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photo link: Delaware Botanic Gardens at Pepper Creek



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photo link: Longwood Gardens

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Seaford, EV Bills Pass House



Longhurst is New House Speaker



Graduates Win Tuition Money

photo link: Marcia Reed



Headlines

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SEAFORD, EV BILLS PASS HOUSE, SO GOP VOTES TO OK BOND BILL

BY SAM HAUT

Republicans returned to the House Friday to vote in favor of the bond bill after the House passed the change to Seaford's charter and another bill on electric vehicles.

House Substitute 1 for House Bill 121, sponsored by Rep. Daniel Short, R-Seaford, will approve a charter change for the town of Seaford allowing an LLC that owns a business in town to have a single vote in municipal elections, even if the owner lives outside the city. The bill passed 34 to 6 and now makes its way to the Senate for consideration.

The House Republicans had walked out Thursday after the Seaford bill failed when they were under the impression that it had the votes to pass. It meant there were not enough votes to pass the capital improvement budget bill. After Friday's vote, Minority Leader Mike Ramone, R-Pike Creek, said he appreciated House Bill 121 passing.

"We were very grateful that our colleagues were able to rerun the bill despite some of the antics that went on within the last 24 hours," Ramone said. "And we're also very grateful for those of you who chose to support... Rep. Short's initiatives, very kind and very much appreciated."

Speaker of the House Rep. Pete Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach, apologized after Ramone's comments.

"I would like to offer you guys an apology because I messed something up yesterday," Schwartzkopf said. "We should have never had our organization meeting during caucus time. We should have come in earlier, that's my call, my mistake. We should have done it on either Wednesday or Thursday before caucus. I'll accept that responsibility."

The House also passed 21 to 20 **House Bill 123**, sponsored by Ramone, which would require the Department

of Natural Resources and Environmental Control to get approval from the legislature before it restricts the sale of gas-powered vehicles. Republicans have been pushing for the **legislature** to restrict DNREC in some way after a new regulation was announced that would have Delaware follow California rules and require all new vehicles sold in Delaware to be zero-emission vehicles by 2035.

House Bill 123, which was introduced on April 20 and had previously not gotten enough signatures to be approved by the House Natural Resources & Energy Committee, will now make its way to the Senate for consideration.

Ramone said Friday that he doesn't know if House Bill 121 or House Bill 123 will pass the Senate. Friday is the last day of the 2023 General Assembly session.

Senate Bill 160, sponsored by Sen. Jack Walsh, D-Stanton, would allocate \$1,409,448,938 to address capital improvement projects across the state and is this year's bond bill. It now makes its way to Gov. John Carney for his signature.

Joe Fulgham, communications director for the House Republican Caucus, said the discussion about getting House Bill 121 and the bond bill passed ended up including House Bill 123.



RAMONE: PASS THE SEAFORD BILL, OR GOP WON'T VOTE ON BOND BILL

BY SAM HAUT

Minority Leader Mike Ramone, R-Pike Creek, said Republicans who walked out of the House Thursday night held the bond bill hostage until the House Democrats agree to pass a charter change for the town of Seaford.

“We’re not going to be voting until you pass reasonable bills,” he said. “They have a lot of young people. I guess they just don’t understand that they haven’t needed us all year. So they’re just doing what they’ve been doing to us all year. Well, now they need us.”

Democrats have a majority in both the Delaware House and Senate. Most bills pass on a simple majority, but constitutionals and other bills require a greater number of ayes. To get those percentages in the House, the Democrats need at least some Republicans. The bond bill, for example, needs a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority to pass, which is 30 votes.

The bill that Republicans want passed is **House Substitute 1 for House Bill 121**, sponsored by Rep. Daniel Short, R-Seaford. It would have approved a charter change for the town of Seaford that would have allowed an LLC with a business in town to have a single vote in municipal elections, even if the owner lives outside the city.

The bill had been the source of **controversy** along with coverage from national news organizations, leading to some hate being directed at the government of Seaford. Ramone said each day the GOP demands aren’t met, the GOP will want more and more assurance that some of their bills passed.

“So as of now, tonight, all we wanted to do was pass 121,” Ramone said about 9 p.m. “Tomorrow, we want 121 to pass the House and the Senate.”

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CHRISTINA'S BAQIR: REVIEW UD CONTRACTS AFTER COP INCIDENT



BY JAREK RUTZ

A Christina school board member said an incident involving a [University of Delaware](#) police officer and an 18-year-old graduate of Newark High School is “another George Floyd moment.” Naveed Baqir made that statement in a special board meeting last week where dozens of community members testified in support of student Mohammed Sanogo, with plenty of disdain and condemnation for UD, with an outcry of police misconduct.

On June 15, Sanogo was arrested by UD police less than 45 minutes after crossing the graduation stage—held at the Bob Carpenter Center on UD’s campus—and receiving his diploma. Sanogo, a star student with a grade point average above a 4.0, had plans to attend the University of Maryland to pursue aerospace engineering. His future endeavors are now in doubt, Baqir said, since

UD is pursuing charges of resisting arrest and reckless driving after accusing Sanogo of trespassing.

Baqir and others questioned the trespassing accusation, as many were still on the premises taking photos with their friends and family members after the ceremony.

“UD could destroy his future by implicating him in serious offenses,” he said. “They want to push through this so that for the rest of his life, anytime he applies for a job, he’ll have to answer the question, ‘have you ever been arrested?’ and he would have to say yes. He’ll be asked if he’s ever been charged with a crime, and he’ll have to say yes.”

Several witnesses of the incident shared the same story. It began when officers approached a handful of people, including Sanogo, who were engaging in a Muslim group prayer in the parking lot.

“The time for our prayer, which is around sunset, had come, so we decided we might as well just pray here,” said 18-year-old Abdu HafdhAllah, a friend of Sanogo.

Witnesses say a couple officers already appeared angry, provocative and on edge when they told the group that was praying that they needed to leave.

“Immediately after we prayed, we got in our vehicles because we were gonna go somewhere to eat,” Hafdh Allah said, “but as soon as I got in my car, a police officer, a lady, came up and she knocked on my window and said ‘You guys can’t be hanging around here.’”

After explaining they were praying, the officer said she didn’t care what they were doing and told them they must leave. The three cars were on their way out of the parking lot, but as Sanogo’s car left, his car made a screeching noise. Witnesses say he had just gotten his tires redone, so when he hit the gas, it made a noticeable sound.

“They made a sound but I was looking at him and he did not drift,” HafdhAllah said. “I don’t know if they thought that because of the sound, he drifted or something.”

After this, two UD cars “boxed in” Sanogo as he was trying to exit the parking lot. “It was just a truck, a construction truck or something from UD, and they boxed him in like they didn’t want him to get out,” said Ali Aidel, a 19-year-old who’s friends with Sanogo and was at the scene in a nearby car with his brother, Zakaraya.

It is unclear if the truck “boxing in” Sanogo was from UD. Even when the green light went off, Aidel said, the vehicle in front of Sanogo would not move.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



Culture

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photo link: Clear Space Theatre Company





YOUR GUIDE TO JULY 4TH HOLIDAY IN DELAWARE

BY JAREK RUTZ

July Fourth—a celebration of America’s independence and often a day full of fun with family and friends—is next Tuesday. With [AAA Mid-Atlantic](#) expecting around 14% of Delaware’s population to be traveling, here’s what to know about Independence Day in the First State:

Travel

AAA predicts 142,000 Delawareans will travel at least 50 miles over the weekend, up more than 4% from last year and setting a new record for the holiday.

Almost 88% of travelers or more than 125,000 Delawareans, will be hitting the road for the holiday. Air travel is up nearly 11% over last year, with AAA projecting more than 10,000 Delawareans to fly to their holiday destination.

The agency states travel by other modes of transportation, which was slowest to recover from the pandemic, is up nearly 24% over last year, with more than 7,000 Delawareans traveling via train, bus or boat.

The best and worst times to drive are:

Best and Worst Times to Travel by Car		
Date	Worst Travel Time	Best Travel Time
Thu, June 29	4:00 - 6:00 PM	Before 12:00 PM
Fri, June 30	10:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Before 10:00 AM, After 6:00 PM
Sat, July 1	1:00 PM	Before 12:00 PM
Sun, July 2	<i>Minimal Traffic Impact Expected</i>	
Mon, July 3	<i>Minimal Traffic Impact Expected</i>	
Tue, July 4	12:00 - 3:00 PM	Before 11:00 AM, After 6:00 PM
Wed, July 5	3:00 - 6:00 PM	Before 2:00 PM

If you are anxious about driving around Delaware, you can check road conditions by looking at the Delaware Department of Transportation’s real-time traffic cameras. Find them at [DelDOT.gov](#) or the DelDOT mobile app.

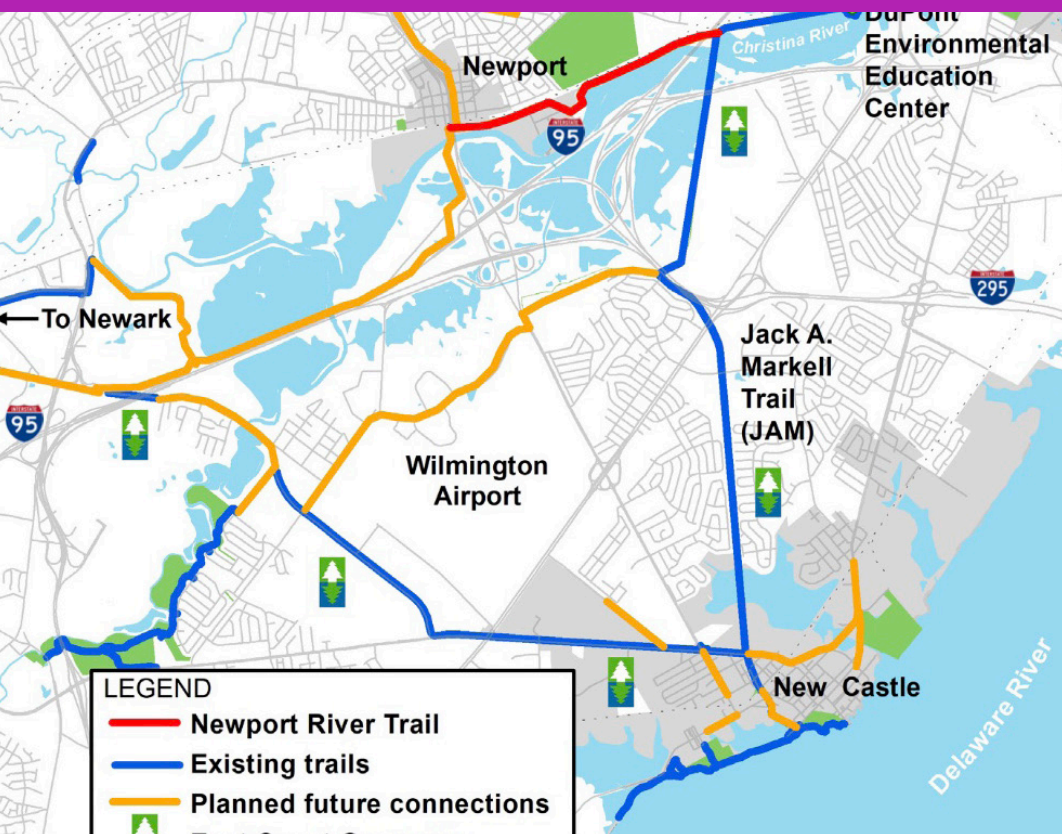
DelDOT encourages visitors to the Sussex beaches to buy a three-zones daily pass for \$10, which can also be used on all beach bus services. Riders can [download](#) the DART Pass mobile app for quick options, and the DART Transit app for alerts about delays, detours and more.

Weather

A beautiful Saturday morning was expected in the First State, but thunderstorms could roll in after 2 p.m., according to the [National Weather Service](#). The day will have partly sunny skies, with a high near 84 and a 50% chance of precipitation. Temperatures will fall to 70 as the storms come later in the day.

Sunday morning could have some showers before 8 a.m. and then a chance of showers and thunderstorms after 2 p.m. The day will be mostly cloudy, with a high of 88 and a 40% chance of rain. The temp will drop to 70 at night.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Multi-use trails to connect Newport with Wilmington and Georgetown with Lewes received \$44 million in federal funding today.

The Newport River Trail will get \$23 million to construct a two-mile path between Newport and the Jack A. Markell Trail on the Wilmington Riverfront. The trail is part of New Castle County’s Connecting Communities **initiative** and will be a far safer way for bicyclists and pedestrians than busy Maryland Avenue.

New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer is a bicycling enthusiast and envisions the day when passengers can ride their bikes safely to and from New Castle Airport, among many other destinations, he **told** *Out & About*.

The Georgetown to Lewes Rail with Trail will get \$21 million for the final phase of the 17-mile trail.

“Since the first phase of the Georgetown to Lewes

FEDS AWARD \$44M FOR NCCO, SUSSEX SHARED-USE TRAILS

Trail opened in October 2016 and with each completed segment, it has now become the most heavily used trail in the state,” Delaware Secretary of Transportation Nicole Majeski said, according to **WRDE**. “We are very excited to receive this grant that will allow the department to move forward with building the final six miles of the trail, connecting our growing communities with a great alternative to relying solely on cars for travel.”

The final phase covers six miles between Airport and Fisher roads, **WRDE reported**.

“Shared-use paths and trails are no longer an add-on at the end of the project planning,” Dave Gula, principal planner who’s worked at the Wilmington Area Planning Council since 2005, told *Out & About*. “They have become a driving force for some projects, and communities accept that these trails are amenities that should be included in almost every project.”

The money comes from the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity program. Nationwide, 70% of the grants are going to projects in regions defined as an Area of Persistent Poverty or a Historically Disadvantaged Community. Like last year, demand for RAISE funding was higher than available funds. This year, the U.S. Department of Transportation received \$15 billion in requests for the \$2.26 billion available.



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Business

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CONTRACTORS: PREVAILING WAGES BILL WILL RAISE STATE COSTS

BY SAM HAUT

A bill that would increase the prevailing wage for contractors making products offsite is unlikely to be heard in the House after the legislature passed the 2024 fiscal year’s budget on Wednesday.

Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 102, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Bryan Townsend, D-Newark, would require laborers making products away from a building site to be paid a prevailing wage, just like construction workers on the site. The law would apply to people working on plumbing, electrical systems, mechanical insulation work, ornamental iron work and commercial signage.

A prevailing wage is something the Delaware Department of Labor **requires** companies to pay to people working on construction jobs costing over \$500,000. It’s different based on the type of job and which county it’s in. For example, an asbestos worker in New Castle County would need to be paid \$27.88 an hour, \$34.33 in

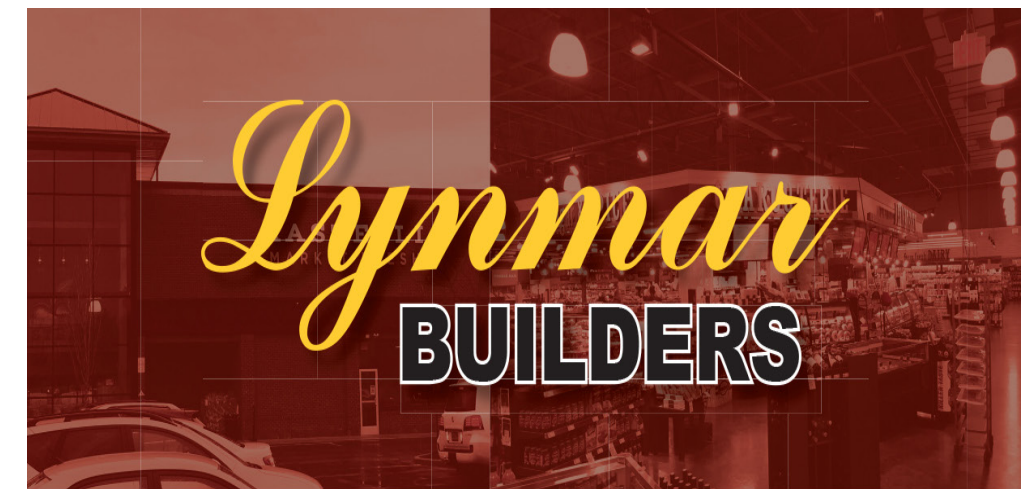
Kent County and \$49.97 in Sussex County. It’s unclear why a Sussex worker would be paid so much more.

Edward Capodanno, president of Associated Builders and Contractors of Delaware, said that they’re opposed to prevailing wages in general because he thinks the market should decide what people get paid.

“For us, it’s more of an issue of fair market value and allowing the market to bear what the wages are,” Capodanno said. “We’ve always been opposed to prevailing wages, even for the people installing the work because we believe that the market should bear what people are paid and that the state shouldn’t mandate what we pay our employees.”

The bill’s fiscal note says it will cost \$15,200 in one-time funding and \$163,866 in ongoing funding for the 2024 fiscal year, \$204,858 for the 2025 fiscal year and \$207,955 for the 2026 fiscal year, all from the appropriated special fund.

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AGILENT TO EXPAND NEWPORT MANUFACTURING SITE

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Agilent Technologies Inc. has announced a plan to invest nearly \$22 million to expand its lab-based manufacturing site in Newport. The site employs 110 today, according to the Delaware Prosperity Partnership, and Agilent expects the number of jobs to increase by 20% over the next 10 years. The company has received a \$693,000 grant from the Delaware Strategic Fund, contingent on meeting various requirements.

The facility produces liquid chromatography columns used for chemical and biochemical analysis, drug discovery, environmental control and analytical chemistry.

Agilent will leave 12,000 square feet adjacent to its existing facility on First State Boulevard and fit out 9,900 square feet as lab space with new infrastructure,

equipment and instrumentation. Over half of the remaining square footage will become a warehouse, storage and shipping/receiving area, and the balance will be used for offices.

Agilent last year announced a \$7 million expansion (with six new jobs) at its Little Falls research and development labs in the suburbs west of Wilmington, the *Delaware Business Times* **reported**. Agilent employs 18,000 people worldwide, including more than 950 in Delaware, making it one of Delaware's top 100 employers.



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photo credit: Jorge Zapata / PEXELS



Food & Dining

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BY PAM GEORGE

There's good news for Delaware diners who want more high-quality, quick-service options. Several eateries have recently opened or are preparing to open. For instance, **Lydia's Grab & Go Bistro** now serves salads, soups, wraps and charcuterie boards in **The Shops at Baltimore Commons** in downtown Rehoboth Beach.

Lydia Croce previously worked at Big Fish Grill and Atlantic Social in the Rehoboth area. With items such as whipped feta, chopped vegetable and herb salads, and quinoa and arugula salads, Croce stands out from the other sandwich shops on Baltimore Avenue. While waiting for your order, check out the cookbook shelf.

Speaking of meat and cheese, **First State Charcuterie** will hold a grand opening on July 1 and 2 for its brick-

and-mortar store in Frankford. Owner Jenna Bullock started as a delivery service in October 2020, and the fledgling business was so well received that she quit her HR job six months later.

In north Wilmington, **Boro Gelato & Cafe** plans to open on July 1 near **Taverna** and El Camino Mexican Kitchen in The Concord, the Talleyville office and residential complex. Owner Colin Dyckman is starting with coffee, gelato and pastry, with more options on the way.

Dinner at Drip

Drip Café in Hockessin is the go-to place for brunch and a good cup of coffee, but on July 19, the Lantana Square restaurant will host a five-course meal with pairings from Citadel Trading Corp., a wine importer.

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Government

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WORST KEPT SECRET: LONGHURST IS NEW HOUSE SPEAKER

BY SAM HAUT

On Friday, speaker of the House Pete Schwatzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach, choked up several times as he announced that he would be stepping down and that **Rep. Valerie Longhurst**, D-Bear, will succeed him as the new speaker. It will be the first time a woman has been elected the Speaker of the House in Delaware.

With Lt. Gov. Bethany Hall-Long presiding over the Senate, it also will be the first time that women have presided over both legislative chambers at one time. Schwatzkopf called it a historic night for the state.

LONGHURST'S ELECTION

Longhurst thanked Schwatzkopf for the attention he had paid to her and for singling her out for leadership. She broke down into tears and said, "I love you, Pete. You're a great man."

The House recessed to have dinner and returned to pass **House Resolution 25**, officially naming Longhurst as speaker. After House Resolution 25 passed unanimously, Schwatzkopf called her to the dias amid booming applause. As she took the oath, lots of cameras were aimed at her.

Schwatzkopf said he has a gift for her, a gavel.

"It's the hammer that Gov. Ruth Ann Minner had," he told Longhurst, when Minner was lieutenant governor.

"Congratulations and carry that thing and beat everybody in the head with it," he said, to great laughter.

In accepting the job, Longhurst pointed out that the Delaware legislature was 300 years old, but it was only a century ago that women won the right to vote. The House will now for the first time have all-female leader-

ship, including Majority Leader Melissa Minor-Brown, D-New Castle, the first person of color elected to leadership, as majority leader and Rep. Kerri Evelyn Harris, the first LGBTQ member of House leadership, as minority whip.

Minor-Brown delighted in being the first to call Longhurst "Madam Speaker," and led the House members in picking up a white rose and handing it to Longhurst with a hug. Minor-Brown also noted that as she was being elected majority leader, the U.S. Supreme Court was announcing its decision to end affirmative action at colleges and universities.

"But even in this historic moment, as we celebrate the first woman speaker and a majority-minority leadership team," Minor-Brown said, "we can't lose sight of the fact that we're living through the second wave of the civil rights movement... But while those challenges lie ahead, we know that there's hope. And this right here in this chamber gives us hope."

Harris said the legislature does something every session to make Delaware more equitable.

"Delaware is starting to heal the wrongs of this nation," Harris said. "Every time a general assembly is elected into office, over the last several years, we've seen change. Every time there's a leadership vote, every time we pass legislation that protects women's health care, that makes sure that there are more civil rights, to make sure that people are getting a second chances when they've made a mistake, that makes sure that we are a nation of the people, a state of the people."

[READ MORE HERE](#)



SENATOR: GUN-FREE SCHOOL ZONE LAW IS ATTACK ON 2ND AMENDMENT

BY JAREK RUTZ

A law that would place restrictions on guns in schools was tabled in the Senate Friday after Republican legislators claimed it was unconstitutional and unfair to law-abiding citizens.

House Bill 201, sponsored by former Speaker of the House Rep. Pete Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach, aims to enable a police officer to act immediately when they see or suspect a person with a gun in a safe school and recreation zone.

“I don’t understand how this bill keeps the bad guys out,” said Sen. Bryant Richardson, R-Seaford. “Ones that have nefarious objectives are going to enter the schools anyway, so how does this do anything?”

The bill cites that as of April 4, 74 people have been killed or injured by guns in schools in 13 separate school shootings across the country this year. School shootings hit a record high in 2022 with 46 shootings, the bill states, surpassing 2021’s record of 42 shootings. In 2022,

43,450 children experienced a school shooting.

Sen. Dave Lawson, R-Marydel, said the bill was yet another attack on the second amendment.

“Law enforcement has a right to stop anyone if they believe there’s about to be a crime committed; they do not have to wait,” he said. “They can intercede and violence does not have to happen for them to take action, so this bill really has a false premise.”

Under the bill, the crime of possession of a firearm in a safe school and recreation zone is a class E felony, which means the culprit could face up to five years in prison. Only police officers, constables or active-duty military personnel who are acting in an official capacity are allowed to have a gun in the school zone, per the bill. However, it allows holders of a valid license to carry concealed weapons only if the firearm is in a vehicle.

Lawson said the bill puts out the idea that a bad actor has free run at a school.

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SENATE PASSES \$1.4 BILLION FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT

BY SAM HAUT

The Senate has approved \$1.4 billion in capital improvement projects, along with a bill that would ban the LGBTQ panic defense, and a bill that adds more funding for the suicide crisis hotline.

Senate Bill 160, sponsored by Sen. Jack Walsh, D-Stanton, would allocate \$1,409,448,938 to address capital improvement projects across the state through this year's bond bill. Walsh said the bill will have a positive impact across the entire state.

“Putting people to work and preparing brick and mortar projects here that definitely all our committees should be proud,” Walsh said. “I think it’s a great package of bills that benefits all of our communities throughout the state.”

Sen. David Wilson, R-Lincoln, said during Wednesday’s debate that he was happy to be a part of the process and

feels the whole state benefited from the bill.

“At the end of the day, it’s about Delaware,” Wilson said. “And it’s about a good bond bill, and I can honestly say that I’m proud to be a part of it this year because we worked together for what was good for New Castle, Kent and Sussex.”

The bill includes:

- \$354.2 million to complete road projects statewide.
- \$200 million for new school construction projects in the Appoquinimink, Brandywine, Colonial, Milford, New Castle County Vo-Tech and Sussex Tech school districts.
- \$177 million for deferred maintenance, roof replacement and other capital improvement projects at state facilities.

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BY SAM HAUT

The Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday discussed a Republican bill that would change the state’s definition of a firearm to exclude a reference to BB guns and be more in line with the federal definition.

The Delaware Code’s definition of a firearm currently “includes any weapon from which a shot, projectile or other object may be discharged by force of combustion, explosive, gas and/or mechanical means, whether operable or inoperable, loaded or unloaded. It does not include a BB gun.”

House Substitute 1 for House Bill 224, sponsored by Rep. Jeffrey Spiegelman, R-Townsend/Hartly, would change that definition to be “a weapon from which a shot, projectile, or other object is designed or may readily be converted to be discharged by force of an explosive, whether operable or inoperable, loaded or unloaded.” and “the frame or receiver of a weapon” that’s defined

SENATE COMMITTEE CONSIDERS UPDATING FIREARM DEFINITION

in the first definition. Because Senate committees don’t vote publicly on bills, it was not immediately clear how the committee voted.

Sen. Brian Pettyjohn, R-Georgetown, said the current definition is too broad and could include things that people wouldn’t normally consider to be a firearm.

“So that means paintball guns are a firearm under Delaware code,” Pettyjohn said. “A slingshot is a firearm, under Delaware Code. It is an extremely broad definition of a firearm, and one that Delaware is the only state that uses. The other 49 states use the more narrowly tailored definition of firearm that’s currently used by the federal government as well. This has led to confusion on behalf of some retailers.”

Sen. Kyle Evans Gay, D-Arden, head of the committee, said she has concerns about changing the definition.

“I do have some concerns about certain types of firearms that I have learned may not be considered firearms in other states,” Gay said. “But I think that it’s important for us to call out where our concerns are and to regulate around our specific concerns and to be clear in that way. So I think it’s a great conversation to get started even though I have some reservations, to be quite honest, just about, you know how far we can go.”

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LAWS PUNISHING CHILD AND FINANCIAL ABUSERS GET SENATE SUPPORT

BY JAREK RUTZ

Three laws seeking to prevent and crack down on child and financial abuse garnered support in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday. They also drew emotional testimonies from victims of abuse or individuals who have had abuse negatively affect their lives.

House Bill 182, sponsored by Rep. Krista Griffith, D-Fairfax, changes child abuse in the third, second and first degree to child abuse in the fourth, third and second degree, respectively. It also changes 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.

HB 182 also creates a new crime of child torture, a class B felony. This class carries a minimum sentence of two years and a maximum of 25 years in jail.

House Bill 183, also 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. It 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.

Advocates for the bill spoke to address the fact that babies often have serious negative health outcomes when a parent is using cocaine, fentanyl or another controlled substance while pregnant or in the early years of a child's life.

"In 2022, there were 62 reports of child victims of drug ingestions requiring medical treatment," said Tonya Kelly, executive director at the Child Protection Accountability Commission.

House Bill 151, sponsored by Rep. Eric Morrison, D-Glasgow, aims to protect women from financial abuse.

"Financial abuse against women is a pervasive and alarming problem that must be tackled head on," said Melanie Ross Levin, director of the **Office of Women's Advancement and Advocacy**.

Financial abuse, she said, involves controlling or exploiting a woman's financial resources, often with the intention to limit her independence, coerce her into submission or maintain power and control within an intimate relationship.

"It can manifest in various ways such as restricting access to bank accounts, undermining employment opportunities, ruining credit or manipulating property ownership," she said. "It perpetuates a cycle of dependency and vulnerability, hindering a woman from achieving financial security, independence and overall restricts their ability to make choices that are in their best interest and prevents them from escaping abusive situations."

The law adds the intentional restriction of another adult's access to economic resources resulting in a loss of financial autonomy to the definition of abuse for protection from abuse proceedings. It specifies that tangible property of the petitioner includes legal documents belonging to the petitioner. Under the law, Family Court would be authorized to order respondents to return specific legal documents, a practice that already exists, but is not in code.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



BY SAM HAUT

Two weeks ago, a Seaford Republican planned to introduce a bill that would only allow trans athletes to participate in sports against players who match their biological sex.

Sen. Bryant Richardson said he filed Senate Bill 191, which he dubbed the Fairness in Girls' Sports Act, because it is unfair to allow transgender women—biological males who transition into women—to play women's sports.

“With this new transgender, men, boys identifying as women and calling themselves girls, entering in the sports arena,” he said, “it’s really set back the opportunities for girls, for women.”

Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, who is a wrestling referee and a sponsor of the bill, said in a news release that he’s seen firsthand the physical differences between male and female student-athletes.

FAIRNESS IN GIRLS' SPORTS ACT INTRODUCED

“There are certainly exceptions,” he said, “but on average, a boy is physically stronger and faster than a girl. We need to do all we can to protect girls and not place female athletes at a competitive disadvantage.”

When it comes to the actual data, though, one **study** has shown a decrease in muscle mass for trans women as they go through the gender transition, while another **study** showed that lowering testosterone levels didn't bring trans women down to the level of cisgender women. Sarah Warbelow, vice president of legal policy at the Human Rights Campaign, said that most of the data that people point to is between performance of cis men and cis women.

“There has been an overall lack of research on trans athletes,” Warbelow said. “Most of the research that exists is comparing men who are not transgender to women who are not transgender, who are adults. And so it really is comparing apples and oranges. ...A trans woman is a woman. She’s not a cisgender man and it’s really not an appropriate comparison.”

Richardson said he doesn't know how many transgender athletes there are in Delaware or how many trans people there are in the state in general, but that his bill would stop them from competing before it becomes a problem.

“It’s not a problem,” he said. “I don't think it's a problem yet, but I don't want it to be a problem in Delaware.”

Warbelow said that there is also a lack of data on the number of trans athletes, but pointed to Utah, which

only has four transgender students participating in high school sports. The legislature last March **passed** a trans sports ban by overriding the governor's veto. The ban was **overturned** last August by a judge in the state.

The focus of his bill, Richardson said, is to stop trans women from competing with cis women in high school, but the bill also bans trans men from competing with cis men in high school. Richardson said he doesn't think there are as many trans women in sports as trans men, but the bill bans both for simplicity.

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SENATE PASSES FIVE ENVIRONMENT BILLS, BUDGET

BY SAM HAUT

On June 20, the Senate passed five bills that relate to the environment, with Republicans offering some resistance, and a budget that had less opposition.

House Bill 99, sponsored by Rep. Debra Heffernan, D-Brandywine Hundred South, would require that Delaware meet certain emission reduction requirements, getting to zero net emissions by 2050, and create climate change officers within all nine departments to help the state achieve these goals. The bill, which doesn't require a fiscal note, passed 15 to 5 and now heads to Gov. John Carney for his signature.

House Bill 12, sponsored by Rep. Sophie Phillips, D-Christiana, would offer a rebate of up to \$2,500 for someone purchasing an electric vehicle in Delaware and up to \$1,000 for someone purchasing a plug-in hybrid in the state, leading to a fiscal note of \$2 million for the 2024 fiscal year. The bill passed 16 to 4 and now heads

to Carney for his signature.

House Bill 10, sponsored by Heffernan, would require that 30% of the state's school bus fleet be electric by 2030, with estimates of costs to be around \$250,000 per bus and the charging infrastructure costing an additional \$75,000 per bus. Since the state buys about 50 buses a year, the fiscal note for the bill estimates it will cost \$975,000 in the 2025 fiscal year and \$1,625,000 in the 2026 fiscal year. It passed 15 to 5 and now heads to Carney for his signature.

Senate Bill 51, sponsored by Sen. Trey Paradee, D-Dover, would ban the use of polystyrene containers in restaurants, fire companies and nonprofit organizations, along with single-use plastic straws, coffee stirrers and cocktail and sandwich picks. The bill, which doesn't require a fiscal note, passed 15 to 5 and now heads to Carney for his signature.

House Bill 11, sponsored by Heffernan, would require that new buildings with a foundation of 50,000 square feet or greater be built to be compatible with solar panels. The bill, which doesn't require a fiscal note, passed 16 to 4 and now heads to Carney for his signature.

DEBATING CLIMATE CHANGE

Sen. Stephanie Hansen, D-Middletown, said that climate change is a growing issue and House Bill 99 will help.

"This is a pivotal time for our state, and our vote today will determine how engaged we are in doing our part to secure a livable and sustainable future for humanity on a global scale," Hansen said. "We are ready and we are able. We will do this because we are actively, deeply invested in our future. We understand the cost of inaction and we care about what tomorrow brings."

Sen. Dave Lawson, R-Marydel, asked Hansen several questions about the specifics of an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change **report** that she referenced and its conclusions about the right amount of carbon dioxide emissions.

"The report that you referenced is 0.4%," Lawson said. The specific number doesn't matter, Hansen replied, but rather that the report outlines that it's an issue.

"What matters is the fact that because this number is higher than it has been in the past, because it is higher, it is trapping heat in our atmosphere and is causing weather-related problems, flooding, related problems," Hansen said. "It's causing dire consequences and so we need to reduce it."

Senate Majority Leader Bryan Townsend, D-Newark, said just because the number seems small doesn't mean it isn't not a problem.

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10 GRADUATES WIN TUITION MONEY FOR AGRICULTURE ACHIEVEMENTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Aidan Bell, a recent graduate of Laurel High School, was pushed into taking an agriculture elective class he barely had interest in during his sixth grade year. Six years later, he was awarded \$7,000 through the first ever Mountaire Farms Farm to Table Scholarship, which he will use to pursue a degree in agriculture and natural resources from the [University of Delaware](#).

“I just fell in love with agriculture,” Bell said. “I’m beyond blessed and beyond honored to receive this award. The scholarship will go to great use for college since it covers pretty much an entire year of school for me, so it definitely helps out a lot financially.”

[Mountaire Farms](#) is an agricultural food production and processing company providing work for almost 10,000 people at facilities in Arkansas, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina.

The company awarded \$30,000 in Farm to Table Scholarships last week to help support graduating seniors

who are pursuing careers in agriculture, culinary arts or related fields that support food production and feeding the world.

The money was given to 10 First State students. Winners received \$2,000 for college, while two—Bell and Samantha Teoli of Indian River High School—were awarded an additional \$5,000.

“It meant everything to get the second scholarship, although the first one was great enough, but to get the extra money to go towards my school and education to help me reach my goals meant the world,” Teoli said.

Teoli, who’s attending [Walnut Hill College](#) in Philadelphia in the fall, is pursuing a degree in culinary arts. She hopes to one day open her own restaurant.

Bell and Teoli were selected as the overall winners, with the additional \$5,000, for their outstanding accomplishments and leadership.

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BUCKSON FOR ACCOUNTABILITY, DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

review, analysis, recommendations and strategic guidance. Advocates in the program help individual students and families resolve disputes or complaints concerning discipline, inequitable access to school programs and different or unfair treatment.

For example, if a student believes he was wrongfully suspended, an advocate would help work out a resolution with school officials. They are not the same as lawyers and take a backseat to lawyers.

Devon Hynson, an official in the ombudsman program, pointed out that the program is often for families who have no other resources, and perhaps cannot afford a lawyer. He said most cases deal with disciplinary disputes.

“Since about April of last year, we’ve done 153 cases,” he said. “We’ve done 50 suspension appeals with an 80% success rate.”

“The ombudsman program is historic and has never been done before,” he said. “So I really appreciate the opportunity to pilot it, and I appreciate you guys supporting it and coming out and saying this is something that we need to help build equity in the school system.”

Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, did not publicly say whether he would vote for the bill to be released by committee or not.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

BY JAREK RUTZ

A law establishing a statewide program that provides advocates to students and families facing educational inequity drew discussion in the Senate Education Committee on Tuesday.

House Bill 188, sponsored by Rep. Sherae’a Moore, D-Middletown, codifies the Equity Ombudsman program, which provides non-lawyer advocates to assist families.

“In 2018, there was litigation against the state... brought by the NAACP and other entities that was settled in 2020,” said Sen. Elizabeth “Tizzy” Lockman, D-Wilmington. “One of the components of that settlement was the creation of an ombudsman program intended to make sure that [families] were receiving equitable treatment in all of the ways that we have encountered challenges in our public education system.”

The bill creates an Educational Equity Council, which would oversee the program and would provide broad

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Sports

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BY JASON WINCHELL

We have went through and picked the top 15 games from the 2022-23 high school sports season. Below you will see the games we selected with some statistics and a short recap of why these games were our top picks. Most of these games are rewatchable either on our YouTube Channel or on the NFHS Network (subscription necessary) if you would like to see them.

No. 15 William Penn vs Howard Basketball (YouTube)
This Jan. 31 game didn't disappoint as these two top 10 teams raced up and down the court in an overtime classic. Rasheen Matthews Jr. led the Wildcats with 15 points in their 58-56 win.

DELAWARE LIVE'S TOP 15 GAMES FROM 2022-23 SEASON

No. 14 Padua vs Saint Mark's Basketball (YouTube)

They met on Jan. 10 at Saint Mark's. The Spartans were 8-1 on the season while the Pandas were looking to get to the .500 mark. This game would go to triple overtime where the Spartans would pull away with a 70-59 win. Grace Trerotola would score 34 points for the Pandas with six three-pointers and a perfect eight for eight from the line. She hit a three at the buzzer to send it to overtime, then did it again to send it to third overtime. Lauren McDonald led the Spartans with 22 points

No. 13 Appoquinimink vs Archmere Girls Soccer

On May 15 in Claymont in one of the best soccer games of the year. Emma Gioffre scored in the 27th minute to give the Auks the 1-0 lead. Appoquinimink would tie it in the 60th minute then win it in the 80th minute on a corner kick goal by Avery Holland who came up from her defensive position to win the game with the last :30 second goal.

No. 12 Laurel vs Seaford Boys Basketball (YouTube)

The second sold out game between these two teams with the Henlopen South title on the line. The Blue Jays would walk away with a 89-76 win to capture the title.

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DIVINCENZO TURNS DOWN PLAYER OPTION



BY PATRICK GARYANTES

Former Salesianum standout, Donte Divincenzo, turned down his \$4.7M player option with the Golden State Warriors on Tuesday, which officially enters him into unrestricted free agency which began Friday, June 30, at 6 p.m.

The “prove it” season with the Warriors should work out for Divincenzo. After an injury-riddled 2021-2022 campaign, Donte played in 72 games last season for the Warriors and averaged 9.4 points, 4.5 rebounds, 3.5 assists, and 1.3 steals per game, while shooting nearly 40% from three-point range in 26 minutes per game. He proved to be one of the more reliable reserve players for the defending champs.

Clearly, Divincenzo and his group feel he has outplayed the \$4.7 million tag he was set to earn for this upcoming year and the stats and market are in his favor.

A few destinations that have surfaced as potential

landing spots for the former Villanova star include landing back with former Nova teammates Josh Hart and Jalen Brunson in New York with the Knicks, according to Jake Fischer of Yahoo Sports. Ian Begley of SNY also has linked Divincenzo to the Knicks, but has also listed Minnesota, Chicago and Detroit as teams who will target him starting June 30.

The Knicks are a logical fit. New York is a train ride away from home, close to Villanova, and as mentioned, two former teammates are key pieces to the nucleus in New York, including his former college roommate, Jalen Brunson. The only questionable spot about the Knicks from Divincenzo’s perspective could be head coach Tom Thibodeau’s coaching style. He tends to lean heavily on playing his starting five and using a short bench. The Knicks are the best positioned of these options to compete for a playoff run, but if minutes and more opportunity are Divincenzo’s priority those other teams may be more tempting.

For those of the local fans hoping that the 76ers would pursue Divincenzo, who undoubtedly provides multiple things that the Sixers need (shooting, athleticism, defensive flexibility, high IQ, shot creator), they have not been linked to the 26-year old guard. Things can change quickly in the NBA so there’s still a chance a return to Philly could happen. For the time being, throw your GM hat on and add him to the team in your NBA 2K Dynasty team!



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THREE DELAWARE BASEBALL STANDOUTS LAND IN VEGAS

BY NICK HALLIDAY

The chances of one Delaware high school baseball player making it to Major League Baseball (MLB) is .05%. So we ask “What are the chances of three Delaware baseball players from the same small state making it and are all on the same team?” Well, we might not know the answer or the percentage, but it has happened, believe it or not.

Colin Peluse of Middletown, Zack Gelof of Cape Henlopen, and Billy Sullivan IV of Saint Mark’s are now teammates on the Las Vegas Aviators Triple AAA baseball team. All of them played their high school baseball in Delaware, but now find themselves teammates in Las Vegas.

The Las Vegas Aviators formerly known as Vegas 51s and Las Vegas Stars, are a Minor League Baseball team of the Pacific Coast League and the Triple-A affiliate of the Oakland Athletics (A’s). The team is located in Summerlin South, NV, which has become the next step in each of their major league careers. Even though they are on the same team now, each player has had their own journey before becoming an Aviator.

After graduating from Middletown, Peluse went on to play his college baseball at Wake Forest University. In 2019, Peluse was drafted by Oakland A’s in the ninth round, No. 284 overall pick in the MLB draft. In 2019, Peluse played for Short-A affiliate Vermont. No season in 2020 due to the pandemic, but in 2021 Peluse went

from High-A to AA Midland. Then in 2022, he was promoted to Triple AAA as he joined the Aviators.

Peluse told us “My time with the Aviators has been amazing. Overall, the experience has been great and I hope to make the most of it for however long I get to play here,” and as far as the three local guys on the same team, “I never thought it would be possible. Growing up in Delaware there weren’t many players drafted or players that even went to play college baseball. I grew up next to Jake Fraley, Chad Kuhl and I went to the same high school. Those were the first guys that I remember really making it and playing on the big stage. The fact that we have three players from such a small state ending up at the same time is unreal.”

Gelof graduated from Cape Henlopen 2018, was named the Delaware Gatorade Player of the Year and also led Cape to a state championship in that season. Gelof was drafted in the 2018 MLB draft as he was selected in the 38th round by the Cleveland Indians, but decided not to sign. He then decided to attend University of Virginia (UVA) to play his collegiate baseball. In three seasons for UVA, Gelof started every game for the Cavaliers. In the 2021 MLB draft, the Oakland A’s selected Gelof with the 60th pick overall in the second round.

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