

# COMMITMENTS MADE: STATE OF THE STATE, 2009

## Maintaining Fiscal Responsibility in a Difficult Economy

- It is my hope, and it is my belief, and it is my expectation that the balanced budget we were required by law to submit to you this month, will be a better budget by the time it's up for final consideration in April.
  - ▶ Fully funded Thornton including the GCEI for the first time ever, includes no employee layoffs, and provides for a 3.8% increase to community colleges when no increase was provided in our original budget.

## Protecting Our Progress in Public Education

- We are, therefore, proposing the largest investment our State has ever made in our public schools of \$5.4 billion,... even in these tough times.
  - ▶ Secured more than \$5.5 billion for our #1 ranked public schools, and brought our three year school construction and renovation investments to over \$1 billion.
- We are also investing more in college affordability,... even in these tough times.
- Now that we have the best public schools in America, we must strive through our first-ever statewide Teacher Survey, and with expanded Career and Technical Education, and renewed emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (or STEM) to make Maryland public schools the best in the world.
- And there is no single investment we can make that expands opportunity to more Marylanders like the investments we make to put the dreams of a college education within the grasp of more hard-working Maryland families.

## Protecting the Safety Net for Maryland's Working Families

- I need your help -- to provide a record \$132 million in energy assistance for more than 125,000 Marylanders who are struggling to pay their heating bills this cold winter.
- I need your help -- to expand health care coverage to more of our families. Together we can make a real difference by investing \$15 million to assist small businesses with obtaining health care coverage for their employees.
  - ▶ The General Assembly passed legislation that authorizes Governor O'Malley to increase funding for this program in order to meet actual demand.
- And together we can keep 700,000 Marylanders insured by investing over \$5.5 billion in Medicaid and the Maryland Children's Health Program.

- Many of our neighbors rely on part time jobs in order to feed their families. This year, I need your help -- to make them eligible to receive unemployment benefits for the first time in our State.
- I need your help -- to crack down on the shameful practice of cheating workers out of rights and benefits by fraudulently “misclassifying” employees as independent contractors when clearly they are not.
- And I need your help to give State workers the right to organize themselves, if they should so chose, by passing Fair Share enabling legislation.
- So let this year be the year that our great State becomes the first in the nation to humbly acknowledge this important duality, not only by pledging to redouble our efforts on land, water, and air to save the Chesapeake Bay, but let this also be the year, that we come together as the first State in the union to commit ourselves to eradicating childhood hunger by 2015.
- I also need your help to guarantee a prevailing wage to workers on 118 more state-sponsored construction projects.

### Making Our Neighborhoods Safer for Families

- We can build upon this progress with better technology, better law enforcement coordination, and better re-entry programs. We can build upon this progress with your support of our Child Safety Net legislation, and your support to take firearms out of the hands of domestic abusers.
- We are investing more in public safety,... even in these tough times.
- And we could have even more resources to accomplish all of these important life-saving goals, if you would follow me in abolishing an outdated, expensive, and utterly ineffective death penalty in Maryland.
- Governor O’Malley successfully updated Maryland’s death penalty law to one of the strictest standards in the nation that dramatically reduces the possibility that an innocent individual could be sentenced to death in our State.