



OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND

Anne Colt Leitess, State's Attorney



Anne Arundel Justice

A Monthly News Digest from the Office of the State's Attorney for Anne Arundel County

A Message from Anne Arundel County State's Attorney Anne Colt Leitess



It's been more than a month since the world watched as 46-year-old George Floyd was murdered by a Minneapolis police officer who knelt on his neck and ignored his pleas for help. Even more disturbing was that fellow officers did not intervene to stop this from happening. This cruel and senseless crime has sparked an awareness of our country's need to fight racism and systemic injustices within our country at every level.

On June 19, we celebrated Juneteenth - a date that serves as the symbolic end of slavery, more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by President Lincoln, because the post-Civil War southern states could no longer ignore the law declaring that African Americans could not be held in bondage. In honor of Juneteenth, our office joined community members and public officials in a remembrance walk to reinforce our commitment to be a part in the fight against racism and the injustices that tear our community apart. We cannot and will not tolerate racism in our county and we will not be bystanders. We must all speak up and speak out.

These two contrasting events - which are separated by more than 150 years - highlight an unfortunate reality that all Americans must face today: African Americans have been and continue to be marginalized by social inequities

and economic injustices. Now is the time to listen, identify and take action against the bias and prejudice that exist within ourselves and our society.

In the Office of the State's Attorney, I am proud of our commitment to build a diverse office that reflects the community at large. I am committed to fostering an inclusive and respectful work environment and am welcoming suggestions from staff on the various ways we can ensure that happens. We all come from different walks of life and backgrounds – and have different experiences - but it is paramount that we understand that we must not allow or tolerate racism or prejudice to remain by our silence and inaction.

Courts Return to Phase III of Operations

Since March 17, 2020, the Maryland District and Circuit Courts have limited court appearances to telephonic and video hearings on a very narrow basis. Anne Arundel has fared better than many other counties in keeping court operations moving along because we are a fully-electronic court system with online document exchange and filings and the ability to schedule, provide notice and manage operations remotely. On July 20, 2020, there will be a resumption of in-person court hearings such as sentencing, motions hearings and guilty pleas. There will be no jury trials scheduled until October 5, 2020.

Despite these restrictions and the backlog of more than 750 criminal cases in the Circuit Court, there have been more than 200 telephonic status conference hearings and more than 100 guilty pleas heard. Our office also worked with the courts and defense counsel to identify any one being held in the detention center who did not pose a risk to public safety for consideration for release, house arrest and other forms of pre-trial monitoring to further limit their exposure to COVID-19.

Our return to “normal” at the courthouses will include temperature checks for all entering the buildings, mandatory masks in public spaces, staggered hearing schedules and social distancing in the courtrooms. These precautions have been outlined by the Maryland Judiciary and our local court administrators to keep the public and courthouse personnel safe as we continue to flatten the curve and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our state.

Protecting Yourself from Financial Exploitation

In an analysis by the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau reported last year, since 2013 financial institutions has reported to the federal government over 180,000 suspicious activities targeting older adults, involving a total of more than \$6 billion in attempted and actual losses including financial exploitation of older adults by scammers.

At the Office of the State's Attorney for Anne Arundel County, we're aware of the risk and the devastating financial loss seniors can face from their caregivers, loved ones and online scammers. Our community outreach program, Education through Prevention, provides a number of quality-of-life topics including senior fraud prevention, which we present to groups

throughout the year. My deputy state's attorney, Brian Marsh, focuses on giving seniors the tools to identify and avoid financial exploitation. In recognition of Protect Week, which raises awareness and helps identify financial scams that target the elderly, I'd like to provide a few tips on preventing online crimes.

Reputable Charity or Ruse?

Throughout the year, many Americans want to give to charities, but it's difficult to be sure you're giving to a reputable organization. Instead of responding to solicitations for donations, it's better to reach out yourself to a charity you trust. Verify that an organization is a nonprofit by going to Charity Checker, GIVE.org or CharityWatch.org. If it is not, do not send money or provide any personal information.

Click [here](#) to read the entire article.

Congratulations to the Class of 2020!

It's truly been a bittersweet year for our graduates who have celebrated their graduations through virtual commencement ceremonies or with family and friends through drive through celebrations. To each of you, I applaud your patience as you have taken these challenges in stride and navigated our new normal while remaining excited about the future.

Thank you for your hard work and diligence and I wish you all the best on your journey! Congratulations!!

Click [here](#) to view our amazing graduates!

I hope that you share this email with a friend and encourage them to sign up for my monthly newsletter which is packed with timely and pertinent information.

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