

# THE BALTIMORE TIMES

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## U.S. Trade Rep. Katherine Tai, U.K. Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan tour Fearless headquarters on visit to Baltimore



*Fearless Solutions, LLC, one of the leading technology companies in the region, hosted U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai and United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan for a tour of its headquarters as part of ongoing U.S-U.K. dialogues on the future of Atlantic trade. (From left): Fearless COO John Foster, Fearless CEO Delali Dzirasa, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai, United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Fearless Chief Brand Officer Bethany Halteman and Fearless CFO Ryan Hemminger. (See article on page 9). Photo: Courtesy of Fearless*



# Cardin, Van Hollen join faith leaders to spotlight federal investments in underserved West Baltimore communities

By *Demetrius Dillard*

U.S. Senators Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) joined religious figures, community leaders and local residents to bring attention to a substantial amount of federal funding directed toward rebuilding underprivileged communities in West Baltimore.

The Rev. Al Hathaway led the concise press conference that celebrated the allocation of congressionally directed investments to three community-based organizations that totaled \$1.5 million. The gathering, which attracted a few dozen attendees, including Baltimore City Councilman Eric Costello and former Mayor Sheila Dixon was on April 1, 2022 at the site of Thurgood Marshall's elementary school — Public School No. 103 on Division Street.

Sens. Cardin and Van Hollen “fought to ensure that these funds became part of the fiscal year omnibus funding package enacted on March 15,” according to the Office of Ben Cardin.

Along with Hathaway, the Rev. Derrick DeWitt and the Rev. Patrick Clayborn were among the notable guests at the press conference. The three faith leaders administer the organizations that were recipients of federal funding that will enable them to facilitate various initiatives and projects focused on rebuilding underserved communities in West Baltimore.

Clayborn, the pastor of Bethel AME Church, was present on behalf of the Bethel Empowerment and Wellness Center, the church's nonprofit community arm, which received \$251,000 that will help expansion of the establishment— from meeting rooms, to an industrial kitchen to provide nutritious meals for families, to other comprehensive services geared toward the surrounding Upton community.

Clergy United for the Transformation of Sandtown-Winchester (CUTS), led by DeWitt, was awarded \$250,000 which will fund revitalization efforts for the Sandtown Community Center.



**From left: Sen. Ben Cardin, Union Baptist Church Pastor Emeritus Al Hathaway and Sen. Chris Van Hollen celebrate a \$1 million investment to Beloved Community Services Corporation. Photo Credit: Demetrius Dillard**

Lastly, Beloved Community Services Corporation, of which Hathaway is president and CEO, received \$1 million that will assist the renovation project of P.S. 103 in addition to workforce training and educational opportunities, among other programs and initiatives included in what will be the Justice Thurgood Marshall Amenity Center. The building is still labeled “Upton’s Henry Highland Garnett Community Center.”

The total cost for the renovation of P.S. 103 will be more than \$12 million, said Hathaway, adding that he and his partners will settle on the project’s financing by the end of April and will begin construction on July 2.

“The federal government, as well as corporate and private partners recognize that this community has experienced some historic disinvestment and now you’re going to see some investment come,” said Hathaway, a community activist who also serves as the Pastor Emeritus of the historic Union Baptist Church.

“This community is going to see a resurgence of investment and it will be catalytic, but the most important thing is that in this community the people have to be the beneficiaries of that investment

and we’re going to make sure that happens.”

Van Hollen was made aware of the project about a year ago and said he and Cardin have been working directly with Hathaway and others to incorporate P.S. 103 into the National Park Service system, aiming to preserve the site as a historical designation.

“The vision, of course, is to restore that building, but not simply make it a memorial to the past but to make it a living legacy,” Van Hollen said.

“It’s a place where we will continue the work of the great Thurgood Marshall. There will be classrooms, there will be opportunities for law students. There will be lots of opportunities to remember the great work that Justice Thurgood Marshall did

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and bring that into the present and into the future as we go forward.

“We are pleased Reverend Hathaway, to work with you to secure \$1 million for the Public School 103 program. Congratulations.”

When Cardin took the podium, he expressed gratitude toward the faith leaders in attendance and said he was impelled to respond to a demand for “more community centers,” which are often pivotal contributors to a neighborhood’s well-being and success, he highlighted.

“This is the type of community investment that gives great hope for the future,” Cardin said. “We know the community is strong in its residents, but it needs community facilities to be able to grow and have a future.”

In addition to the development and renovation of the Sandtown Community Center, the \$250,000 received by CUTS will enable the establishment to provide small business incubation, a community meeting place and retail, health and business opportunities for residents. “This is a great opportunity for that community for sure,” said DeWitt, also the pastor of First Mount Calvary Baptist Church.

For the first time in about 15 years, U.S. senators from Maryland have secured direct congressional funding, Van Hollen said gleefully.

“This was an initiative we believed in,” Van Hollen said. “This is something that we have a lot of passion about because of the needs here in West Baltimore and the potential... and so that requires investment and this has been a passion of mine - securing these funds.”

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# Guest Editorials/Commentary

## Scientists made history last year— but 2022 could be even better

By Michelle McMurry-Heath

Scientists had an astoundingly productive 2021. The Food and Drug Administration fully approved more than 50 new drugs—one of the best years on record—and granted emergency use authorization to numerous other therapies, including antiviral pills that reduce the risk of death from COVID-19 by up to 89 percent.

Those COVID therapeutics and vaccines generated the biggest headlines. But other breakthroughs were just as scientifically impressive.

Consider the new once-a-month injectable treatment for HIV-positive adults. It will make it easier for folks to adhere to their medications, stay healthy and avoid infecting others.

Then there is a first-of-its-kind treatment that protects bone marrow from damage caused by chemotherapy. The drug could eliminate one of the most harmful side effects of chemotherapy, ensuring patients can complete their treatment regimens.

We also had the first new treatment for Alzheimer's since 2003. Millions of patients, and their families, are hoping advances in new treatments will help them beat back this fatal disease.

Researchers made huge strides in the fight against rare diseases, too. Early last year, federal regulators gave the green light to the first drug to treat a specific genetic mutation present in eight percent of patients with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a fatal disease that causes patients' muscles to gradually waste away.

This year could prove even more transformational than 2021.

Researchers are on the verge of a breakthrough in treating amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), often known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Late last year, the FDA granted priority review to the medicine, and a decision could be made by this summer.

And there's a real possibility that we will finally achieve a vaccine for HIV. Scientists announced in December that they had developed a vaccine for a virus similar to HIV that proved safe and effective in animals. Preliminary results showed that the jab reduced risk of infection by 79 percent.

With scientists on the verge of so many breakthroughs, it'd be enormously counterproductive for policymakers to press forward with well-intentioned but poorly conceived legislation and executive actions that would cause private-sector investment in research endeavors to dry up.

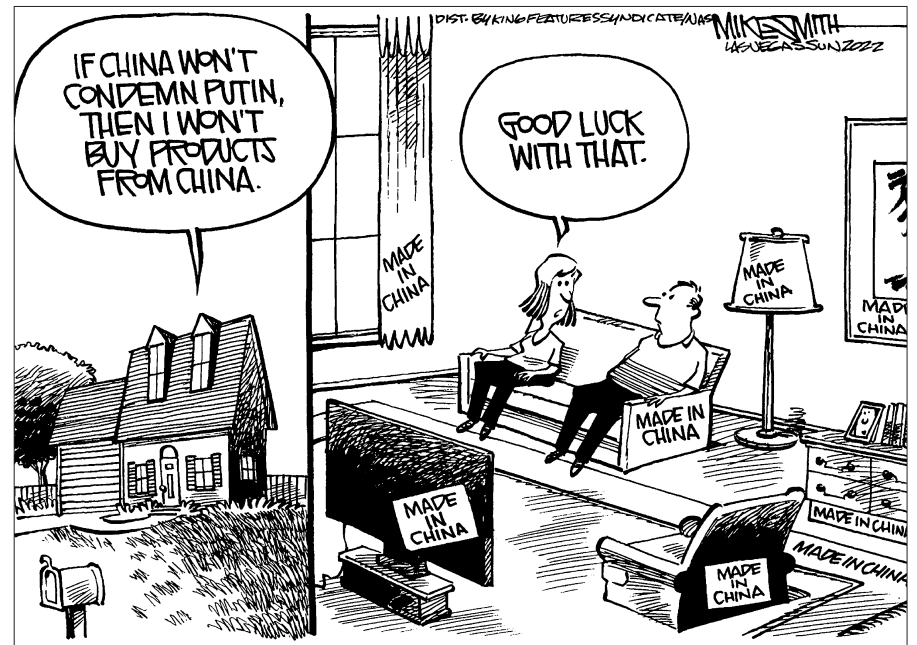
That would be cataclysmic for patients, since private capital drives nearly all drug development. According to a recent study, "23,230 NIH Grants in the year 2000 were linked by NIH-supported patents to 41 investigational drugs, only 18 of which gained FDA approval by 2020." Of those 18 medicines approved in 2020 that benefited from federal grants, \$44.2 billion of the funding needed to bring them to market came from the private sector, and just \$670 million came from the NIH.

In other words, private companies funded 98.5 percent of the cost of developing those drugs.

Lifesaving medical breakthroughs don't happen by accident. They're a direct consequence of good public policy. Skeptics need only look at Europe—which used to develop over half the world's new medicines as recently as the 1970s, but now invents barely a third, while America creates nearly two-thirds of new drugs—for proof of the damage wrought by poorly thought-out policies.

America's scientists are poised to make 2022 another banner year—as long as policymakers don't throw a wrench in their work.

*Dr. Michelle McMurry-Heath is a physician-scientist and president and CEO of the Biotechnology Innovation Organization. This piece was originally published in Modern Healthcare (ModernHealthcare.com).*



## Letters to the Editor

**Editor:**

### Russia Is The Immoral Enemy

After Putin invaded Ukraine, the U.S. administration timidly succumbed to Putin's threats to widen the war if the U.S. and NATO became directly involved. We abandoned Ukraine to the Russian war crimes machine by not confronting the aggression within Ukraine. Economic sanctions against Russia and the supply of defensive military equipment to Ukraine will not stop the wanton deaths and destruction. They need combat aircraft, tanks and long range of offensive missile systems.

The murdering of Ukrainian civilians by the Russian military is similar to the German atrocities committed in Europe during WWII, and the ramifications of the U.S. and NATO not going into Ukraine will reverberate in Europe for many years.

Russia could have military forces closer to the borders of NATO countries, and Russia could threaten these countries unless they agree to leave NATO.

The world is faced with a Russian tyrant who is intent on expanding into other countries and willing to achieve his aims by warfare. The free world will be locked in a new Cold War and possible military confrontations with Russia as Putin tries to recreate the Soviet empire.

NATO should be encouraged to increase its military forces; and offensive missile systems should be deployed in NATO countries.

Russia has exhibited inhumanity to man, and it is the immoral enemy of mankind.

**Donald Moskowitz  
Londonderry NH**

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## Fighting the Corruption of Power

By Ben Jealous

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - We keep learning more about the attack on the U.S. Capitol. And we keep learning more about the many schemes former President Donald Trump and his team tried to use to overturn the 2020 presidential election.

In some ways, it is discouraging. We know just how badly Trump's inner circle was corrupted by his desire to keep power at all costs. We had lawyers writing memos about how to break the law and stop Congress from affirming Trump's defeat. We had members of Congress repeating his lies about a stolen election and trying to take the decision away from the voters.

In other ways, it is encouraging that the truth continues to come out. News stories that expose lies and corruption remind us of the importance of a free press. The investigation by the Jan. 6 select committee reminds us how much we need the checks and balances that are built into our system.



Ben Jealous

Those checks and balances—like the ability of Congress to conduct oversight of the Executive Branch—are necessary to prevent abuses of power and hold politicians accountable.

But for those protections to work, we must have public officials who are committed to upholding the rule of law. That's not what we're seeing from former Trump staffers and advisers. Just the opposite. They are stonewalling the congressional investigation and defying its subpoenas.

***“When Americans go to the polls this fall to elect members of Congress, we will not only be participating in democracy. We will be determining its future.”***

And with just a few exceptions, congressional Republicans are not acting honorably. Rather than embracing the search for truth, they try to discredit the investigation. Rather than face up to the anti-democratic rot in their party, they would like to sweep it all under the rug.

Let's be clear. Trump and his lawbreaking friends are trying to keep

Americans from learning the truth about the attack on Congress and the attempt to overthrow the will of the voters.

Specifically, Trump and his supporters are trying to run out the clock. They are counting on their allies taking a majority in the House of Representatives in this year's elections. And then they'll shut the investigation down before the full truth can come out.

That would be disastrous for our democracy.

Consider just a few of the things we have learned recently.

When the White House handed over logs of Trump's calls on the day of the insurrection, there was a seven-hour gap covering the crucial hours before, during, and after the attack on Congress. What violations of law are hiding in that gap?

We also learned that Ginni Thomas, a hard-right activist and wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, was in regular contact with Trump's chief of staff Mark Meadows in the days and weeks after the presidential election. She embraced even the most extreme and ridiculous far-right conspiracy theories

about the election.

She even said she hoped it was true that members of the “Biden crime family,” reporters, and elected officials were being arrested and would be held on barges in Guantanamo Bay to face military trials for sedition. She urged Trump not to concede defeat.

It just so happens that Justice Clarence

Thomas was the only Supreme Court justice who backed Trump's attempt to keep White House records from being shared with the Jan. 6 committee. It was an 8-1 vote. That explains why so many people are now calling on Thomas to resign—or at the very least to recuse himself from any other cases about the insurrection that come before the Court.

We can't make Clarence Thomas act honorably. But that doesn't mean we are powerless to protect our democracy.

It was we the people who voted Trump out of power. Trump's ability to pressure and bully election officials and legislators into joining his corrupt schemes was limited by the fact that he lost in multiple battleground states, not just one. His supporters' ability to shield him from accountability will be determined in part by what happens in this year's elections.

When Americans go to the polls this fall to elect members of Congress, we will not only be participating in democracy. We will be determining its future.

*Ben Jealous serves as president of People For the American Way and Professor of the Practice in the Africana Studies Department at the University of Pennsylvania where he teaches leadership. Jealous has decades of experience as a leader, coalition builder, campaigner for social justice and seasoned nonprofit executive. In 2008, he was chosen as the youngest-ever president and CEO of the NAACP. He is a graduate of Columbia University and Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar and he taught at Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania.*

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# Ravens Lamar Jackson may wait until 2023 to do new deal

By Tyler Hamilton

Talks of a new contract for Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson continue to dominate the headlines surrounding the team. That's understandable considering how the former NFL MVP is the key to the Ravens' success. Jackson's importance was further emphasized by Baltimore's four-game losing streak without him in the lineup.

So far, Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen is the only signal caller from the 2018 draft to get an extension. Allen signed a six-year contract extension worth \$258 million last August. Baker Mayfield's divorce from the Cleveland Browns is inevitable and Sam Darnold has meanwhile been traded from the New York Jets to the Carolina Panthers who appear to be moving on from him as well.

Meanwhile, Jackson is playing this year on the fifth-year option despite his team experiencing arguably the most success out of all quarterbacks from the 2018 class. Jackson is set to make \$23 million on the fifth-year option this year.

A new deal for Jackson should easily reach a similar value to the five-year, \$230 million deal the Browns agreed to with Deshaun Watson after they acquired him in a trade with the Houston Texans.

The Ravens have full intentions of signing Jackson.

"I hope so, at some point, that we will. I think we've discussed this at length, and I said this before: We will work at Lamar's [Jackson] urgency. So, he and I have had ongoing discussions," general manager Eric DeCosta said at the Combine last month.



Lamar Jackson, Ravens quarterback  
Patrick Stevens/Getty Image

"He's a guy that when we think about the Ravens three, four, five years from now, we envision Lamar being a very, very big part of that team and definitely a player that can help us win Super Bowls."

Jackson has received criticism for not having an agent which is supposedly complicating the negotiation process. The pace isn't going the way it may be expected. But according to a recent report by Mike Florio of Pro Football it's because Jackson's focus is elsewhere.

"At the start of the season, the story was that he was too focused on football," Florio wrote. "After the season, the story was that he was too focused on getting healthy. Per a source with knowledge of the situation, Jackson has told the Ravens that he's currently too focused on having his best possible year

and that he doesn't want to do a deal until the 2022 season is over."

Florio went on to say that he sees a possibility for Jackson to play on the

franchise tag in each of the next two seasons.

"Fifth-year option in 2022. Franchise tag in 2023. If the salary cap increases by, say, 15 percent this year, the franchise tag for quarterbacks will be in the range of \$34 million in 2023. If so, he'd get \$40.8 million in 2024. Combine that with the \$23 million he'll make this year, and that's a three-year payout of \$97.8 million. Given the current quarterback market, that's not a bad deal for Baltimore," Florio explained.

A three-year payout worth \$97.8 million pales in comparison to the five-year, \$258 million total that Allen is set to make or the \$230 million over five years that Watson inked last month. Neither Allen nor Watson have an MVP to their name like Jackson does. Unlike Jackson, neither Allen nor Watson have led the league in touchdown passes either.

Jackson's focus on winning is admirable but the time is now for getting a deal done.

## VISIT BALTIMORE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE BALTIMORE TOURISM IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 FINANCIAL PLAN

The District Management Committee of Visit Baltimore will meet on Thursday, April 21, 2022, at 11:00 AM at a virtual public meeting hosted by Visit Baltimore to conduct a public hearing on the Baltimore Tourism Improvement District (BTID) FY2022-23 Financial Plan. The public hearing is a requirement of Article II, §70 of the Baltimore City Charter, and Article 14, §20 of the Baltimore City Code. At the public virtual hearing, the District Management Committee will review the BTID FY2022-23 Financial Plan for approval. The BTID FY2022-23 Financial Plan includes the proposed budget and BTID special assessments to be levied on any "Hotel" as defined in City Code Article 28, §21-1(c). The FY2022-23 Financial Plan will also outline proposed services to be provided by the BTID. If approved, the FY2022-23 Financial Plan will be submitted to Baltimore City Board of Estimates for final approval. The public hearing will allow for public comment on the FY2022-23 Financial Plan.

For more information and registration link contact: Mia Blom, Visit Baltimore's Director of Government & Community Affairs at 410-659-8373 or [mblom@baltimore.org](mailto:mblom@baltimore.org)

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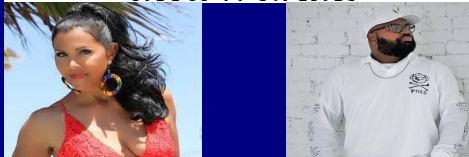


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# Saving Lives Through Giving the Gift of Life

By *Andrea Blackstone*

President Joe Biden proclaimed April 2022 National Donate Life Month, while continuing the tradition of encouraging organ donation. Within the proclamation, Biden urged more Americans to become organ, eye, tissue, marrow, and blood donors. Additionally, the president celebrated and honored donors, healthcare professionals who work in the transplantation field, and individuals who supported loved ones within making the decision to donate their organs.

Americans who sign up to donate organs such as kidneys, livers, hearts, and lungs can positively impact ill patients on waiting lists. Improving quality of life, or making a life-saving organ gift, can prove to be a priceless investment in them.

Donate Life Maryland (DLM) —which is led by Executive Director Lisa Spicknall— stays busy throughout the year promoting organ donation messages. Baltimore-based DLM Baltimore has been around since 2007. The state-authorized nonprofit organization strives to save and enhance lives through registering organ, eye and tissue donors. Another aspect of the organization’s vision is to spread that message that every “Marylander can make an educated decision about organ eye and tissue donation and registering as a donor.” The Maryland Donor Registry confidentially houses names of Marylanders who are organ, eye, and tissue donors. According to DLM’s website, the registry was set in motion in 2009.

Spicknall has been working in her position since 2020. She oversees maintaining an important piece of giving the gift of life.

“So all 2.2 million Marylanders who are registered to be organ donors, I am in charge of that registry, first and foremost,” Spicknall said, explaining what her duties entail. “And then also outreach and any legislation.”

DLM’s executive director also keeps up with legislative activity to determine the organization’s stance which enables the organization to work with legislators. But



*April is National Donate Life Month. President Joe Biden joined supporters in raising awareness about organ, eye, tissue, marrow, and blood donors and transplants. Lisa Spicknall, who is Donate Life Maryland’s (DLM) Executive Director, is also encouraging individuals to register to be an organ, eye, and tissue donor. DLM partners with the Maryland MVA. Interested parties may register in-person at a location, while renewing a driver’s license, or online via DLM’s website.*

Courtesy Photo: Emma Sampson, The Living Legacy Foundation

despite constantly working to achieve life-giving goals, Spicknall’s duties do not come without needing to dispel organ donation myths.

“The biggest one, I think, is that hospitals or first responders won’t save ‘me’ if I’m a registered donor, and that’s just not true. What we know is hospitals and first responders are going to do absolutely everything that they can to save you. And generally, they don’t even know if you’re an organ donor. So, the first thing that someone’s doing, they’re not checking your organ donation status. Their first and primary focus is on you,” Spicknall said.

Another misconception that Spicknall mentioned is that ill, rich or famous people are prioritized on organ donation lists. No priority is given, according to DLM’s executive director. Severity of their health condition, time spent waiting for a donation, blood type, and any other critical medical information that may

influence the transplant list position.

It is critical to note that the organ donation topic impacts ordinary people, too. More than 100,000 U.S.-based men, women, and children need a life-saving organ transplant, per information provided in Biden’s recent proclamation.

“Last year, because of the charity and generosity of the American people, our nation’s transplant experts performed more than 41,000 organ transplants — a record number. We saw organ donations

from deceased donors set an annual record for the 11th consecutive year. Living donor transplants, which decreased significantly in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, increased with over 6,500 living donor transplants performed,” Biden said. “Despite our progress, our nation continues to face a critical shortage of organ donors, and the number of people in need of a transplant is high, with 17 people dying every day while waiting for a transplant.”

Information provided by [www.organdonor.gov](http://www.organdonor.gov) reminded that age or medical history does not restrict an individual from deciding to sign up to be a donor. A single donor can save eight lives and improve more than 75 additional ones, according to provided details. Biden also mentioned alarming waitlist data. People of color almost comprise 60 percent of individuals who are waiting for an organ transplant.

With all of this in mind, Spicknall’s call to action is simple. She wants more individuals to become registered organ donors. Potential Maryland donors may sign up while renewing their driver’s license at the Motor Vehicle Administration, or it can be done online through DLM.

“You can save up to eight lives and really, really help someone who’s in need, if you do face that tragic circumstance of dying,” Spicknall said. “Understand the myths and misconceptions. Reach out to us to ask the questions and let us help you make the best decision for you.”

Visit [www.donatelifemaryland.org](http://www.donatelifemaryland.org) to learn more about Donate Life Maryland’s online donor registration.

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# U.S. Trade Rep. Katherine Tai, U.K. Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan tour Fearless headquarters on visit to Baltimore

By *Demetrius Dillard*

As part of the ongoing United States-United Kingdom dialogues on the future of Atlantic trade, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai and United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan visit one of the region's top technology companies in downtown Baltimore for a special, exclusive tour on March 22, 2022.

Fearless Solutions, LLC, a full stack digital services firm that specializes in building innovative cutting-edge software, is the largest software development company in the greater Baltimore region. The company hosted the dignitaries, who were later joined by Mayor Brandon Scott, for a tour of its headquarters facility located within the Power Plant Live complex.

"The U.S./U.K. Dialogues on the Future of Atlantic Trade will explore how the United States and United Kingdom can collaborate to advance mutual international trade priorities rooted in our shared values, while promoting innovation and inclusive economic growth for workers and businesses on both sides of the Atlantic," says a press release from the Office of the United States Trade Representative.

"The trade ministers will use these events as they further deepen our important U.S-UK bilateral trade relationship and address our shared challenges and opportunities through discussions over the following months."

Fearless is Black-owned and is the largest software development company in the greater Baltimore region with nearly \$60 million in revenue and 200 employees, and is a rapidly emerging leader in the delivery of digital solutions,



*Left to right) Mayor Brandon Scott, Fearless CEO Delali Dzirasa, United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan and U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai. Photo: Courtesy of Fearless*

particularly for various governmental agencies.

"Ultimately, our vision is to create a world where software powers things that matter and this is just the beginning," said Dzirasa, an Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year (2021) for the Mid-Atlantic award winner.

When the trade ministers, Tai and Trevelyan, arrived at Fearless, they were greeted with handshakes and smiles from Fearless CEO and founder Delali Dzirasa and a few of the company's executives.

Before the tour began, Dzirasa welcomed Tai and Trevelyan and explained the mission of Fearless, the purpose of the company's studios and some of its minority-focused incubator programs. Tai and Trevelyan were accompanied by members of their offices for the visit.

Following Dzirasa's remarks, the tour began with a look at Fearless' scrum

teams office where the rundown of DoD (definition of done) support, content management system and design initiatives were explained in detail by Fearless digital services manager Ryan Ganser.

The tour's second stop was the software infrastructure and automation room, where guests learned about the code deployment process and the systems that enable data to be handled properly. Over the course of the tour, trade ministers asked Delali and Fearless employees questions, such as government contracting.

Next, visitors went to the testing lab where employees Alex De Los Reyes and Marques Jackson showed a testing demonstration then discussed how context-driven testing is facilitated and approached.

The company's podcast room and brand & communications design lab were the next two destinations in the tour before everyone headed to the Hutch Workspace, perhaps the highlight of the day. The workspace, located on the facility's bottom floor, incubates 20 companies and is changing the scope of diversity and inclusion in the technology industry.

Hutch is Fearless' incubator program that supports minority entrepreneurs. Tai,

Trevelyan and Scott seemed intrigued with that portion of the tour in particular and exchanged ideas and acknowledgements with some of the business owners gathered at the workspace.

Through dialogues with partners in the U.K., it was clear to Representative Tai that the U.S. and U.K. share fundamental values in regard to what's important in the world, she said, adding that she anticipates "bringing the spirit of Fearless" to trade dialogues moving forward.

"I am delighted to be able to bring Secretary Trevelyan and her team from the U.K. to Baltimore," Tai said. "This tour through Fearless, getting to know the talent over in the Hutch incubator, the innovation that we see here, the connection between technology and people and community is inspiring to me in terms of what we're trying to do in trade policy."

The final stop was the Mural Conference Room in which Tai, Trevelyan and Fearless executives met for a brief discussion before the day concluded with a press conference in the lobby area.

"Today, we had the opportunity to learn about one of our good companies here in Baltimore, Fearless, that is changing the world through software programming... it's really about how we grow that, and how we do that in an inclusive way," Scott said.

In addition to the tour, Fearless' four core values: take initiative, create belonging, open dialogue and make an impact, caught Trevelyan's attention. She'll be inviting Tai and her team to the U.K. this month to carry on the trade dialogues, she emphasized.

"As I look at Fearless's four values, I think we can do much with that," she said.

"It's so important understanding the digital world and making sure that it has the right values. Fearless [serves as] something here in Baltimore as that baseline from which we all want to make sure that we are building a better, stronger and safer world for our children."



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## Demystifying Health Coverage

# Health Expert Will Contribute Content to The Baltimore Times Newspaper

By Andrea Blackstone

On any given day, a percentage of Americans feel torn about pursuing medical care because of the risk of financial stress. Seeking professional aid for everything from aching teeth to mental health services can be influenced by how individuals will pay for deductibles, procedures, or preventative care.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation's polling, "half of U.S. adults say they put off or skipped some sort of health care or dental care in the past year because of the cost. Three in ten (29%) also report not taking their medicines as prescribed at some point in the past year because of the cost."

La-Villa Brooks, the owner of Brooks Home and Healthcare Management, LLC, understands the plight of individuals who face challenges that relate to obtaining medical coverage and paying for medical expenses. Brooks has roots in Harlem and Long Island, New York. She serves clients in her home state and in Maryland. She will contribute future health-related information to The Baltimore Times newspaper.

While running her business full-time, Brooks provides streamlined information in the continuum of healthcare to address healthcare needs. Her experience includes applying for insurance through the government-related Health Insurance Marketplace, navigation through local Department of Social Services for long term care needs, and providing market analysis and quality assurance for local, state and federal applications in case management. Brooks' healthcare experience includes over 12 years of work in the industry. She is highly skilled in obtaining results for clients who need support applying for Medicaid, Medicare, long term, chronic care, and veteran health care services.

Her journey began working for a law firm in healthcare assisting hospital clientele to become Medicaid eligible. She also continues to work with the aged, blind, disabled, and youth population.

"When people are admitted into the hospital, they don't necessarily have health insurance or the means in place to



***La-Villa Brooks will contribute healthcare information to The Baltimore Times newspaper. She owns Brooks Home and Healthcare Management, LLC. Through her business, Brooks provides streamlined information about healthcare. The expert uses 12 years of experience in the health care industry to help navigate healthcare from the initial process through to completion. She also lends support services to clients beyond the application process. Courtesy Photo***

afford their hospital stay. This happens when they are unaware or uninformed about their eligibility for government programs such as Medicaid," Brooks said.

Charting a successful career path led to Brooks' desire to create a family legacy for her children through the Brooks name. Furthering her education, and pursuing an entrepreneurial path in the healthcare field, enabled the savvy expert to take the next steps to make it happen.

"I pursued my master's [degree]. I earned my MPA (Master of Public Administration). My daughter, who is currently working in hospital administration, is pursuing her master's in health care," Brooks said. "I founded Brooks Home Healthcare Management on the premise

of helping guide others through the process of healthcare and its ever-changing landscape. Another reason I started my business was to create an environment that my family could be involved with and have guaranteed employment in serving others."

Brooks tapped into her knowledge of assisting people in Nassau and Suffolk counties in N.Y. to build a business of her own. She gained experience supporting a variety of individuals in getting qualified for health insurance. They included everyone from people who needed long-term care to young, pregnant teenagers.

"As part of New York state's health-care initiative, I provided quality assurance to the Department of Social Services (DSS) through a grant program that allowed people to become qualified for Medicaid and Medicare. I was responsible for verifying all information for applications submitted to Suffolk and Nassau counties. I made sure that their applications were airtight before submitting them to the local DSS. For four consecutive years, applications I worked on contained less than one percent error. Ninety nine percent of applications I prepared were not denied," Brooks said.

The Army veteran is also experienced navigating beyond guaranteed services the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers. Some of Brooks' clients in Maryland have parents who require nursing home care, or they are seeking manners of supportive care which will enable them to balance medical demands, while they work.

Brooks will offer expert health coverage knowledge about a host of topics to The Baltimore Times' readers twice a month. A "Did you know?" component will be included at the end of each article. Readers can also write in and ask Brooks questions.

"The goal is to provide education through my articles. I want people to become enlightened and informed. I strive to provide healthcare resources for the community," Brooks said.



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# Rambling Rose

**Baltimore's own "Bobby Starr"  
of The Intruders passed away**



*Rosa Pryor Trusty*

First, I want to say, "Hello" to everyone, and I hope that you and your family are happy and doing well. I want to bring you up to date about my husband, "Boo-Boo" "Shorty" who checked into Saint Agnes Hospital on March 28th to have surgery on his lungs. We are hoping and praying for complete removal of the cancer. He is expected to be in the hospital for at least 5 days. Please keep him in your prayers.

I received news last week that a friend, and one of my entertainers Robert "Bobby Star" Ferguson passed away on March 18, 2022; he was born January 19, 1937. I was lucky to have managed "Bobby Star" for a couple of years back in the late 1970s as a solo artist. One of the first gigs that I booked for him was Moe's Cocktail Lounge on Green Street. Bobby was born and raised in Baltimore; he always could sing. He toured with a variety of vocal groups as a teen before he formed his own group called "Bobby Starr and the Versatilles."

While on tour with the Versatilles, he met the Philadelphia recording group, "The Intruders." The Intruders' lead singer, Samuel "Little Sonny" Brown chose Starr to replace him when he opted out to spend time with his family. The rest is history. Bobby Starr joining the Intruders led to many hit singles such as "When We Get Married," "I'm Girl Scoutin'," "Cowboys to Girls" and "I Bet He Don't Love You," just to name a few on the Gamble Recording Label.

The Intruders disbanded in the early 1980s and reformed under the direction of Glenn Montgomery. The members then were Bobby Starr, Glenn Montgomery, James Murphy and Phil Gay. With the support of Phillip "Phil" Terry and Robert "Big Sonny" Edwards, the surviving members of the original group, The Intruders continue to perform

today. Big Sonny and Phil proudly passed the torch. Sadly, missed are Eugene "Bird" Daughtry, who passed away on December 25, 1994 and Sam "Little Sonny" Brown, who died four months later on April 17, 1995 and now Robert "Bobby Starr" Ferguson in 2022. Condolences to the Ferguson family as well as the R&B singer families. We lost another good one!

## "LIVE ENTERTAINMENT IS ALIVE AGAIN"

Okay my dear fans and followers, we have a few shows with live entertainment to tell you about. First, we want to tell you about Greg Hatza Hammond Organ Trio who will be performing in concert at An Die Musik on Charles Street on Sunday, April 10 starting at 7 p.m. Greg will be hammering on his B-3 Organ. Man-o-man this will be a show to check out and remember for weeks after it is over. So if you are into some down-home blues and Be-bop jazz, I suggest that you get your ticket now and check out this show. For more information, call 410-385-2638.

We don't want to stop there, another one of my musicians Phill Butts will be doing his thing too. He is calling it "Hot Jazz & Razzama Tazz." Dr. Phill Butts Big Band featuring song stylist "LARZINE" will take place at the Roof House of the Arena Players, 801 McCulloh Street on Saturday, April 9 from 6-9 p.m. For tickets and information call 443-676-4543 or 410-493-5022.

The Gladiator Association will be celebrating their "46<sup>th</sup> Annual Bull & Oyster Roast" at Martin's West, on Dogwood Road on Sunday, April 10 from 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more information call 410-428-0270. I don't believe they will have live entertainment, but you will be so busy eating that good food, the DJ will be all that you will need.



*Bobby Starr, Baltimore's Own, former vocalist with the international recording group the Intruders passed away March 18, 2022*



*The Intruders, 1968*



*The extraordinary Dr. Phill Butts with his Big Band featuring Song Stylist Larzine will present "Hot Jazz & Razzama Tazz" at the historic Arena Player, 801 McCulloh Street in Baltimore on Saturday, April 9, 6-9 p.m. For more information and tickets call, 443-676-4543 or 410-294-4821.*



*Greg Hatza, renowned musician, organist and band leader will perform on his B-3 organ with his trio in concert at An Die Musik on Sunday April 10 at 7 p.m. For more information, call 410-385-2638.*

Oh, My Goodness! My dear friend! The Caton Castle Night Club and Lounge, 20 S. Caton Avenue will be back open and swinging this weekend. Thank God! I am so glad. I know you are too!

Well, my dear friends, I have got to go to spend some time with my "Boo-Boo". Remember if you need me call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at rosapryor@aol.com. **UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.**





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## Legal Notice

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NOTICE OF LETTING

Sealed Bids or Proposals, in duplicate addressed to the Board of Estimates of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore and marked for **BALTIMORE CITY NO. RP18810R DRUID HILL PARK REPTILE HOUSE RENOVATIONS** will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M. **May 18, 2022**. Positively no bids will be received after 11:00 A.M. Bids will be publicly opened by the Board of Estimates in Room 215, City Hall at Noon. The proposed Contract Documents may be examined, without charge, at the Dept. of Rec & Parks at 2600 Madison Ave, Baltimore, Md. 21217 by appointment only on Wednesdays and Fridays, 8:30am – 4:00pm by emailing [benitaj.randolph@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:benitaj.randolph@baltimorecity.gov) as of **April 8, 2022** and copies may be purchased for a non-refundable cost of **\$200.00**. **Conditions and requirements of the Bid are found in the bid package.** All contractors bidding on this Contract must first be prequalified by the City of Baltimore Contractors Qualification Committee. Interested parties should call (410) 396-6883 or contact the Committee at 4 South Frederick Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. **If a bid is submitted by a joint venture ("JV"), then in that event, the document that established the JV shall be submitted with the bid for verification purposes.** The Prequalification Category required for bidding on this project is **E13001 Three Story and Under or E13006 Renovation of Historic/Specialty Structures**. Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be **\$1,000,000.00 to \$2,000,000.00**. A MANDATORY "Pre-Bidding Information" session will be conducted via Microsoft Teams at **10:00 A.M.** on **April 20, 2022**. Email your contact information to [LDecker@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:LDecker@baltimorecity.gov) to receive an invite to the Microsoft Team(video conference meeting) no later than **April 19, 2022** at 12pm. Principal Items of work for this project are stabilization, restoration and interior renovation of the Reptile house in Druid Hill Park including demolition of the non-original rear addition, repair and restoration of the exterior (brick walls, stucco walls, concrete vaulting, tile roof, and original wood windows and doors), minor site work, new electrical and gas service, stabilization of the main floor structure, conservation of the historic vault, removal of existing partitions and fixtures, insertion of new partition walls, all new electrical, plumbing, and gas infrastructure, and HVAC and communication systems. The MBE goal is **26%** and WBE goal is **11%**.

APPROVED: M. Celeste Amato, Clerk, Board of Estimates

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