



MARYLAND

Changing Maryland for the Better

An Interview with
Larry Hogan, Governor of Maryland

EDITORS' NOTE Governor Larry Hogan was inaugurated as the 62nd governor of the State of Maryland in January of 2015. Prior to being elected, he worked in the private sector for more than 25 years as a successful Maryland business owner. Frustration with the out-of-touch leadership in Annapolis led him to found Change Maryland, the largest nonpartisan organization in state history, dedicated to bringing fiscal responsibility and common sense to Maryland state government.



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Spurred by massive public engagement and the success of Change Maryland, Governor Hogan ran for the state's highest office in 2014 on a platform of fiscal restraint, tax relief, and job creation. In November of 2014, he won 20 out of 23 counties by an average of 35 percent, leading to the return of balanced government to Annapolis for the first time since 2006. Governor Hogan also worked closely with the agricultural and environmental communities to develop enhanced Phosphorous Management Tool regulations. To address the state's heroin addiction epidemic, Governor Hogan created the Maryland Heroin and Opioid Emergency Task Force. He also established the Regulatory Reform Commission, which is currently conducting a top-to-bottom review of every single regulation in the state. The Redistricting Reform Commission, also established in 2015, directly led to Hogan-sponsored legislation to end the partisan drawing of district lines.

Would you discuss the mission of Change Maryland and the impact and success of the organization?

When I started Change Maryland, I never expected that it would reach so many people and have as much of an impact as it did. It started off as an idea among a few friends and grew into the largest nonpartisan grassroots organization in the history of our state. We sought to shine a spotlight on the tax-and-spend policies that were chasing jobs and businesses out of our state and making it harder to live, work, and raise a family in Maryland. As it turns out, Marylanders of all political stripes agreed, and pushing for commonsense economic reforms became the focal point of our campaign.

Would you discuss the priorities for your administration and how you have addressed these issues since you assumed office?

Creating jobs, reining in government spending, and providing tax and fee relief are top priorities of our administration. Since taking office, Maryland has added more than 70,000 jobs, and we're growing jobs at one of the fastest paces in the nation. Our economy has jumped from 49th to 11th place among all 50 states, according to analysis from the federal government. In our first legislative session, we successfully delivered tax relief for our veterans and repealed the notorious Rain Tax mandate. We've reduced or eliminated over 250 state fees,

saving taxpayers over \$110 million, in addition to cutting tolls at every facility across the state.

How have you addressed education reform in Maryland and are you happy with the impact you have made in this regard?

Maryland has some of the best schools in the nation, but there are also districts where schools have been struggling for years. Finding innovative solutions to close that performance gap is extremely important, and we've taken critical steps to ensure every child in our state has access to a world-class education.

Our administration has made the largest investment in our K-12 public school system in the history of our state. However, money alone is not enough. We owe it to our children to think outside the box and find creative solutions.

To help prepare Maryland students for the jobs of tomorrow, we launched our P-TECH (Pathways in Technology Early College High School) program this year, which is a nationally recognized approach to education that blends high school, college, and work experience. P-TECH students complete a six-year education program, graduating with both a high school diploma and a two-year postsecondary degree in a STEM field from an accredited community college. Students in the P-TECH program are then first in line for skilled jobs upon graduation. The first two P-TECH schools in Maryland opened this year in Baltimore City.

We've also worked to give parents better alternatives for their children's education in areas where school systems are still struggling. By strengthening charter school laws in the state and signing legislation to provide scholarships for low-income students to attend nonpublic or faith-based schools, we are giving students the opportunity for a better education and a brighter future.

How critical is the investment in infrastructure to the future growth of Maryland?

A balanced approach to transportation and improving infrastructure is extremely critical to the future growth and strength of Maryland. In the past, the Transportation Trust Fund was routinely raided, and much-needed transportation dollars were diverted to pay for out-of-control state spending while our roads and bridges were neglected. Not only are we working to restore the money that was taken but we have invested \$2 billion in priority road and bridge projects in every single jurisdiction in the state.

We're also investing in transit by moving forward with building the Purple Line commuter rail project in the Washington, D.C. suburbs at a fraction of the original projected cost to Maryland taxpayers. We transformed transit in the Baltimore area through the new BaltimoreLink bus line, which is designed to connect jobs to people in the city who need them most.

You were diagnosed with Stage 3 non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and went through aggressive treatment, but have since announced that you are 100 percent cancer free and in complete remission. Would you touch on the major efforts that you have undertaken to raise awareness for all of those battling cancer and supporting efforts to find a cure?

I made the decision to share my diagnosis with the public because I believe it is important to be as open and honest as possible with the people who elected me to serve. I never could have predicted the incredible outpouring of prayers and support from Marylanders in every corner of the state. Knowing that there were millions of people around the state, even around the world, praying for me and supporting me, gave me strength to keep fighting.

But it was really my interactions with my fellow cancer patients, especially young children, which had the biggest impact on me. Meeting these kids and their families has inspired me to stay involved in this fight and to keep raising awareness until a cure is found.

How have you been able to drive action and create change for Maryland in today's political environment?

Since taking office, I've been focused on doing exactly what I said I would do during my campaign: controlling government spending, providing relief to hardworking taxpayers, growing our economy, and putting people back to work. That's what Marylanders voted for, it's what they deserve, and as governor, it's my responsibility to make sure it becomes a reality. ●