee on Wednesday heard from dozens of people supporting a bill to provide tenants who lose their leases the right to a lawyer to help.

Senate Bill 1, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Bryan Townsend, D-Newark, would set up a system for tenants below 200% of the federal poverty line a right to an attorney when dealing with eviction proceedings. The bill has 28 additional sponsors and cosponsors, all Democrats. Among the 30 people speaking in favor of the bill was Javier Horstmann, chief policy advisor for the Delaware State Housing Authority.

“DSHA strongly supports this legislative effort as we have shown through our work to facilitate legal representation through our participation in the eviction defense program,” Horstmann said.

“This program...has demonstrated that access to representation can help prevent evictions and save limited resources to address homelessness.”

Debra Burgos, vice president of property management at the Delaware Apartment Association, said legislators have worked with them to make the bill more palatable than they found previous versions.

“We are very appreciative of the sponsor of this bill for working with our organization to try to find a compromise that will allow this bill to move forward,” Burgos said. “We’re committed to continuing to work with you on those amendments so that we can hopefully all be on the same page.”

Branden Fletcher, a housing organizer with the HOMES Campaign, said he’s seen the impact evictions have on members of the community.

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Food & Dining

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



BY TERRY ROGERS

A new fondue restaurant in Milford will focus on simple menus with a variety of cheese and broths available by themselves or in a full dinner.

fondue., with a little F and its own period, is the newest venture of Zack and Marissa King, who also own **Easy-Speak**, a popular distillery and brewpub in Milford.

“This is something completely new and different in Milford,” Marissa said. “The menu we have created is very simplistic with four courses typically. We are also offering a la carte.”

The restaurant’s offerings won’t be limited only to fondue. It will offer appetizers such as Pupu platters, Cajun seafood boil and a roasted garlic hummus plate, as well as a variety of salads. The cocktails will feature EasySpeak spirits, under the guidance of bar manager Taylor Davis.

“We are really excited about our cocktail menu as we have gotten incredibly artsy with them,” Marissa said. The vibe at fondue., located at 39 N. Walnut St., will be

DO YOU FONDUE? THERE'S A NEW MILFORD RESTAURANT FOR YOU

different from that of EasySpeak and more upscale, she said.

fondue. has three private soft openings scheduled before the restaurant opens to the public. Marissa said they hope to work out all the bugs before the grand opening.

“We are asking for patience as this is new to everyone,” Marissa said. “We are just really excited to bring this new concept to Milford.”

Once opened, fondue. won’t require reservations but will accept them for certain tables when reservations are made for the full four-course experience.

The restaurant revealed its menu on social media over the weekend. Cheese fondue, which serves up to two guests for \$21, will include Swiss; Wisconsin aged; south of the border; bacon, cheddar and ranch; and fontina, spinach and artichoke.

Dippers include broccoli florets, julienne carrots, red and green bell peppers, Granny Smith apple, French baguette, multigrain bread, pretzel and fingerling potatoes.

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**TWO HOURS TO
BRING A SMILE**



BY JAREK RUTZ

A Delaware country music star and a Bridgeville creamery are partnering to bring a new ice cream flavor to shelves across America. Jimmie Allen, who topped the music charts with his singles “Big Shot” and “Make Me Want To” in 2018 and **The Frozen Farmer** are introducing the new flavor inspired by his mother’s cooking.

Among his accolades are winning the **Country Music Association Award for New Artist of the Year** in 2018. Frozen Farmer became a celebrity business when it earned an investment from Lori Greiner in 2020 on ABC’s “Shark Tank.”

They plan a new ice cream flavor called “Miss Angie’s Peach Cobbler Frobert.” Allen, a Milton native who’s currently touring with Carrie Underwood, said he always loved eating his mom’s peach cobbler.

JIMMIE ALLEN, FROZEN FARMER PARTNER FOR NEW ICE CREAM FLAVOR

“Every kid has a story about when their mom or dad made that one thing that brought them comfort,” he said. “My momma’s peach cobbler takes me back to a time when we shared memories around the dinner table. It takes me home to Delaware.”

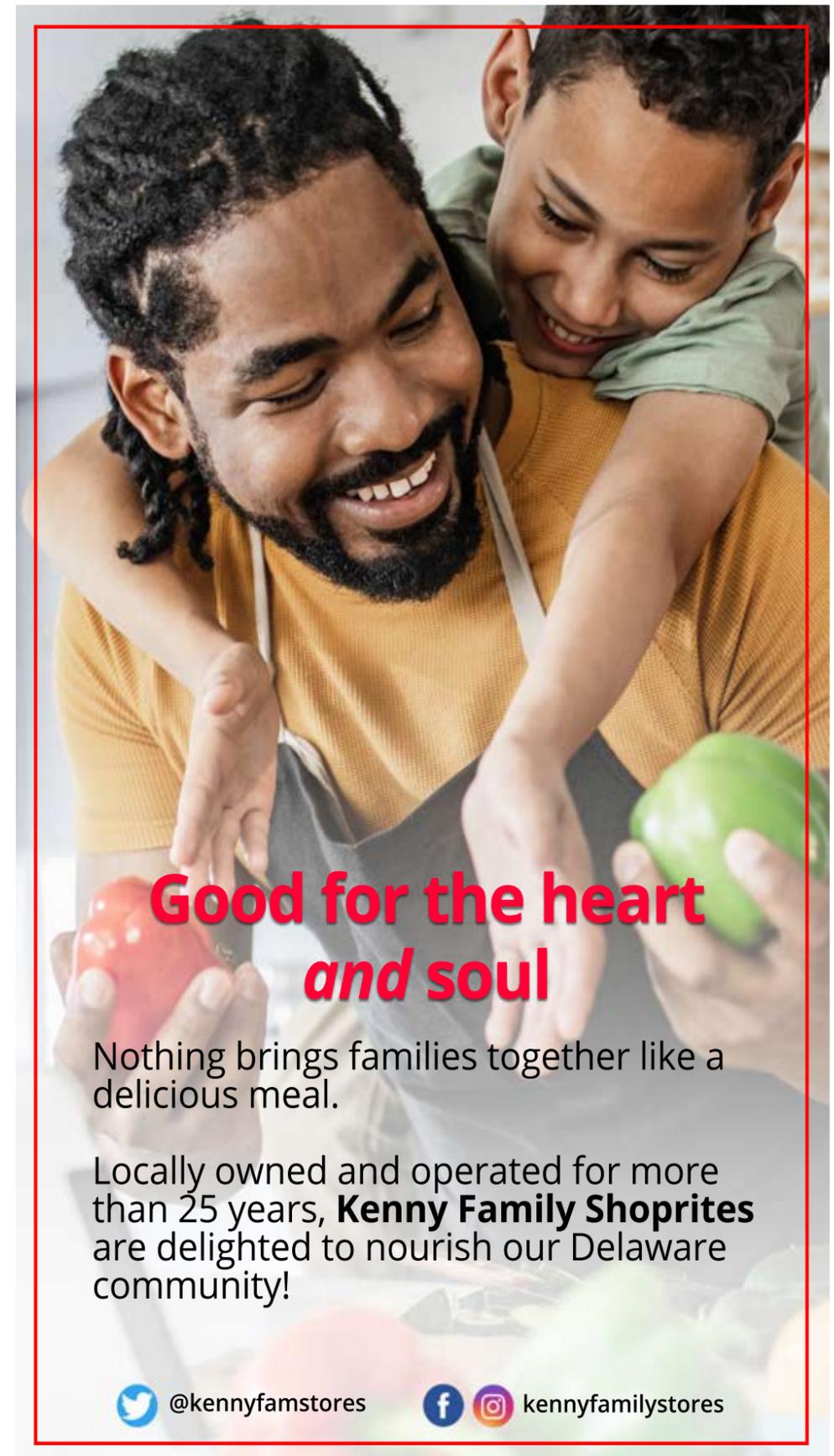
“We have peaches in Delaware, and peach cobbler is a popular southern dish, so with his mom’s famous recipe and our mission, this seemed like the perfect partnership all around,” said Katey Evans, founder and chief executive officer of the creamery.

Kroger has partnered with The Frozen Farmer to exclusively sell the frozen dessert in nearly 2,200 stores nationwide, according to Evans. This includes several of Kroger’s 19 affiliate stores. Those affiliates include Harris Teeter stores in Selbyville and Millsboro. The 370-calorie pints will sell from \$4.99 to \$6.49. But don’t worry—the new flavor won’t be a limited edition.

“We certainly plan to extend the partnership if everything proves successful into next year and beyond this,” Evans said.

She said the Frozen Farmer’s goal is to provide a crafted line of flavors utilizing fruit delivery services that stand by the company’s mission to reduce food waste. Kroger has committed to becoming a zero-food-waste company by 2025.

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Government

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

BILL WOULD SET UP REVIEW OF NONPROFIT GRANT REQUESTS

BY SAM HAUT

A bill that would create a new committee to oversee nonprofit grant requests for state appropriations was unanimously voted out of the House Administration committee Wednesday.

The state spends a substantial amount of money on aiding nonprofits with projects and programs. Last year's \$69.4 million grant-in-aid package included more than \$14 million to paramedic program operations, \$6.3 million for neighborhood and community services, \$3.4 million for insurance rebate equalization, \$8.1 million to fire companies and almost \$500,000 to veteran organizations. Nonprofits also can apply for funding for construction projects under the state's Bond Bill.

The committee that would be set up by [House Bill 40](#), sponsored by Rep. Ruth Briggs King, R-Georgetown, would not have the power to make policy. It would review requests for grants-in-aid, including having authority to probe financial information about projects, and then pass the requests to the Joint Finance Committee. If passed, HB 401 would take effect Aug. 1, 2023.

The new committee would be composed of three members from the House and three members of the Senate, with at least one member from each chamber required to be a Republican. According to the fiscal note for the bill, the committee would cost \$33,057 in the 2024 fiscal year and increase by about 2% each year.

The bill had 10 other sponsors, including eight Republicans and two Democrats.

GRANT REVIEW NEEDED?

House Minority Leader Mike Ramone, R-Pike Creek, said during the meeting that he wished there was more oversight.

"I love this bill. I think we need to do it. I think we need to have better oversight and more discerning input from a group that would be able to value just how much value the state's getting from some of these non-profits," Ramone said.

Melissa Hopkins, the executive vice president of sector advancement at the Delaware Alliance for Nonprofits, said they aren't sure the committee is necessary or how it improves the current system.

"DANA is taking a neutral approach to this bill," she said. "Whether or not we create another committee to do this work, I think where this is lacking is that we're not really understanding how the process improves by adding more people."

Rep. Valerie Longhurst, D-Bear, the chair of the committee, suggested an amendment to the bill that the controller general's office could help the grant-in-aid committee with some guidelines, and other members of the Administration Committee. Briggs King agreed with the suggestion. The bill will now move to the House floor ready list.



RESOLUTION DECLARES GUN VIOLENCE A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

BY SAM HAUT

A joint resolution to declare gun violence a public health emergency passed along party lines in the Delaware House and Senate Tuesday. In a House voice vote for [Senate Concurrent Resolution 12](#), there was an audible opposition from the Republican side of the aisle. In the Senate it passed 14 to six.

Introduced by Sen. Marie Pinkney, D-Bear, on March 14, the resolution included 16 additional sponsors and cosponsors, all Democrats.

“We have a responsibility to protect the people who elect us, trust us and believe in us,” Pinkney said.

The resolution acknowledges 36 people in Delaware have been shot this year so far and 226 last year.

“I’m asking for us to pull resources forward to save hundreds of lives and years to come,” she said.

She introduced a similar resolution in 2021, [Senate Concurrent Resolution 8](#), which passed the Senate 13 to eight, but was not voted on in the House. Democrats hold large majorities in both chambers.

The resolution states that the legislature will support policies to “make schools safe, confront armed hate and extremism, prevent suicide, and center and support survivors of gun violence.” It does not name any specific program or act. There was no discussion of the resolution in the House.

However, several Republican senators argued lives are also saved by guns, that guns are among many things that imperil the lives of Delawareans, that the opioid crisis is worse than the gun crisis and that violence cannot be contained.

Senate Minority Whip Brian Pettyjohn, R-Georgetown, said that he took issue with several of the whereas clauses in the resolution.

“I think we can all agree that violence and loss of life is something that we should do everything we can to avoid it,” Pettyjohn said. “And whether it’s by gun, whether it’s by knife, whether it’s by a drunk driver on our road, we need to look for facts. We need to look for

proven ways to diminish the number of Delawareans who are dying before their time.”

Pettyjohn said that the fourth clause, which states that gun violence costs about \$557.2 billion annually, is incomplete because many lives are also saved due to gun violence.

He also cited the fifth clause, which states that more guns have been sold during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pettyjohn said he doesn’t think there’s a correlation between an increase in guns sold and gun violence.

Pinkney said that addressing gun violence doesn’t mean they don’t care about other causes of death.

“Today, I’m talking about a public health approach to the violence that results from gun ownership and from gun use,” Pinkney said. “I’m asking for us to put resources behind data gathering. I’m asking for us to put additional resources to the proven violence reduction programs that we already have across this state...I am simply asking that we put money and resources behind stopping people from dying.”

Sen. Dave Lawson, R-Marydel, argued that it’s impossible to stop violence.

“I certainly agree with you,” he said. “We’ve got to stop the unnecessary killings, dying from drugs or what have you in the state of Delaware.

“Can we stop it? No, we can’t. Violence has always been...We’ve always had the violence and more people are killed...from knives and fists than firearms.”

Sens. Kyle Evans Gay, D-Brandywine Hundred/Arden, and Stephanie Hansen, D-Middletown/Newark, asked to be added to the list of co-sponsors.

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DELAWARE HOUSE PASSES BILL TO MAKE EPIPENS MORE AFFORDABLE

EPIPENS BECAME EXPENSIVE

“We have seen how much drug prices have gone up in recent years, forcing many of our constituents to make unthinkable decisions about whether they can afford this life-saving drug,” Williams said. “It costs less than a Capriotti’s bobbie to manufacture an EpiPen, but a two-pack of EpiPens can cost more than a car payment.”

Sen. Sarah McBride, D-Wilmington, said in the release that EpiPens are the only medication that will save the life of a person suffering from anaphylaxis, but they are among the most expensive medications on the market.

“No one who is at risk of a severe allergic reaction should forgo carrying an EpiPen simply because they are too expensive,” she said.

The cost of epinephrine has increased dramatically in the last decade, from \$106 in November 2004 to \$608 in May 2016. After the rights to EpiPen’s were purchased by Mylan in 2007, that company dramatically raised prices, even though the core cost of the pen’s **components** are about \$34.

Delaware isn’t the only place to try to make medication more affordable. As part of the federal **Inflation Reduction Act**, Medicare will put a \$35 cap on the price of insulin.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

BY SAM HAUT

The Delaware House unanimously passed a bill on Tuesday that would require Delaware insurance plans to cover epinephrine auto-injectors for everyone. Today in Delaware, epinephrine is only guaranteed to people 18 years or younger. If **House Bill 54** passes the Senate, all Delawareans would be guaranteed at least one injector in the lowest tier of their insurance. The bill would not take effect until 2024. There is no fiscal note attached to the bill.

HB 24 is sponsored by Kimberly Williams, D-Stanton, along with 19 other sponsors, 18 Democrats and one Republican, Rep. Ruth Briggs King, R-Georgetown. The bill follows 2021’s **House Bill 95**, also sponsored by Williams, which established epinephrine coverage for those 18 years and younger.

Following passage of HB 54, Williams said in a press release that epinephrine shouldn’t cost as much as it does. The drug is used to counteract allergic relations, which kill people by closing airways and making their tongues swell, among other symptoms.



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SENATE VOTES TO EASE WORKLOAD OF FAMILY SERVICE WORKERS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Case workers for the Division of Family Services could soon be getting a reduced workload. The Delaware Senate voted Tuesday to approve a recommendation made by the Child Protection Accountability Commission to drop the number of families that case workers follow from 18 to 12. [Senate Bill 33](#), sponsored by Sen. Kyle Evans Gay, D-Arden, would act on the commission's final report of Nov. 20, 2019.

"It doesn't take a large stretch of the imagination to understand that these workers are under stress and that they are trying to do their best for families," Gay said. "Moving them towards a more standardized and target caseload of 12 cases is going to both help with retention as well outcomes for families who are going through the system."

The bill passed unanimously with no discussion. It will now head to the House floor. There is no fiscal note attached to the bill.

"As someone who volunteers my legal time pro bono working with foster children, I could not do my work for these kids without the tremendous work that the caseworkers are doing for children and families," Gay said.

If caseloads exceed 12 during any fiscal year for a single worker, the [Office of Management and Budget](#) must authorize the use of casual seasonal positions as a temporary way to ensure that caseloads remain within the confines of the law, according to the bill. It now heads to the House.

Also in the Senate Tuesday:

- [Senate Bill 32](#), sponsored by Nicole Poore, D-Delaware City, adds blindness/visual impairment to the list of programs funded to run year-round. Now, the only children who qualify for the programs are those diagnosed with severe mental disability, trainable mental disability, autism, traumatic brain injury, deaf-blindness or orthopedic disability, limited to cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, amputation, arthrogyrosis or contractures caused by fractures or burns. The bill now heads to the House.
- [Senate Concurrent Resolution 14](#), sponsored by Sen. Marie Pinkney, D-Bear, recognized March 14 as "Pi Day" in Delaware. Pinkney said it will bring more attention to the important subject of math. The resolution also passed the House Tuesday.
- [Senate Concurrent Resolution 11](#), sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Bryan Townsend, D-Newark, would recognize March 18, 2023, as National Public Defense Day. It also was passed by Senate and heads to Gov. John Carney for his signature.
- [House Concurrent Resolution 15](#), sponsored by Rep. Stephanie Bolden, D-Wilmington, designates March 14, as "Equal Pay Day" in Delaware. Senate Majority Whip Elizabeth "Tizzy" Lockman, D-Wilmington, said women are disproportionately paid and driven out of the workforce more than their male counterparts. The resolution now heads to the governor.

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HOUSE RESOLUTION WOULD DECLARE ATHEIST DAY IN DELAWARE

BY SAM HAUT

A recently circulated General Assembly resolution would designate March 23 as National Atheist Day in Delaware. Sponsored by Rep. Eric Morrison, D-Glasgow and Sen. Laura Sturgeon, D-Hockessin, the resolution doesn't yet have a bill number. Efforts were not successful to reach Morrison for comment.

Sturgeon said she grew up and remains Catholic, but believes in philosopher Søren Kierkegaard's leap of faith, which he describes as a person having trust in something despite the lack of logic, reason and rationality. The resolution will be an interesting litmus test for the Christian politicians in the legislature, she said.

"It'll be really interesting to see how the openly Christian elected officials, the ones that I'm familiar with more in my chamber in the Senate...respond to this resolution," Sturgeon said. "And I think how they

respond to the resolution will again give insight into why a resolution like this is an important conversation starter...if they're reluctant, then again it only underscores why the resolution is needed."

There's no reason legislators should refuse to pass this resolution, she said. The legislature has no problem having a prayer said and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance before each session.

"Almost 95% of the time it is a Christian prayer. It's overtly a Christian prayer," Sturgeon said. "And nobody balks, and everybody is supportive and everybody bows their head and most, as far as I can tell, say amen at the end....It seems rather stingy for anyone to have a problem supporting one day to honor the many good and loving atheists in the world."

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BILL WOULD REMOVE CONFESSION PRIVILEGES FOR CHILD ABUSE

BY SAM HAUT

A new bill would remove the privileged secrecy that priests have in sacramental confession in cases related to child abuse or neglect. In response, the Diocese of Wilmington put out a statement that calls the idea “non-negotiable.”

House Bill 74 is sponsored by Rep. Eric Morrison, D-Glasgow, with 10 other Democrats and Republican Rep. Dave Wilson, R-Seafood, listed as additional sponsors and co-sponsors.

“The sacrament of confession and its seal of confession is a fundamental aspect of the church’s sacramental theology and practice,” the diocese said. “It is non-negotiable.”

“No Catholic priest or bishop would ever break the seal of confession under any circumstances. To do so would incur an automatic excommunication that could

only be pardoned by the pope himself. It would be a clear violation of the First Amendment for the government to interfere in this most sacred and ancient practice of our faith.

“While we support initiatives to make Delaware a safer place for minors and vulnerable adults, HB 74 would not contribute to such efforts in any meaningful way. Priests are already mandatory reporters under Delaware’s child abuse reporting law in all circumstances other than the sacrament of confession. Additionally, the Diocese of Wilmington’s own internal policies require all clergy to report suspected incidents of child abuse to civil authorities.”

Bob Krebs, communications director for the diocese, said that they do have a lobbyist in the legislature, but haven’t decided what they plan on doing to oppose the bill.



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“There’s nothing that’s off the table,” he said. “We’re exploring all of our options now, but yeah it’s definitely something that’s very serious. We’ve already heard from a number of Catholics in the diocese about their disappointment that this is being proposed. We’re definitely going to be doing our best to make sure that the rights of the Catholics in Delaware are not cast aside in this manner.”

Vermont and **Utah** have both introduced bills that would remove the exemption for sacraments. Several states, including North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas and West Virginia, have passed legislation that doesn’t exempt sacraments from child abuse cases.

Since 1987, 190 similar bills have died in 33 state legislatures, according to the **Associated Press**.





CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT FOCUS OF NEWLY FILED BILL

Wilmington, DE

Catalytic Converters Philadelphia, PA

g37 coupe catalytic converters Magnolia, NJ

BY SAM HAUT

A new bill filed in the General Assembly aims to put a dent in the sale of stolen catalytic converters by changing rules and increasing the penalty for stealing them. **House Bill 78**, sponsored by Rep. Eric Morrison, D-Glasgow, would update the definition of catalytic converters, limit who is able to buy and sell them, increase the penalties for taking catalytic converters and require they be held for longer before being sold. Morrison was not immediately available for comment.

The bill has 10 co-sponsors, including nine Democrats and one Republican, Rep. Mike Ramone, R-Pike Creek. Ramone said he signed on partly because at least two family members and about four people at his fitness centers have had their catalytic converters stolen.

This bill will slow the resale process at salvage yards or other auto parts locations by requiring the buyers to wait 48 hours before paying a seller, he said.

“So a piece doesn’t go to a salvage yard and immedi-

ately gets recycled,” Ramone said. “It has to sit around, gotta log it in.”

The theft of catalytic converters is an issue nationally. The **National Insurance Crime Bureau** says it has increased because the price of the precious metals inside a converter—platinum, palladium or rhodium—has increased since 2020. According to the **Delaware State Police**, catalytic converter theft has increased from 17 in 2016 to 1,071 in 2021.

Ramonesaid his only concern about the bill is that Delaware is such a small state people will take the converters out of state.

“But some of the surrounding states have similar informational processes,” he said. “A crook is always a crook and they’ll find a way to get around whatever we try to do, but at least we’ll slow them down and give the police some tools.”

CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT

Thefts not only cost individuals, but all kinds of other organizations. School bus depots have to be on constant alert to guard against theft.

Red Clay Consolidated School District’s bus depot now has drivers working overnight shifts to deter thefts. So far, they haven’t caught anyone in action, but they’ve found three holes cut in the chain link fence surrounding one of their lots, which likely stopped the thefts, said Kelly Shahan, Red Clay’s transportation manager. She said she’s seen video from another bus yard of the thief laying down on a sled with wheels and propelling himself under a row of buses, snipping 10 converters loose in a few moments.

Ramone believes more people are stealing catalytic converters because of the rocky economy. The House minority leader blames it on runaway inflation, excessive increases in minimum wage and the state not having enough affordable day cares so they can join the workforce. That creates an environment where some people think it’s more beneficial to not work than it is to work, he said.

The subject of catalytic converters is not new to the state legislature. Last year, **House Bill 296** added catalytic converters to the list of items that scrap metal processors make a record of purchasing or otherwise acquiring. The goal of that bill also was to help combat the increase in catalytic converter thefts.

Ramone said he doesn’t know specifically what impact it had, but police are able to get more information when they go to salvage yards.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

DELAWARE HOUSE APPROVES MARIJUANA TAX BILL

BY SAM HAUT

The Delaware House of Representatives on March 9 passed a bill that creates a tax system for legal marijuana in the state. **House Bill 2**, which passed 27-13, is a companion bill to **House Bill 1**, which was passed by the House days before, and would legalize marijuana. HB2 next goes to the Senate. Gov. John Carney **vetoed** a similar bill last year.

Rep. Edward Osienski, D-Newark, is the sponsor for HB 2 and is joined by 30 other senators and representatives, all Democrats. Sen. Nicole Poore, D-Delaware City, is the only new sponsor from the group that sponsored HB 1.

HB 2 would tax marijuana similar to how alcohol is taxed. It would also set up a marijuana commissioner, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate.

FOLLOW THE MONEY TRAIL ON MARIJUANA TAXES

The bill also includes social equity licenses, which would provide marijuana licenses at a 40% discount to applicants who either were convicted of a marijuana offense, were married to someone convicted of a marijuana offense or have lived in a disproportionately impacted area for at least five years.

According to the fiscal notes for the bill, it would cost in 2024 \$1,913,971 in a one-time cost and \$2,201,225 for the general fund. In 2025, it would cost \$1,241,459 for the general fund, \$129,000 for an appropriated special fund and \$2,470,510 for a marijuana regulation fund. In 2026, it would cost \$1,282,608 for the general fund, \$194,000 for an appropriated special fund and \$2,513,782 for a marijuana regulation fund.

According to the fee impact, it would take a minimum of 13 months after the signing of the bill for various fees that the bill will impose to be collected. Marijuana stores, marijuana testing facilities, marijuana cultivation facilities and marijuana production facilities would all pay \$10,000 fees every two years.

The fee impact estimates nothing generated in 2024, a minimum of \$925,000 generated in 2025 and assumes no more money from licenses until they are renewed in 2027.

Money from the fees will be placed into a marijuana regulation fund, which will go to the costs of the marijuana commissioner and the Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement, to cover some costs for the Department of Justice. And 7% of marijuana tax money will be put into a justice reinvestment fund.

The House also approved two amendments to the bill by voice vote, one that makes various technical corrections and another that makes more corrections put forth by the governor, including preventing marijuana from being consumed while at a marijuana testing facility or retail store.



photo link: Christiana High School

CHRISTIANA HIGH SCHOOL			
BOYS TRACK RECORDS	GIRLS TRACK RECORDS		
NAME	YEAR	NAME	YEAR
A. BARRY	11.81	A. BARRY	11.81
A. BARRY	14.20	A. BARRY	14.20
A. BARRY	16.20	A. BARRY	16.20
A. BARRY	18.20	A. BARRY	18.20
A. BARRY	20.20	A. BARRY	20.20
A. BARRY	22.20	A. BARRY	22.20
A. BARRY	24.20	A. BARRY	24.20
A. BARRY	26.20	A. BARRY	26.20
A. BARRY	28.20	A. BARRY	28.20
A. BARRY	30.20	A. BARRY	30.20
A. BARRY	32.20	A. BARRY	32.20
A. BARRY	34.20	A. BARRY	34.20
A. BARRY	36.20	A. BARRY	36.20
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A. BARRY	40.20	A. BARRY	40.20
A. BARRY	42.20	A. BARRY	42.20
A. BARRY	44.20	A. BARRY	44.20
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A. BARRY	50.20	A. BARRY	50.20
A. BARRY	52.20	A. BARRY	52.20
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A. BARRY	60.20	A. BARRY	60.20
A. BARRY	62.20	A. BARRY	62.20
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A. BARRY	72.20	A. BARRY	72.20
A. BARRY	74.20	A. BARRY	74.20
A. BARRY	76.20	A. BARRY	76.20
A. BARRY	78.20	A. BARRY	78.20
A. BARRY	80.20	A. BARRY	80.20
A. BARRY	82.20	A. BARRY	82.20
A. BARRY	84.20	A. BARRY	84.20
A. BARRY	86.20	A. BARRY	86.20
A. BARRY	88.20	A. BARRY	88.20
A. BARRY	90.20	A. BARRY	90.20
A. BARRY	92.20	A. BARRY	92.20
A. BARRY	94.20	A. BARRY	94.20
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A. BARRY	98.20	A. BARRY	98.20
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SCHOOL BUS

BILL LETS DISTRICTS SAY NO TO BUSING SOME CHARTER STUDENTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

A bill giving school districts power to tell charter schools to transport students living within the district passed through the House Education Committee Wednesday. **House Bill 81**, sponsored by Rep. Kim Williams, D-Marshallton, the chair of the committee, could force charters to privately contract their own buses to bring students within a district to the schools.

Rep. Rich Collins, R-Millsboro, said it was important to have a charter leader comment on the bill, which none did in the hearing. Kendall Massett, executive director of the **Delaware Charter Schools Network**, said the association is neutral on HB 81.

“The bill is actually just a clarifying bill to make clear something that is already allowable in the law,” she said.

Delaware code currently allows charter schools to

request their authorizing district to provide transportation to them. For example, **Cab Calloway School of the Arts** and the **Charter School of Wilmington**, located in the same building and authorized by the **Red Clay Consolidated School District**, has its students picked up and dropped off by Red Clay buses.

Unlike districts, which have a 90%/10% state and local split of funding for transportation, charter schools receive 70% of their home count’s vocational schools expenditure in the prior year for transportation costs.

“In Fiscal Year 2023 in New Castle County, whatever New Castle County Vocational School District’s transportation expenditure was, we calculate the per pupil amount, and then charter schools within New Castle County receive that amount per transportation-

eligible students,” said Kim Klein, associate secretary of operations for the Department of Education, during the meeting.

John Marinucci, executive director of the **Delaware School Boards Association**, who has worked in transportation at the state level, said in the meeting that the difference in funding is because charter schools can use hubs, which districts cannot. A hub would be a central point like a park or a shopping center where parents can take students to be picked up by a bus, rather than the students picked up in their neighborhood.

Marinucci and Tammy Croce, executive director of the **Delaware Association of School Administrators**, both said Wednesday that they supported House Bill 81.

“Districts have to use existing transportation services and buses and routes to accommodate the request of charters to pick up the charter kids,” Marinucci said. “Sometimes that doesn’t work, sometimes that can’t happen. In a lot of cases it cannot happen, and therefore, there needs to be the ability to deny that request.”

He pointed out that under the bill, the funding would still go to the charter schools, but they would be the ones responsible for managing buses, drivers, routes and related issues and expenses.

HB 81 was released by the committee with a vote of seven favorable and four on its merits. An on its merit vote means the legislator thought the issue should be debated by the house, but didn’t want to be on the record supporting the bill. It now heads to the House ready list.





EDUCATION LEADERS FIGHT BILLS ADDING DAYS OFF FOR TEACHERS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Bills that would expand the reasons and days for teachers to take days off from work divided legislators and public commenters in the Senate Education Committee Wednesday.

Senate Bill 60, sponsored by Sen. Laura Sturgeon, D-Hockessin, who is chair of the committee, would give teachers and other school employees the same protection to be absent without a loss of pay as other state employees to:

- Appear under subpoena to testify in a matter, unless they are one of the parties in the case or if the trial is directly related to that employee’s work.
- Report to serve on a jury.

The backlash came from heads of educational organizations.

“I’ve been on many juries and many jury duty assignments, and it’s usually a two-week assignment,” said John

Marinucci, executive director of the **Delaware School Board Association**. “Two weeks out of the classroom is a long time, especially now, when we have so many needs in the classroom. Now is not the time to identify ways to help teachers not to be in a classroom.”

Tammy Croce, executive director of the **Delaware Association of School Administrators**, said it was unlawful for the General Assembly to rule on this subject. “Those rules should and currently do fall under the purview of the local boards of education,” she said.

Woodbridge School District Superintendent Heath Chasanov, speaking on behalf of the 19 district superintendents, said he was against the bill for the same reason.

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HEATED DEBATE ENDS IN VOTE TO RAISE TEACHER PAY OVER FOUR YEARS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Defying the demands of the state teachers union, a committee formed to make recommendations on educator pay voted Monday to bring teacher’s starting salary to \$60,000 over four years rather than three. The four-year plan will consist of a 2% salary increase and a flat dollar increase of \$1,875 to the base salary for teachers, nurses and administrators each year until it reaches \$60,000 in the 2027-2028 school year.

The argument over the three- or four-year spread grew heated between Cerron Cade, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the Delaware State Education Association, which represents teachers and other educators. The union wants raises faster, saying the state needs them to compete with rising salaries in other states. OMB wants to spread raises out to be more accommodating to the state budget.

“This is kind of embarrassing at this point, and I’m not really sure where we’re supposed to go from here,” said Rep. Mike Smith, R-Pike Creek during the Public Education Compensation Committee’s meeting. “I’m just going to go not voting because I don’t even feel com-

fortable at this point that we’re gonna get anywhere.”

His comment came after Stephanie Ingram, president of the DSEA, insisted that the committee needs to bump starting salaries to \$60,000 through a three-year timeline. Maryland recently passed legislation that would bring the starting salaries of teachers to \$60,000 by July 1, 2026. Ingram has pushed for months for the committee to recommend the three-year plan in order to keep the state on pace with Maryland’s law.

“Our recommendation needs to be bold. Our recommendation needs to be one that ensures that we keep pace within our region,” Ingram said.

The committee needs to make a decision to put its students and educators first, she said, or the state is going to find itself again in a position where it can’t compete with surrounding states.

“We need to commit to our students’ future and ensure that all of Delaware’s classrooms are as fully staffed and up and running as soon as we possibly can,” Ingram said.



She and Sen. Laura Sturgeon, D-Hockessin, voted against the four-year plan.

“This committee’s charge is to make a recommendation that we think will make our schools attractive to educators...since there’s a shortage of teachers,” Sturgeon said. “It is not to figure out how to pay for it. That is the job of the JFC [Joint Finance Committee].”

Phasing it in over four years means Delaware will continue to languish in hiring and retention, which ultimately hurts students, she said.

Committee member Cade, who is the director of the Office of Management and Budget, adamantly disagreed.

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DOVER SENATOR: BILLS PUSHED THROUGH ASSEMBLY TOO FAST

BY JAREK RUTZ

A Dover state senator says too many bills are being pushed through the General Assembly too quickly and it's not a great way to govern. That doesn't leave time for thoughtful debate or even for the public to talk to their own representatives about how they feel, said Eric Buckson, R-Dover. He was elected to the Senate last November, beating longtime Sen. Colin Bonini after serving on the Kent County Levy Board.

"If you're going to make a change that impacts all Delawareans in a significant way, good or bad, there needs to be an opportunity, I think, for constituents to be brought into the mix and allowed to share their thoughts with their elected officials," Buckson said.

"To say, well they can show on less than 24 hours notice to a hearing, I think it doesn't speak to transparency. It doesn't speak to good governance."

Not everyone agrees.

Sen. Brian Pettyjohn, R-Georgetown, said he had not discussed the issue with Buckson but doesn't think the time it takes for bills to go from committee to floors is too quick.

"There are some pieces of legislation that have to be moved quickly for whatever reason. We have processes in place for that," Pettyjohn said. "It doesn't happen all the time...and that's something about Delaware. If there's legislation that needs to be moved quickly from committee to the floor, it can happen and the committee process is there to garner the public input."

Senate Majority Leader Bryan Townsend, D-Newark, said in a written statement that Democrats will work to pass more legislation.

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LEARNING COLLAB EXTENDS DIRECTOR APPLICATION INDEFINITELY

BY JAREK RUTZ

With only seven applicants for executive director, the Wilmington Learning Collaborative council voted March 9 to extend the application deadline indefinitely. It was to have ended by March 23, with the post being filled by June 1.

The council also discussed whether to alert the current applicants that the deadline was being extended, whether to post the job ad in [Education Week](#) and hiring a nonprofit advisor to help them write bylaws and learn to run meetings well.

The [Learning Collaborative](#) is a partnership created in November 2022 to help Wilmington children in nine city elementary schools serving about 2,8000 across Brandywine, Red Clay and Christina school districts. It hopes to create consistency for students, empower educators, school leaders and communities, and improve

outcomes for students with better test scores, less absenteeism and higher graduation rates. To do that it also plans to connect families with social services to address issues like homelessness, poverty and hunger.

Councilman Don Patton said it was important that the council didn't "hire someone just to hire someone."

"Some of this plays on the number of people who apply and the quality of the people who apply," he said.

Council members also said they wanted more regional and national candidates to apply. Extending the application deadline could help draw regional or even national applicants, Patton said.

Council member Lincoln Hohler, who is also superintendent of Brandywine School District, suggested using some of the Collaborative's \$10 million budget on advertising.

"It's \$2,200 to post in the national top jobs for Ed Week for superintendents position, and it's \$1,395 for a director's position," Hohler said.

The council agreed to consider the option, but did not take a vote.

"It's in the budget that we've started to draft," said councilwoman Jennie Yeow, Red Clay's parent representative who's serving as the interim secretary for the council.

There is a line item for advertising and that's been a part of the conversation among the committee responsible for making the collaborative's budget, Yeow said.

The job description for the executive director position cites an annual salary of \$156,257-\$175,616.

"Can we send a courtesy email to the seven applicants that are already in the system, letting them know that the window's being extended?" Hohler said. "Just having sat in that seat before, you know the updates one second, you get your fingers crossed for that phone call a week or two later, and it's going to be longer than that? It's just a professional courtesy."

Patton said that isn't necessary.

"If we're saying 'until it's filled' that doesn't preclude us from finding applicants in that system now, and interviewing them," he said.

Councilman Dorrell Green, who is also superintendent of the Red Clay Consolidated School District, said since they aren't extending it to a hard date, and the initial application deadline hasn't even passed, a courtesy email isn't necessary.

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MIDDLETOWN STUDENT TO LEAD BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS OF AMERICA

BY JAREK RUTZ

Middletown High School junior Jennae Overton has been selected by the Business Professionals of America to serve as the president of the 2023-2024 State Officer Leadership Team.

Overton believes she was a great candidate for the presidential role because of her involvement in her school newspaper, Future Farmers of America, golf and the Black Student Union.

“Newspaper taught me to be accurate with my information and timely, FFA taught me countless leadership and public speaking skills I will always carry with me, golf taught me to be patient, not only with my surroundings but with myself,” she said, “and the Black Student Union taught me to speak up for what is right always.”

She said those are all important qualities that she should have not only as a president, but as a human being.

With her on the leadership team will be Vice President Kinga Gul from Newark Charter High School, Secretary Manushri Gupta from MOT Charter High School and Anusha Sarwadi from Alfred G. Waters Middle School, who will be the middle school rep. The nominations come after last month’s state leadership conference at the Chase Center in Wilmington.

There, more than 350 high school business students from 20 high schools competed in 52 events in manage-

ment, marketing and communications, digital communications and design, management information systems, business administration and finance. And 260 business students from 20 middle schools statewide competed in 15 events. Students also campaigned for the state officer leadership team.

“In January I submitted my official application and then the ball really started to roll from there,” Overton said. “We had to submit speeches for review, a video showing why we would make a good candidate, as well as a headshot, and there was a candidate meeting where we all got to meet one another and some members of the state staff.”

The team represents the students of Delaware BPA and plans the fall leadership conference as well as the state leadership conference.

“We do so many other things too, like visiting industry partners and representing the Delaware BPA members at the national leadership conference,” she said.



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Sports

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



SALESIANUM WINS 2023 BOYS' BASKETBALL STATE TITLE

added five, and Ethan Hinds with three, as each player connected on three-pointers. The Colonials went 1-11 from the field in the quarter.

In the third quarter, Salesianum took its largest lead of the game of 11 points when they went up 31-20 with a little more than five minutes on the clock. That lead still did not discourage the battle tested Colonials. They went on a 7-0 run to bring the game back within four points of the Sals and even had the game down to two points a few minutes later. However, the Sals were able to hold off the Colonials taking a 39-32 lead into the fourth quarter.

In the fourth quarter, the Sals again would have to fend off the Colonials. Sallies scored the first two points of the quarter, but after that they were outscored 10-4 by William Penn for the next few minutes. Penn was able to bring the score to within one point, 43-42 with 1:32 left. Jaiden Guy was the catalyst in that run, scoring six points in the quarter.

Salesianum's defense stepped up after the William Penn run. They only gave up two points to the Colonials in the last minute of the game. Penn still had a chance to at least tie the game to force overtime, but the defense stepped up again. Down 47-44 with 15 seconds left Penn had possession right at half court. The inbounds went to Guy, but they immediately started screening for Jalen Sample who had already hit three three-pointers in the game, but Sallies did a great job of switching, which forced Sample to retreat backwards. As time ran out, Sample had to put up a shot from around the center quarter logo that missed everything.

Salesianum was able to come away with its first state title in basketball since 2015 with a 48-44 victory. Hynson led the Sals with a game-high 20 points. Thomas was the other Sallies player in double figures, with 14 points hitting 3-4 shots from behind the arc.

For the Colonials, Sample led the way with 13 points with Guy adding 12 and Emmanuel Vonhm had 10.

BY NICK HALLIDAY

Salesianum and William Penn both had tough roads getting through the bracket since neither team was a top seed. Salesianum came in as the No. 5 seed, while William Penn came in as the No.7 seed. Both teams came into this game battle tested and ready, having had to knock off all the higher seeds to get there.

The game was just what you would have expected with two teams who have played some of the toughest schedules throughout the state. Neither team was going to back down or be intimidated by the other. Penn was able to defeat Sallies earlier in the season at home by a score of 75-63. Sallies would avenge that loss in the biggest game of the season.

The game was tied after one quarter at 10-10, but the Sals were able to separate with a big second quarter. Sallies doubled the outcome of the Colonials outscoring them 16-8 in the quarter. Isaiah Hynson led the way with six points while Kareem Thomas

SANFORD DEFEATS URSULINE FOR STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

BY NICK HALLIDAY

In front of a packed house March 10 at the Bob Carpenter Center, Sanford and Ursuline took the court against each other for the first time since 2019. Ursuline was able to defeat Sanford that year, but this year was a different story. The Sanford Warriors were able to hold off Ursuline en route to winning the 2023 DIAA girls' state championship.

Sanford was able to jump out early on Ursuline, scoring the first nine points of the game. However, Ursuline was able to make its own run, reeling off eight straight points of its own. Sanford then outscored 8-2 to close out the first quarter on a deep three by Azareya (Zy) Kilgoe at the buzzer.

In the second quarter, Sanford's Dallas Pierce was able to carry the offense to maintain the lead into half. Pierce was perfect from the floor in the quarter, going 3-for-3 from the floor and 2-of-2 from behind the arc, scoring eight points. Sanford was able to take a 10-point lead into the half by a score of 30-20.

Coming out of the half, Sanford was able to keep the momentum going by expanding its lead to 40-29 with just over two minutes left in the quarter. Ursuline was able to answer back, again outscoring Sanford 7-2 behind a big three from Emma Anthony and a couple of layups from Taylor Brown and Jezelle (GG) Banks, that cut the lead to 42-36 to end the quarter.

Ursuline carried that momentum into the fourth quarter. Anthony got things started by hitting her second three-pointer of the game, right in front of the Ursuline bench that caught her as she fell. A minute later, GG did the same as she drained a three pointer of her own right in front of the bench as well. Those big threes brought the game to within two points at 44-42. After a timeout, Banks drove to the



basket, making a nice scooping layup to tie the game at 44 the first time since the start of the game at 0-0.

After the two teams exchanged buckets to tie the game at 46, Sanford then took over the game to hold off the young Ursuline Raiders. Sanford was able to keep Ursuline scoreless for the last three minutes of the game. As time started to run out, Ursuline had to foul to try to conserve time, but Sanford was clutch from the free throw line going a perfect 8-of-8 to close out the game. Pierce went a perfect 4-of-4 and on her fourth free throw she made the 1,000th point of her career. Sanford scored the last 12 points of the game to close out the victory with a 58-46 victory.

Pierce led Sanford with a game-high 24 points going 8-of-12 from the floor, 3-of-3 from behind the arc and 5-of-5 from the free throw line. When she was asked what the game plan was she said "defense, defense, defense"; however it seems it was her offense with stats like she posted in the biggest game of the year. Jada Snow and Kilgoe also added double figure points for Sanford with 13 and 12, respectively.

Ursuline was led by Banks who scored 15 points, while Brown and Bolden each added eight.

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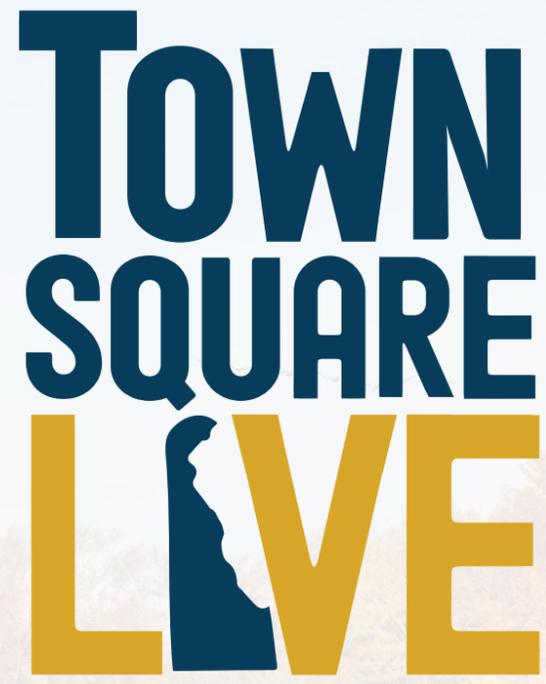
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