

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

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Contents

Community	3
Business	8
Food & Dining	12
Government	14
Education.....	22
Sports	25
Stay Connected	29



Wilmington Called Most Affordable City



Five-Year Property Reassessment Bill



Seven Inducted Into State Baseball Hall of Fame



Community

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



WILMINGTON CALLED AMERICA'S MOST AFFORDABLE CITY

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

“Wilmington, DE, is the cheapest city to live in the U.S.,” some new number crunching has concluded. Scholaroo reached that conclusion in ranking 151 cities in eight qualities to come up with the **Best Places to Live**. Wilmington “has one of the lowest rent costs and the city has no sales taxes,” the site continued. It does have an income tax, and so does Delaware, a factor not considered in the rankings.

The site assigned affordability 18 points out of the 100 it gave out overall, and it includes four factors in affordability: home value (9 points), rent (4.5 points), cost of living (2.25 points for “transportation, gas, etc.”) and sales tax (2.25 points). Delaware does not have a general sales tax, but it does have a **gross receipts tax**.

Wilmington’s average home value is \$302,174, according to **Zillow**, well below the national average of \$346,270. Rents are more difficult to parse. As RentCafe puts it, “The cost of rent varies depending on several factors,

including location, size and quality.” That said, several sites give \$1,506 as the average monthly rent for a Wilmington apartment.

The other 10 cities called most affordable are all in the Rust Belt, plus the border town of Brownsville, TX.

HOW WILMINGTON RANKED OVERALL

Wilmington ranked 54th overall in the list. It is 19th in healthcare, 29th in education, 38th in quality of life, 77th in opportunity, 96th in infrastructure, 113th in the economy and 145th in crime and safety. The No. 1 city on the list is Naples, FL, a retirement haven that ranked dead last in affordability.

The website considered 47 factors, in eight categories. It did not release the sources of its data.

Crime and safety (10 points): property crimes, (1.18 points), robberies (1.18 points), murder (0.59 points), aggravated assault (1.18 points), violent crimes (0.59 points), burglary (1.18 points), larceny (0.59 points),

motor vehicle theft (1.18 points), sexual assault (1.18 points), police officers (0.59 points) and firefighters (0.59 points). Yes, property crimes include burglary and larceny.

Affordability (18 points): home value (9 points), rent (4.5 points), cost of living (2.25 points) and sales taxes (2.25 points).

Economy (10 points): homeownership (2.86 points), poverty rate (1.43 points), median household income (5.71 points).

Quality of life (15 points): weather (1.15 points for the rate of change in the climate of the highest and lowest temperatures in 2022), air quality (2.31 points), water quality (2.31 points), movie theaters (1.15 points), museums (1.15 points), parks (2.31 points), zoos (1.15 points), restaurants (1.15 points), coffee shops (1.15 points) and malls (1.15 points)

Healthcare (10 points): hospitals (4 points), doctors (2 points), nurses (2 points), dentists (1 point) and people without health insurance (1 point)

Education (15 points): high school graduation rate (4.29 points), public schools (2.14 points), tuition at private schools, (2.14 points), public educational expenditures (2.14 points) and student/teacher ratio (2.14 points).

Opportunity (15 points): unemployment rate (3.33 points), self-employment (1.67 points), employment (3.33 points), people with a home office job (1.67 points), commute time on buses (1.67 points) and gender pay gap (3.33 points). Yes, unemployment and employment are two ways to look at the same issue.

Infrastructure (7 points): houses (1.75 points), bridge conditions (3.5 points) and airports (1.75 points).

WHERE YOU CAN HAVE A BLAST AT FIREWORKS ACROSS DELAWARE



BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Most Delaware places known for Fourth of July fireworks and other Independence Day activities have announced their plans. Organizers consistently ask for people to arrive early and leave late, and the Delaware Department of Transportation warns that many events close roads, too. In other words, traffic could be bad.

Dusk is about 9:05 p.m. on the Tuesday, the Fourth, but fireworks could start as late as 9:30. Here's a lineup:

FIREWORKS ON (OR NEAR) THE FOURTH

Bethany Beach says its holiday celebration is “our biggest party of the year.” The fun starts with a 5K run/walk on Sunday, July 2. On the Fourth, there’s a parade at noon featuring floats (the theme is “Sand & Sea in ’23”), bands, motor vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians.

Parade awards will be announced at the bandstand at 7:15 p.m., followed by a concert at 7:30 and the fireworks at dusk.

Dewey Beach gets fireworks on the Fourth, thanks to businessman Alex Pires.

The **Dover Fourth of July Celebration** this year begins on Saturday, July 1, when First State Heritage Park presents the holiday as celebrated in the late 1800s, with lawn games, live music and other activities. There will be walking tours and the Declaration of Independence will be read out from the steps of the Old State House at 2 p.m., just as it was in July 1776. The events on July 4 start at 10 a.m. with working tours of park, and the declaration read again at 2 p.m. Artisans and



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10 MEALS ON WHEELS DELAWARE

food vendors will be operating by 4 p.m. A parade starts at 6 p.m. on Park Drive, and it heads west on Lookerman Street, turns left on State Street and terminates at Water Street. A DJ starts spinning at 6:30 p.m., with fireworks at 9:15 p.m.

The **Hockessin Fourth of July Festival and Fireworks** includes neighborhood relays and a field day in the morning, a parade in the afternoon and the fireworks at dusk on July 4. The fireworks can be seen all over Hockessin, the website says, with the main viewing from Swift Park, Piedmont Baseball Fields, Hockessin Library and Artesian Soccer Fields.

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A POP-UP PARTY AT A NCCCO PARK? NO WAY, POLICE SAY

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

A post-midnight **shooting** at an illegal pop-up party at Glasgow Regional Park has led New Castle County Police to take “a proactive approach” on controlling parties at county parks.

The party apparently involved people leaving a Newark hotel and deciding via Instagram to move to Glasgow Park, even though it was closed, according to Cpl. Michael McNasby, a spokesman for County Police. The victim was a 16-year-old girl, **6ABC reported**.

That party was impromptu, but County Police have seen increasing numbers of parties at county parks being planned on social media, often by out-of-state promoters, he said. Flyers for the parties sometimes promise DJs and alcohol, which are both banned at county parks. Police officers sometimes scan social media for such events, and they have also been tipped off about questionable activities being planned. “Once things get on social media, they can get out of control,” he said.

Such parties have been reported most often at Banning Regional Park, Delcastle Recreational Park, Glasgow Regional Park and Iron Hill Park, he said. All are large (Banning, at 156 acres, is the smallest), and all have multiple amenities. Glasgow and Iron Hill are conveniently located on a big road, Route 896.

“New Castle County parks are a welcoming place for visitors, but our utmost priority is the safety of our community,” McNasby **wrote** in a release warning against pop-up parties promoted on social media. “Please know the rules prior to hosting an event so we all can have a safe and enjoyable summer.

“Due to the way these events are advertised, a large influx of people can converge on a space that is not properly set up to handle such a crowd.” it continued.

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ANOTHER ST. ANTHONY'S FESTIVAL, ANOTHER DEBATE ON PARKING

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

St. Anthony's Italian Festival has been drawing the crowds to Wilmington since the 1970s, and it's likely that there have been parking issues all along.

"St. Anthony's has gone too far for this Festival," Christine Ciccone began her [post](#) on nextdoor.com. "Starting tomorrow we are not able to park on 8th & N. Scott St. for two weeks due to Festival. Where are we suppose to park? We are seniors. Not fair."

Also not the whole truth.

The Wilmington Police Department traffic unit has "worked with residents and festival organizers to set aside parking for residents that would be affected by temporary parking restrictions related to the St. Anthony's Italian Festival," John Rago, deputy chief of

staff for Mayor Mike Purzycki, explained in an email. "The effort was to preserve parking spaces for residents so they would not be taken by festival visitors."

The thread points out the installation of temporary "no parking" signs all day July 7 through July 20—and how they were edited to say 5-9 p.m. Some posts debate residents' ability to "reserve" parking spaces in front of their homes with parking cones or even lawn chairs.

Although most of the posts on the thread were negative, N. du Pont Street resident Paul Puskarczyk said "on the signs not normally blocked by police it says 'Resident Parking Permit required' so I was initially upset but in reality they are trying to help the situation by not having randos park outside our homes."



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St. Anthony's offers free secured parking near Salesianum School, about 1.5 miles away, with continuous shuttle service from 30 minutes prior to opening through 30 minutes after closing daily.

In January, the city revised the system for residential parking permits for its 26 neighborhoods. "Residential Parking Permit holders are exempt from time limits in their residential zones but must obey all other regulations," **according** to the city. "RPPs are digital and use License Plate Recognition technology for enforcement. Residents utilize web-based technology to apply for, receive and renew their RPP."

The festival runs 6-10:30 p.m. Friday, 4-10:30 p.m. Saturday and 2-6 p.m. Sunday.



photo by Mailchimp / Unsplash

The laptop screen displays the Mailchimp homepage. At the top, the Mailchimp logo is visible on the left, and the text "Sales +1(800) 315-5929 Log in" is on the right. The main headline reads "Outperform your last campaign". Below this is a diagram of an email automation flow: "No Abandoned Carts" (Subject: You left something behind) leads to "Float left in their cart", which leads to "Wait 1 hour", which leads to "Gets reminder email". A central graphic shows a yellow float with a pink box and a blue box, with the text "BIG ON FLOATS" and "Don't let this one float away!". To the right of the flow diagram, the text says "Sell more with email automations" and "Generate more orders with our prebuilt automations: remind abandoned cart shoppers, reengage lost customers, or cross-sell your products. Marketers have seen, on average, 4x more orders with our Customer Journey Builder than with bulk emails." A "Sell more" button is located at the bottom right of the text.

Business

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

CARVERTISE OPENS HEADQUARTERS ON WILMINGTON RIVERFRONT



BY BETSY PRICE

A home-grown company that puts advertising on cars celebrated its sleek new headquarters June 15.

Carvertise's operations and dispatch crews moved under I-195 from its warehouse and production facility in Wilmington's Browntown neighborhood to a \$1.2 million, 15,000-square-foot home in the Shipyard Center on the Christina riverfront. The space, renovated in a modern industrial design with whites and grays and a touch of blondish wood beneath exposed black HVAC ducts, bears no resemblance to the outlet store and bank that once occupied at 974 Justison St.

Most importantly, said CEO Mac Mcleod during a Thursday tour of the space, the new offices will allow the company, which wraps cars in vinyl decal material, to continue growing. It's seen a 55% year-over-year sales growth in 2022—Mcleod won't say exactly what reve-

nues are—and the staff has grown from 20 in 2021 and then 30 in 2022, before hitting 55 right now. The building has room for 150, he said.

Carvertise wanted to stay in Delaware, where it began a decade ago when Mcleod co-founded it with Greg Star, while the two were students at the University of Delaware. One of their first customers was ShopRite grocery stores. CEO Chris Kenny remembers Alan Levin of the Delaware Economic Development Office asking him to take a chance on the two. Kenny, who also is owner of Delaware LIVE, did.

"I think the growth is amazing," he said June 15 before the grand opening. ShopRite's headquarters and flagship store now is just across the river from Carvertise's new headquarters.

"They never gave up. They kept pressing and charging

forward," Kenny said. "It's a really nice home-grown success story."

EXPANDING NATIONALLY

Even though Delaware business now accounts for only 5% of the company's revenues, and it boasts national work with Coca-Cola, Netflix, NBCUniversal, 7-Eleven, EA Sports, NASCAR and GlaxoSmithKline, Mcleod said they wanted the headquarters to stay local.

"This area is the heart and soul of our organization, and we're excited to invest and grow in the community that grew and shaped us," Mcleod said in a press statement. "It feels right."

After searching for the right space for a few years, Pettinaro showed the company the riverfront space and Carvertise spent the next 18 months planning the renovation with Mitchell & Associates.

The time spent picking designs and sourcing materials seemed to move like molasses, McLeod said. It was tricky to balance the design so it was elegant but not off-puttingly posh. The two-phase construction flew by, he said.

Pettinaro Construction did the remodel, sharing some of the expenses now. They will be loaded back into company's 10-year lease in a deal referred to as a tenant improvement allowance, Mcleod said.

Phase one was the front of the building, with executive offices down a dark corridor and dispatchers sitting in the windows fronting the building. Phase two was the back two-thirds of the building, with conference rooms and offices running along one wall and offices on the other. The space between them holds desks.

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FRIENDLY'S IN BRANDYWINE TOWN CENTER CLOSING

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

The Friendly's restaurant in the Brandywine Town Center is closing, James Phipps' post in the Take Back Claymont group on Facebook read, and the first two responses were simply "Wow" and "Whattttt."

The news was confirmed an hour later by Betty Baudoux. "I stopped there tonight...[and wished] the hostess and waitress well. They told me and a friend they were closing due to staffing problems. Nobody wants to work. Can you believe it. What's wrong with this country?"

The restaurant's last day, according to the thread, was Friday, June 16.

DelawareLive.com called the restaurant and did not receive a call back. Management of the shopping center referred queries to the restaurant. An email to the public relations agency listed on Friendly's corporate site bounced back. An email to JAMCO Interests—the private equity group that is the majority owner of

Amici Partners Group, which owns Friendly's—was not immediately returned.

"Friendly's has gone through a number of ups and downs throughout the chain's lengthy history, from lawsuits to family feuds and two bankruptcy filings," **Insider** reported in 2020. "At the chain's height, there were 850 Friendly's restaurants in the United States. Now, there are just 138 restaurants remaining."

Now there are even fewer. A map on **FriendlysRestaurants.com** lists only about 30, all in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The map lists locations in the Dove Run Shopping Center near Middletown, Lantana Square near Hockessin and Peoples Plaza near Glasgow. There used to be Friendly's locations on Kirkwood Highway and in Concord Mall. The Friendly's on Route 896 in Newark closed early in 2022, **delawareonline.com** reported.

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PAID LEAVE HASN'T STARTED, BUT CHANGES ALREADY SUGGESTED

BY JAREK RUTZ

Proposed laws shifting who deals with appeals to the state's new paid leave program, which starts in 2026, drew little comment in Wednesday's Senate Health and Social Services Committee meeting.

Senate Bill 178, sponsored by Sen. Sarah McBride, D-Wilmington and committee chair, makes technical changes to private plans under the **Family and Medical Leave Program**. The new program requires Delaware businesses with 25 employers or more to join the program, which is paid for by a .08% tax on employee wages, split between the employee and the employer. Businesses that already have a paid leave program must apply to be exempted from the state program.

When it starts in January 2026, workers will be allowed to apply to take up to 12 weeks of paid leave for child-births, caring for parents and other family situations. Benefits are capped at 80% of an employee's salary or \$900 per week, whichever is less.

SB 178 revises the appeal process for when the Department of Labor denies an application from a business, so that the hearing is conducted by the secretary of the department instead of the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Appeal Board.

The Appeals Board conducts hearings on denials of individual claims for benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Program. Individuals will not be eligible for these benefits until January 1, 2026. That means the board does not need to be established in 2023, and the expertise members need is in areas other than those needed for appeal decisions.

"The process now will be staff within the Paid Leave Division will make the initial determination and the appeal would then go to the secretary instead of a board," McBride said, "and then further the entity would have the ability to appeal to the Superior Court from the secretary's determination."

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Providing Big Support For Delaware's Small Businesses



business.delaware.gov

photo by Spencer Davis / Unsplash



Food & Dining

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



A MAC-AND-CHEESE FACEOFF; BAR REVERIE OPENS; MONTY'S 'CLAW'

BY PAM GEORGE

Dining in Delaware is far from dull. The state—aka the Small Wonder—boasts James Beard Award nominees, reality cooking show stars and a supportive network of chefs, restaurateurs and industry associations. So, if you're in the culinary doldrums, it might be because you haven't kept up on the tasty gossip.

We're here to spill the tea.

MAC ATTACK ON 'BEAT BOBBY FLAY'

Delaware's Hari Cameron accepted the challenge to beat celebrity chef Bobby Flay on the Food Network. Cameron and his brother Orion own **Grandpa Mac** on Coastal Highway between Lewes and Rehoboth Beach, which specializes in pasta dishes. The creative Delaware chef won the heat against the other contestant, who left more than a few bones in her sea bass, in the June 14 show. Consequently, Flay let Cameron select the dish

for the final round, and he chose—you guessed it—mac-and-cheese.

Cameron made his noodles from scratch, mixed them with seven cheeses and topped them with toasted breadcrumbs and pancetta. Flay used dried pasta, and he rehydrated porcini and portabella mushrooms.

In the end, the judges felt Cameron's version lacked seasoning. He couldn't disagree more. "I thought it was perfect."

Cameron is becoming a familiar face on TV. He was also on "Snack VS Chef" on Netflix. We're guessing it won't be his last appearance.

GROTTO PIZZA UNVEILS SUMMER MENU

Grotto Pizza also has a signature dish and it's served with a swirl. But the restaurant group that started in Rehoboth Beach also offers seasonal menus to reflect the culinary trends.

Recent additions include a flatbread topped with pulled chicken in a Korean barbecue sauce and chicken salad—a Delaware staple—on brioche or an iceberg wedge. Cocktails include Stateside Springwater made with Stateside Urbancraft Vodka, hand-squeezed lemon and lime, club soda and a splash of Sprite.

NEW NORTH OF THE CANAL

David Dietz of **BBC Tavern** fame opened **Bar Reverie** on June 15 and he can easily keep tabs on both—the outdoor covered patios practically kiss. The new restaurant serves coffee and pastries from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. Put your diet on hold: Gretchen Sianni, formerly of De La Coeur Café et Pâtisserie in Wilmington, is working the whisk and mixer.

In the evening, the wine takes center stage—indeed, the 24-tap temperature-controlled cuvenee system is the focal point behind the bar. All told the restaurant has more than 350 wines, and the preservation system allows bartenders to pour even pricy bottles by the glass without fear of wasting the rest.

Highlights from the first dinner menu include the tomato tart with a cheesy, flaky crust; deviled eggs topped with caviar; crispy grilled snapper; and a 10-ounce steak with Bordelaise and gratin dauphinoise (sliced potatoes baked in cream).

MONTY'S MOMENTOUS MONTH

To the south, Steve "Monty" Montgomery is a partner in some of the most successful establishments on the Culinary Coast, starting with The Starboard. In the past month, his experienced team has opened not one but three restaurants.

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photo by Charlie Megginson

LEGISLATIVE HALL

Government

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



FIVE-YEAR PROPERTY REASSESSMENT BILL ON WAY TO CARNEY

BY JAREK RUTZ

After decades of no regular property assessments, all three Delaware counties likely will be required to conduct them every five years, after the current reassessment forced by a court order ends in 2025.

House Bill 62, sponsored by Rep. Madinah Wilson-Anton, D-Newark, passed the Senate Tuesday. It would require counties to reassess real property values at least once every five years, starting with the next reassessment. The bill now goes to Gov. John Carney for his signature before becoming law.

Property reassessments have not been done in New Castle County since 1983, in Kent County since 1987 and in Sussex County since 1974. Kent County will finish its reassessment first, by the end of 2024, with New Castle and Sussex counties having a deadline of the end of 2025.

“An absence of consistent and routine property reassessments from one end of our state to the other has played a major role in the funding disparities and socioeconomic inequities that have been hallmarks of Delaware’s public education system for decades,” said Sen. Elizabeth “Tizzy” Lockman.

One reason property values are important, as is updating them regularly, is because they dictate how much a resident pays in local taxes, which affects school funding. Lockman said it’s crucial to prevent residential property tax and education funding systems from falling further and further out of alignment with reality. By establishing a clear timeline for reassessment, Lockman said Delaware can ensure that its assessed values are accurately reflected, promoting fairness and equity throughout the state. She pointed out that neighboring

state Maryland requires reassessments every three years and Pennsylvania conducts them annually.

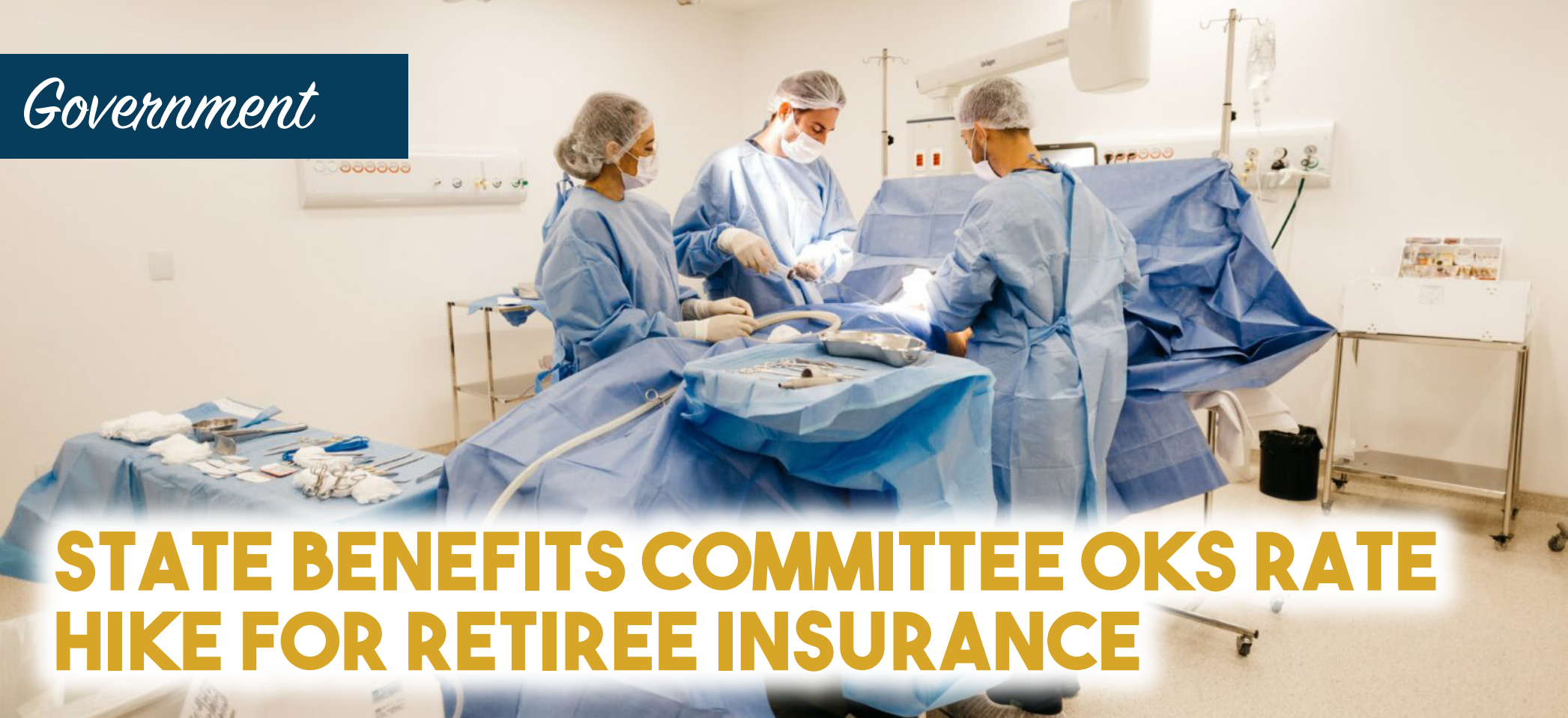
Lockman read a statement from the Delaware Association of Counties, which said “the counties collectively see the inherent value and regularly reassessing property values in accordance with industry standards in order to avoid costly legal suits and the more expensive boots-on-the-ground method of reassessment that is currently underway in all three counties.”

Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, said he supports the bill. “It’s a real clear statement to recognize that Delaware has a duty and obligation based on the laws that we currently have in our constitution to ensure that we don’t go down the path that led us to where we are today,” he said. The current system of reassessment is flawed, he said.

Buckson also cited the **lawsuit** that “forced the state’s hands” into conducting reassessments for the first time in decades. The NAACP of Delaware and Delawareans for Educational Opportunity filed a lawsuit against the state in 2018, claiming the lack of consistent reassessments had denied adequate funding for Delaware schools, particularly those serving disadvantaged students. Among other requirements, the decision of that lawsuit required Delaware to conduct property reassessments.

“Nobody wants to do this, but it is what it is,” Buckson said. “I did talk to the counties, Kent County specifically, and they recognize the five years has been a fair approach.”





STATE BENEFITS COMMITTEE OKS RATE HIKE FOR RETIREE INSURANCE

BY SAM HAUT

The State Employee Benefits Committee unanimously approved raising the rate retirees pay for their Special Medicfill insurance plan. The committee in May voted to raise Medicfill rates by 5% starting Jan. 1, 2024, through June 30, 2024. On Tuesday, though, the vote was to approve a specific dollar increase.

The increased rates will lead to no change for those who retired on or prior to July 1, 2012, as the state is paying for the entire plan of those members, costing the state \$482.34 a month for the Special Medicfill plan with prescriptions and \$273.46 a month for a Special Medicfill plan without a prescription.

For pensioners who retired after July 1, 2012, those with a prescription would have to pay an additional \$24.10 a month on average and those without a pre-

scription would have to pay an additional \$13.66 a month on average.

Claire DeMatteis, secretary of the Department of Human Resources, said that 65% of the Medicare pensioner population won't see an increase as they don't pay anything for coverage because the state covers the cost for those retirees.

The SEBC on Tuesday also discussed Highmark's Custom Care Management Unit. It is a program that helps people with chronic diseases manage those illnesses. In Delaware, members are slightly older and at a higher risk than national averages. The average age for those in Delaware is 34.5, compared to the national average of 34.4.

Dr. Mark Jacobson, a medical director with Highmark, said that there's about \$850 per member per month in savings for people who use the case management program. Those who use the Transitions of Care Program, another case management program for high risk, high cost admissions see a \$964 per member per month decrease in costs, he said. Both of those numbers came from an internal report by Highmark which compared people who similar geography, socioeconomic status, gender, and age, and compared the costs of medical care for someone who was on the program and someone who wasn't.

Those in the Custom Care Management Unit have more chronic conditions than the average, with 38.6% of those on the plan having two or more chronic conditions compared to Highmark's average of 29%.

In the fourth quarter of 2022, 11 % of those insured by the state were in the Custom Care Management Unit. That's up from 9.9% for the fourth quarter of the 2021 fiscal year, and up from the average of 4%.

The number of people in the Custom Care Management Unit that nurses were able to reach and talk to, called the engagement rate, was 88.6% for the fourth quarter of the 2022 fiscal year, compared to 83.9% the year before. Jacobson said that percentage is higher than they expected. When Custom Care Management Units were first developed, they expected the percent engaged to be between 4% to 5%.





THREE BILLS ADDRESSING CHILD ABUSE ISSUES PASS HOUSE

BY SAM HAUT

Three bills that change Delaware law as it relates to child abuse passed the House, with some sparking more contention than others.

House Bill 182, sponsored by Rep. Krista Griffith, D-Fairfax, would change child abuse in the third, second and first degree to child abuse in the fourth, third and second degree respectively; better define each degree of child abuse; and change the new third degree child abuse to a class D felony from a class G felony. Someone convicted of a class G felony could serve up to two years in prison, while someone convicted of a class D felony could serve up to eight years in prison.

House Bill 183, sponsored by Griffith, would update the definition of child endangerment to include intentionally giving a child a controlled substance that the

child isn't prescribed. The bill adds additional penalties depending on the harm to a child due to exposure to controlled substances, with a child's death leading to a class B felony, serious physical injury leading to a class C felony, and physical injury leading to a class D felony.

House Bill 186, sponsored by Rep. Cyndie Romer, D-Newark, would remove a requirement that children—even older children who abuse younger children—be placed on the sex offender registry and have judges decide whether to place a child on the registry.

None of the bills require a fiscal note.

HB 182

An **amendment** to HB 182, sponsored by Rep. Sean Lynn, D-Dover, would have decreased the bill's mandatory minimum sentencing time from five years to three

years for anyone who commits second degree child abuse. Lynn said the mandatory minimum sentencing in the bill is unjust and unfair.

“Minimum mandatory jail sentences undermine our commitment to justice and fairness. They prevent judges from looking at individuals' backgrounds and the circumstances of his or her offenses in sentencing determinations,” Lynn said. “These laws, as we've learned over the years, disproportionately impact people of color and have caused our prison population to soar. It leads to overcrowding and exorbitant costs of incarceration to our taxpayers.”

Griffith called the amendment unfriendly, a signal she didn't support it, and the amendment failed 6 to 33. The bill passed the House 39 to 1 and now heads to the Senate for consideration.

HB 183

Griffith said HB 183 hopes to address issues of children unintentionally breathing a substance such as fentanyl.

“Just a child breathing in fentanyl in a vent of a car can result, and has resulted, in a child's death. Serious physical injuries are happening and deaths are happening to children,” Griffith said. “This bill seeks to address that by imposing criminal charges should a child die, suffer a serious physical injury or suffer a period of altered mental or physical state because of the child's exposure to substances not prescribed by a physician.”

An **amendment** to the bill, sponsored by Griffith, would clarify that there has to be a connection between a child's exposure to a controlled substance and some kind of physical or mental injury to that child.

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BILL COULD STACK DEMS ON WILMINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD

BY JAREK RUTZ

A bill that could sway the political power of the Wilmington Housing Authority is moving on after little discussion in the Senate Housing and Land Use Committee Tuesday.

Senate Bill 177, sponsored by Sen. Elizabeth “Tizzy” Lockman, D-Wilmington and committee chair, deals with the partisanship of the nine commissioners of the **Wilmington Housing Authority**. If passed, more than five commissioners or interim commissioners of the agency could be of the same political party, something that is currently banned.

“One of the things that is evident and is a goal of ours is to maintain a strong board, a knowledgeable board and a board that is engaged and able to come to meetings,” said Jane Vincent, chair of commissioners.

Part of the challenge in doing that, she said, is when the board has a vacancy, it often takes a lot of time for an appointment to be made to fill the open spot.

“At times it’s because of coordination between the appointing members,” she said, “but almost always the political affiliation is an issue. With certainly the city being majority Democrat, sometimes it’s very hard to find someone who does not meet a political affiliation.”

This, she said, has resulted in the board struggling to make quorum, being able to conduct business and delays to resolutions that come before the board each month. Having a quorum means the board has enough members present to hold a formal binding vote. Often, a simple majority of board members being present constitutes a quorum.

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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)
)
 v.) Criminal Action No. 23- 61-UNA
)
 ROBERT HUNTER BIDEN,)
)
 Defendant.)

INFORMATION

The United States Attorney for the District of Delaware charges that:

COUNT ONE

On or about October 12, 2018, through on or about October 23, 2018, in the District of Delaware, the defendant Robert Hunter Biden, knowing that he was an unlawful user of and addicted to a controlled substance as defined in Title 21, United States Code, Section 802, did knowingly possess a firearm, that is, a Colt Cobra 38SPL revolver with serial number RA 551363, said firearm having been shipped and transported in interstate commerce.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(g)(3) and 924(a)(2) (2018).

FILED

JUN 20 2023

DAVID C. WEISS
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

By: *David C. Weiss*

BY BETSY PRICE

Hunter Biden, son of President Joe Biden, has been charged with two misdemeanor tax offenses and one felony firearm offense by the **United States attorney for Delaware**. Hunter Biden, who’s been the focus of a national uproar about his finances and the contents of his laptop, had agreed to enter a plea of guilty to the tax offenses and enter a pre-trial diversion agreement about the firearm charge.

Hunter Biden is charged with two violations of failure to pay income tax and one violation of unlawful possession of a firearm by a person prohibited. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 12 months in prison on each of the tax charges and a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison on the firearm charge. Many cases like this are settled without jail time. The press release from U.S. Attorney David C. Weiss points out that sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties and are determined by a federal district court judge based on sentencing guidelines and other factors.

The court records show Hunter Biden received taxable income in excess of \$1,500,000 annually in calendar years 2017 and 2018. Despite owing in excess of \$100,000 in federal income taxes each year, he did not pay the income tax due for either year. The court records do not name the source of the income.

According to the firearm information, from on or about Oct. 12, 2018 through Oct. 23, 2018, Hunter Biden possessed a firearm despite knowing he was an unlawful user of and addicted to a controlled substance.

A pretrial diversion program is designed to resolve a criminal case and usually involved the defendant avoiding jail time and a criminal conviction. Hunter Biden’s pre-trial diversion agreement on the firearm charge will be dealt with at a proceeding to be scheduled by the assigned United States District Court judge, the press release said.

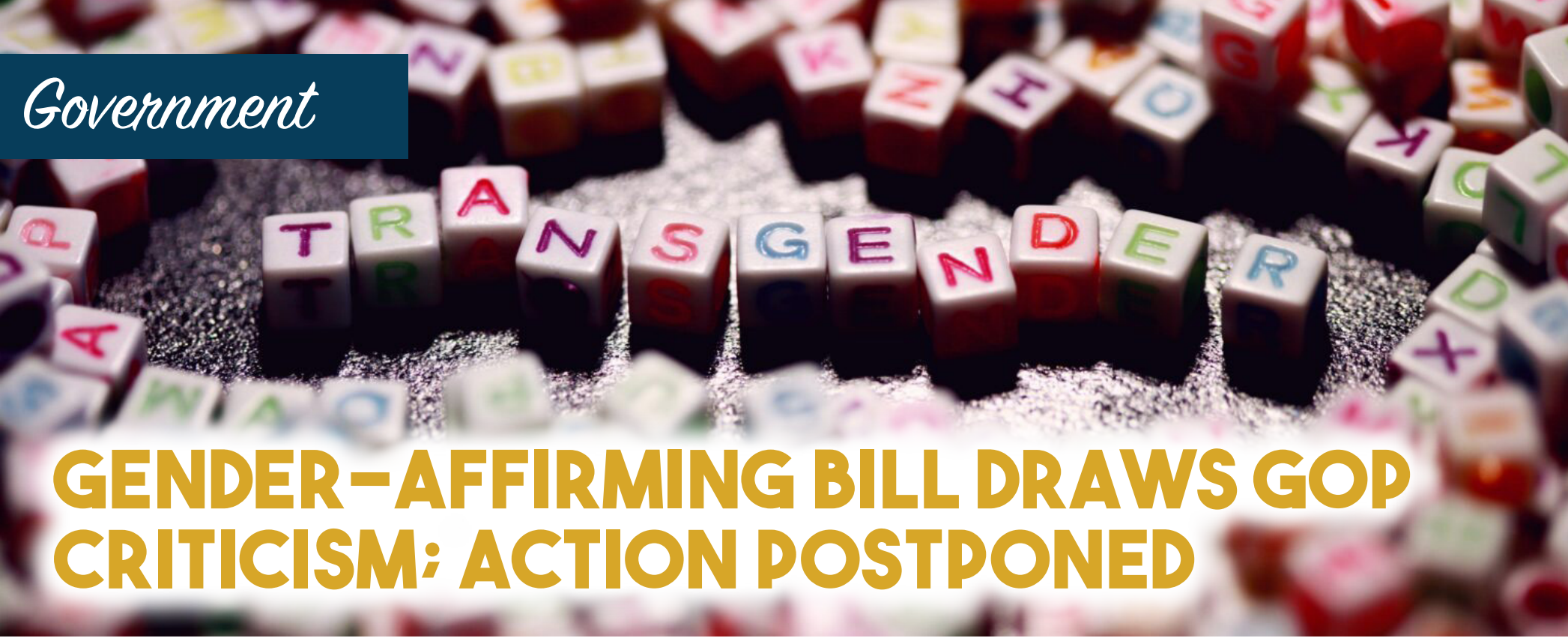
U.S. Sen. Chris Coons, a Democrat, said the charges come at the end of a “five-year-long thorough investigation by a Trump-appointed U.S. Attorney.”

“From press accounts, I am encouraged that Hunter is taking responsibility for his actions, paying the taxes that he owes, and preparing to move on with his life,” Coons said.

Sen. Tom Carper, a Democrat, later echoed Coons’ comment, saying the investigation was “free from political interference.”

“This is how the rule of law works,” Carper’s statement said. “Hunter Biden is a private citizen and I am encouraged that he is taking responsibility for his actions.”





GENDER-AFFIRMING BILL DRAWS GOP CRITICISM; ACTION POSTPONED

BY SAM HAUT

A bill introduced June 15 adding protections for gender-affirming care in Delaware has drawn criticism from Republicans for the impact it would have on parental rights.

House Bill 230, sponsored by Rep. Deshanna Neal, D-Elsmere, would protect medical providers in Delaware who provide gender-affirming care from being prosecuted by other states that ban the practice. Neal said in a statement June 16 that the bill will not go in front of a committee this year.

“I want to be clear that I filed this bill to begin the conversation and open a dialogue on the issue,” said Neal, who uses they/them/their pronouns. “I will not be pushing the bill forward in committee this year. Instead, I want to spend the break building support and educating people about this very critical—and very misunderstood—issue.”

The General Assembly’s legislative session lasts two years. Any bill introduced this year can be heard next year, too, without being reintroduced. If it fails then, the bill must be reintroduced for the next session.

HB 230 defines gender-affirming care as:

- Suppressing the development of endogenous secondary sex characteristics.
- Aligning the patient’s appearance or body with their gender identity.
- Alleviating someone’s symptoms of gender dysphoria which cause significant distress.
- Finding ways to integrate someone’s gender identity, reduce distress, and increase family acceptance, all in developmentally appropriate ways.

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SPIEGELMAN TALKS NAZIS IN OPPOSING LGBTQ PANIC DEFENSE BILL

BY SAM HAUT

A bill that would ban the use of the LGBTQ panic defense in Delaware courts passed the state House June 15, but not before one representative brought up Jews and Nazi Germany.

House Substitute 2 for House Bill 142, sponsored by Rep. Eric Morrison, D-Glasgow, would not permit a defendant to claim they reacted violently when they realized that someone else was of a certain sexual orientation or gender identity.

Before it passed, Rep. Jeffrey Spiegelman, R-Townsend/Hartly, offered an **amendment** that would have changed the bill to include anyone who is a member of a protected class instead of only being based on someone's sexual orientation, or gender identity. Spiegelman said he'd withdraw his amendment if Morrison could promise him that there won't be a Jew defense in Delaware.

"In Nazi Germany there was a Jew defense in the 1930s," Spiegleman said. "If you're talking to somebody and it turns out that they are a Jew, you are allowed to use violence against them. And the courts backed that up again and again in Nazi Germany. Promise me that that will never be set in this country. And it will never be used in Delaware. And I'll scrap this amendment right now."

Spiegelman said the amendment should be made so Delaware would be protecting all residents.

"There should not be one protected class that gets the benefit of being protected from this kind of thing," Spiegelman said. "It should cover the entirety of all the protected classes that we as Delawareans in our position as state officials have decided to cover."

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Education

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS LAW AIMS TO COMBAT TEACHER SHORTAGE

BY JAREK RUTZ

The most recent plan to attract teachers to Delaware schools was applauded in the Senate Education Committee Wednesday. **House Bill 138**, sponsored by Rep. Kim Williams, D-Marshallton and chair of the House Education Committee, addresses the ongoing national teacher shortage.

The legislation establishes a new tool to recruit and retain educators through an apprenticeship pilot program. This model will build off of grow-your-own educator strategy and year-long teacher residency models, which have become more popular throughout Delaware schools as a way to grow the teacher pipeline.

Five states have already introduced legislation to implement teacher apprenticeships and 17 states are

exploring or implementing this model, said Sen. Laura Sturgeon, D-Hockessin and Senate Education Committee chair.

“It is our understanding that in the 2023-24 school year, Appoquinimink School District and Wilmington University are planning to pilot this approach,” she said.

Delaware will receive \$337,102 from a U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeship grant on May 1, 2023. “This grant includes \$150,000 that will pay for the pilot between Appoquinimink School District and Wilmington University,” Sturgeon said. “Delaware Department of Labor will use the remaining amount for other apprenticeship programs.”

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AWARDS GALA RAISES \$343,000 FOR WILMINGTON HBCU WEEK

BY JAREK RUTZ

An event this month raised \$343,000 for Wilmington's 2023 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Week. The 4th Annual HBCU Week Awards Gala, held June 9 at the Hotel Dupont in downtown Wilmington, raised money to support the city's annual **HBCU Week initiative**. The dates for this year's HBCU week have not been announced, but more info is expected to be released soon here.

HBCU Week is designed to expose high-school aged youth to the proud legacies and historical significance of HBCUs and encourage students to further their education at **one** of the more than 100 such institutions across the United States.

The gala is the start of Wilmington's yearly celebration of HBCUs leading to HBCU Week and the a college fair in September, with thousands of young students exploring their academic options after high school. This

fair is unique in that most of the participating colleges engage in an on-the-spot acceptance process. If the student attends with a copy of their transcript and a report of their SAT/ACT score, they could be admitted into college right away and potentially offered a scholarship award. Since 2017, more than 6,000 on-the-spot acceptances have been offered and more than \$60 million in scholarships have been awarded from the HBCU admission staff and corporate partnerships.

Howard University's Nia Anderson and Kayla Bell-Davis, along with North Carolina AT&T State University's Simone Josey and Jazmine Harrison, were honored as scholars at the fundraising gala. Each of them had received a \$40,000 Future of Chemistry Scholarship in 2019 and have now graduated with honors from their universities.

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Sports

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



BY NICK HALLIDAY

Jake Gelof, formerly of Cape Henlopen high school now at University of Virginia, is heading back to the College Baseball World Series (CWS) in Omaha.

After winning a state championship at Cape Henlopen in 2018, Gelof transferred to IMG Academy to finish out his high school baseball career. At IMG, he earned a scholarship to play his college baseball at the University of Virginia. In his freshman year at Virginia, Gelof and his Cavalier teammates earned a trip to the CWS in Omaha. The Cavaliers went 1-2 in Omaha and had an early exit.

However, Gelof was outstanding. He went 7-of-12 at the plate hitting two doubles with two RBI and scored three runs. That is a stat line that will be hard for him to duplicate this year as he returns to Omaha with his Cavaliers teammates.

FORMER CAPE SLUGGER HEADING BACK TO COLLEGE WORLD SERIES

UVA defeated Duke in the NCAA super regional on the last play of the game to punch their ticket back to Omaha.

Gelof now is a junior and has emerged as the power hitter for the Cavaliers. Gelof became the all-time Virginia home run leader April 11 with his 38th career home run, a solo shot in the fifth inning against Richmond. Last season, he hit 21 home runs and was the first college player in the nation to reach 14 home runs.

This season, he already hit 23 home runs to lead the Cavaliers again. He also holds the all-time record for UVA with five home runs in NCAA tournament games.

The No. 7 Cavaliers opened the CWS Friday night as they took on No. 2 Florida. The game aired on ESPN and stats can be followed at www.VirginiaSports.com.



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ACC FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR

TOMMY
Men's Swimming & Diving

FORMER SALESIANUM ATHLETE NAMED TOP ACC FRESHMAN SWIMMER

BY JASON WINCHELL

Tommy Janton's freshman season at the University of Notre Dame ended with a bang. The Salesianum School alum was named the Atlantic Coast Conference Freshman of the Year. Janton, who graduated from Sallies in 2022, set program records for the Fighting Irish in both the 100- and 200-yard backstroke. He also was part of Notre Dame's 200-yard medley relay team that also set a school record. His times in the backstroke at the 2022 U.S. Toyota Open qualified him for the Olympic Trials next year.

In addition to his conference honors, Janton was named Notre Dame's Rookie of the Year. He is a member of the 2023 All-ACC Academic Team and an honorable

mention all-American in the 100 and 200 back.

Janton swam for the Wahoos at the Western YMCA near Newark. While he was at Salesianum, the Sals won four consecutive state championships, and Janton was a key member of those teams. He won two individual events as a sophomore, junior and senior, and a part of two winning relay teams all four years.

An economics major, Janton also earned a place on the ACC's all-academic team this year.

Notre Dame finished 18th this year in the NCAA Swimming and Diving Championships in Minneapolis, their highest placement ever.



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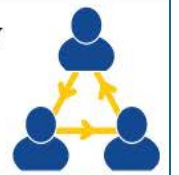
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SEVEN INDUCTED INTO STATE BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

the Colonials to a berth in the 1989 state title game and set a school record for stolen bases in the process, for Hall of Fame head coach Mel Gardner. He also was an All-State football player and medaled twice at the state wrestling tournament. During the summers, he led his Stahl Post #30 American Legion team to two state titles and earned the 1989 Don Kimsey Award as the state legion Player of the Year.

He didn't have to go far to continue his stellar baseball career. While at Wilmington University in 1990-93, he was a four-year starter, a team captain, and led his teams to the 1992 NAIA World Series, three regional titles and three conference championships for Hall of Fame head coach Jim Sherman. He earned all-conference honors three times and was a three-time NAIA All-American, earning second team honors in 1993. Brainard was then drafted in the 25th round by the Philadelphia Phillies and started for the 1993 Batavia Phillies, later earning the Minor League Catcher of the Camp award in 1994 spring training.

His coaching career was just as impressive. He was named head coach of his alma mater, Wilmington University, at the tender age of 23 and led the Wildcats for 10 seasons from 1995-2004. He led the Wildcats to 350 victories, seven conference or section titles, three regional championships and a 1995 Region 8 title that resulted in a berth in the NAIA World Series. He was named conference Coach of the Year seven times, regional Coach of the Year three times, and was a finalist for NAIA Coach of the Year twice. He then moved on to the head coaching position at West Chester (Pa.) University for two seasons in 2005-06 and led the NCAA II Golden Rams to two Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference East titles. The 2006 season was a special one as WCU captured the PSAC overall title and the NCAA East Region championship, and earned a berth in the NCAA II World Series, a first for the school. He was named a finalist for NCAA National Coach of the Year in 2006.

BY JASON WINCHELL

On Wednesday, June 14, at Frawley Stadium, the Delaware High School Baseball Hall of Fame inducted seven new inductees. They honored Matt Brainard, Bill Brakeley, Rob Bryson, Brian Lesher, Johnny Morris, Mark Romanczuk and Mark Rubini in front of a great crowd at Frawley.

The Delaware Baseball Coaches Association began work on forming a Hall of Fame in November of 1992. With the induction of the Class of 2023, we will now have 163 members (156 individual members along with seven teams) from all segments of the baseball community in Delaware. A plaque honoring the inductees can be seen on the concourse on the first base side of the press box at Frawley Stadium. See below for the profiles for the class of 2023 inductees.

MATT BRAINARD

As a versatile all-league selection at William Penn High School, an All-American standout at Wilmington University, and as a highly-successful coach at both his alma mater and West Chester (PA), Matt Brainard was the epitome of a local boy success story. At William Penn, Brainard was an All-Blue Hen Conference selection who led

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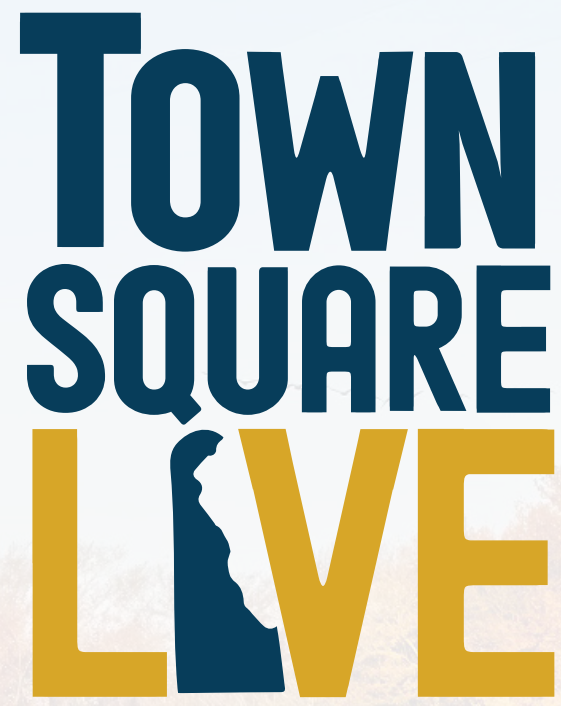
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