



M U L T I S T A T E

[Former House Speaker DiMasi's Efforts To Become A Lobbyist After Compassionate Release From Prison Denied](#)

Former House Speaker Sal DiMasi on Thursday lost his appeal of Secretary of State William Galvin's decision to deny his application to become a lobbyist on Beacon Hill based on his past conviction in federal court on corruption charges.

The denial means his case will likely move out of an administrative hearing room and into the court system where the former Democratic leader and his attorney have said they intend to fight for DiMasi's right to lobby.

Galvin denied DiMasi's application to register as a lobbyist in March, citing a 2009 state law that calls for anyone found to be "in violation" of state ethics, lobbying or campaign finance laws to be automatically disqualified from lobbying for 10 years. DiMasi's attorney Meredith Fierro argued that the law spoke only to state crimes, and not violations of federal statutes. She said the legislature could have, but decided against including federal law in the list of crimes that would warrant automatic lobbying disqualification.

The hearing officer in the case, Peter Cassidy, ruled on the day after Christmas that the automatic denial was appropriate, and that the "narrow interpretation" argued by DiMasi's attorney was "at odds with the regulatory scheme established by the Lobbying Law, and the intentions of the legislature."

"The Lobbying Law is designed to protect the integrity of legislative process, public resources and citizens' trust in their government from the effects of dishonesty and abuse in lobbying," Cassidy wrote in his decision. "This law must be interpreted in light of the problems it is intended to address and the objects it is intended to accomplish."

Cassidy, who works as an attorney with Galvin's Securities Division, said he was not drawing any conclusions from the Legislature's decision not to include federal crimes in the automatic disqualification section of the law. He also said that as a hearing officer he was not "empowered" to address constitutional free speech issues raised by DiMasi's attorney.

In a separate ruling, Cassidy granted DiMasi's motion to dismiss Galvin's "alternate theory" that DiMasi had violated state lobbying laws while serving as speaker for failing to register as a lobbyist for the work he did on behalf of Cognos, the software company who benefited from contracts DiMasi helped secure in exchange for financial kickbacks that resulted in his federal conviction.

[Virginia's House Speaker-elect to leave job at lobbying firm](#)

Virginia's House Speaker-elect is stepping down from her job at a lobbying firm as she prepares for her new leadership role.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported Tuesday that [Eileen Filler-Corn](#) is doing so to alleviate the potential for conflicts of interest.

The Democrat had served as government relations director at Albers & Company. The firm lobbies at the Statehouse and governor's office on health care and energy issues.

[Filing seeks former Arkansas lawmaker's Florida house after guilty plea in corruption case](#)

Federal prosecutors have asked a judge to order a key figure in Arkansas' long-running public corruption scandal, former state legislator Eddie Cooper, D-Melbourne, to forfeit his interest in a Florida house he owns with a co-conspirator.

Cooper and former Capitol lobbyist Milton "Rusty" Cranford of Rogers are owners of the house in North Port, Fla., that prosecutors valued at \$245,000, according to a motion for forfeiture filed Tuesday in federal court in western Missouri.

Both have pleaded guilty in connection with the political corruption scandal in which Arkansas legislators were paid to pass laws and regulations favorable to nonprofits for which Cranford and Cooper worked.

Prosecutors said the government intends to sell or dispose of the house at 2004 Boca Chica Ave. and apply the proceeds to fines and forfeitures levied against the two.

The North Port house is described on the real estate website Zillow.com as a three-bedroom, two-bathroom structure of 1,858 square feet built in 1995. It also has an in-ground pool and covered lanai.

"This is a lovely custom built home with a great corner lot located on a greenbelt," according to the description of the property. The house isn't on the market, the website says. Zillow valued it at \$232,598.

North Port, population about 66,300, is located 84 miles south of Tampa, about a 20-minute drive to Gulf Coast beaches.

Prosecutors said Preferred Family Healthcare Inc. paid Cranford and Cooper, who were employed by the company, "rent" on the North Port property for company retreats. But prosecutors alleged the payments actually were one method used by the nonprofit's executives to steal assets from their company.

Preferred Family at one time was Arkansas' largest provider of government-funded mental health treatment, through the federal- and state-operated Medicaid program.

Tuesday's filing invited any others with ownership interest to petition the court for a hearing on their rights to the forfeited property. Sarasota County, Fla., property records list a third owner of the house who has not been connected to the crimes.

The public corruption scandal spanning Arkansas and western Missouri became public knowledge with a guilty plea by one ex-legislator, former Rep. Micah Neal, R-Springdale, in January 2017.

Four more former state legislators, including Cooper, have pleaded guilty or been convicted since. Another 11 players, including Cranford, have pleaded guilty or face charges.

Cooper pleaded guilty in February 2018 to one count of conspiracy to embezzle from Preferred Family, where he worked. The plot involving Cranford and other executives centered on using the nonprofit's proceeds illegally for lobbying, for political campaign contributions and for their own enrichment, according to his guilty plea.

Cooper's sentencing date hasn't been set.

Tuesday's filing also asked U.S. District Judge Brian Wimes to direct a monetary judgment against Cooper, to be announced at his sentencing.

Cranford, who worked as a Preferred Family executive while also operating political lobbying firms in Little Rock, was sentenced Nov. 25 to seven years in prison and was ordered to return \$3.73 million in taxpayer money.

Three of the nonprofit's former executives have pleaded guilty in connection with public corruption crimes. Two more, married couple and former top executives Tom and Bontiea Goss, have pleaded innocent and await trial in 2021.

Cooper and Cranford have faced prosecution in Springfield, Mo., because Preferred Family was located in that district.

The federal investigation into the political corruption scandal has also led to indictments of executives with Northwest Arkansas' Ecclesia College and a Magnolia youth lockup and treatment nonprofit, South Arkansas Youth Services. They have also been convicted of bribing legislators to produce laws, state grants and regulations that benefited their operations.

The federal investigation is ongoing, prosecutors say.

The federal public defender's office, which represents Cooper, and the U.S. attorney's office in Springfield, Mo., were closed Wednesday.

Lawmakers in Pre-Session Dash for Cash

Before many Marylanders have even rubbed the sleep out of their eyes Thursday morning, state lawmakers, lobbyists and other power brokers will start six grueling days on the fundraising circuit, moving in flocks from one political event to another.

It's the annual dash for campaign cash that precedes the General Assembly session, which begins this year at noon on Jan. 8. From that day forward until the last night of the session, on April 6, state legislators and the four statewide officials — the governor, the lieutenant governor, the comptroller and the attorney general — are banned from raising money.

(There are a few exceptions to this rule: Legislators who are candidates for Congress can keep raising money for their federal campaign committees. And legislators who are candidates for office in the 2020 Baltimore City elections can continue raising money, even though their state campaign accounts are being used to advance their city campaigns.)

But this annual ritual isn't just a dash for cash — it's also a last-minute dash for influence, with special interests and their well-connected lobbyists digging deep to pay tribute one last time to the people who hold the fate of legislative initiatives in their hands.

It isn't the prettiest element of democracy.

At least 60 lawmaker fundraisers are taking place between the morning of Jan. 2 and the evening of Jan. 7, involving more than one-third of the General Assembly. The carousel begins at 7:30 a.m. on Thursday with a fundraiser for Sen. Guy J. Guzzone (D-Howard), the incoming chairman of the Budget and Taxation Committee, and ends Tuesday evening with an event for the bipartisan Women Legislators of Maryland Inc., with House Speaker Adrienne A. Jones (D-Baltimore County) as the featured speaker.

In between, Jones and incoming Senate President Bill Ferguson (D-Baltimore City) are holding fundraisers. So are the Republican leaders of the House and Senate. So are the chairmen of three of the four standing Senate committees and the chairs of four of the six standing House committees. So are the House speaker pro tem, the House majority leader, the Senate president pro tem, and the chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus.

For this six-day period, it may seem as if Harry Browne's, the multi-tiered restaurant and watering hole just across from the State House on State Circle, is the center of the political universe, but that wouldn't be fair to the other Annapolis establishments that are regularly used as venues for fundraisers. Still, at least 18 of these events are taking place at Harry Browne's.

Not everyone is doing a standard breakfast or happy hour at a watering hole close to the State House. Del. Regina T. Boyce (D-Baltimore City) is hosting a dance party in her district. Del. Johnny Mautz (R-Middle Shore) is using the historic Avalon Theater in Easton as a fundraising venue.

Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan (D-Montgomery) is inviting donors to join her for a milkshake at Chick and Ruth's Delly in downtown Annapolis — famous for naming menu items after Maryland politicians (including a thin mint milkshake named for Kagan). Sen. Christopher R. West (R-Baltimore County) is talking issues at the Annapolis office of the American Institute of Architects. There is no set ticket price; West is asking for a "modest donation."

The four lawmakers from Montgomery County's District 14 — Sen. Craig J. Zucker (D) and Dels. Anne R. Kaiser (D), Eric G. Luedtke (D) and Pamela Queen (D) — are hosting back-to-back-to-back-to-back fundraisers on a single evening in adjoining bars in Annapolis. Republicans from specific committees are teaming up to hold joint fundraisers.

It would cost at least \$9,236.20 to attend every one of these fundraisers, paying the minimum ticket price. The reality is, lawmakers will be collecting a whole lot more.

What follows is a list of all the fundraisers scheduled for the six days before the General Assembly session begins — or at least those Maryland Matters knows about. The roster has been put together from invitations that we have seen, lists compiled by lobbying firms, and political committee websites. It's possible we have missed a few.

We publish these not to advertise the events themselves, but to highlight just how much money is going to change hands in the hours before the 90-day legislative session begins.

Thursday, Jan. 2

** 7:30-9:30 a.m. Senate Budget and Taxation Chairman Guy J. Guzzone (D-Howard), featuring incoming Senate President Bill Ferguson (D-Baltimore City). Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$75 and up

** 8-9:30 a.m. Del. Benjamin Brooks (D-Baltimore County), Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$100 and up

** 9-10:15 a.m. Incoming Senate President Pro Tem Melony G. Griffith (D-Prince George's), featuring incoming Senate President Bill Ferguson (D-Baltimore City), Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$50 and up

** 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Sen. Arthur Ellis (D-Charles), Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$100 and up

** 4-6 p.m. House Minority Leader Nicholas R. Kipke (D-Anne Arundel) and House Minority Whip Kathy Szeliga (R-Baltimore County), Associated Builders and Contractors, Annapolis. Tickets: \$150 and up

** 5:15-6:30 p.m. Sen. Craig J. Zucker (D-Montgomery), Red Red Wine Bar, Annapolis. Tickets: \$100 and up

** 5:30-7:30 p.m. Del. Shaneka Henson (D-Anne Arundel), Reynolds Tavern – 1747 Pub, Annapolis. Tickets: \$100 and up

** 6-7:15 p.m. Del. Pamela Queen (D-Montgomery), DRY 85, Annapolis. Tickets: \$75 and up

** 6-9 p.m. Del. Regina T. Boyce (D-Baltimore City), Melba's, Baltimore. Tickets: \$20.20 and up

** 6:45-8 p.m. House Ways and Means Committee Chairwoman Anne Kaiser (D-Montgomery), Red Red Wine Bar, Annapolis. Tickets: \$50 and up

** 7:30-8:45 p.m. House Majority Leader Eric G. Luedtke (D-Montgomery), DRY 85, Annapolis. Tickets: \$125 and up

** 8:15-9:30 p.m. Incoming Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Chairman William C. Smith Jr. (D-Montgomery), Red Red Wine Bar, Annapolis. Tickets: \$125 and up

Friday, Jan. 3

** 8-9:30 a.m. House Speaker Adrienne A. Jones (D-Baltimore County), Latitude 38°, Annapolis. Tickets: \$500 and up

** 9:30-11 a.m. House Economic Matters Committee Chairman Dereck E. Davis (D-Prince George's) District 25, Chair House Economic Matters Committee, Calvert House, Annapolis. Tickets: \$250 and up

** 9:30-11 a.m. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Luke Clippinger (D-Baltimore City), Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$250 and up

** 10 a.m.-noon Incoming Senate President Bill Ferguson (D-Baltimore City), Maryland Inn, Annapolis. Tickets: \$500 and up

** 5-7 p.m. Del. Johnny Mautz (R-Middle Shore), Avalon Theater, Easton. Tickets: \$50 and up

** 6-7:30 p.m. Sen. Antonio L. Hayes (D-Baltimore City), The Tilted Row, Baltimore. Tickets: \$250 and up

Saturday, Jan. 4

** 9-11 a.m. Del. Bob Long (R-Baltimore County), The Boulevard Diner, Dundalk. Tickets: \$25 and up

** 9-11 a.m. Sen. Jack Bailey (R-St. Mary's), The Foxy Fish Seafood Restaurant, Mechanicsville.
Tickets: \$25 and up

Sunday, Jan. 5

** 6-8 p.m. Del. Michele Guyton (D-Baltimore County), featuring House Ways and Means Chairwoman Anne Kaiser (D-Montgomery) and House Majority Leader Eric Luedtke (D-Montgomery), District 42B, House Ways & Means Committee, U.S. Lacrosse Headquarters and Museum, Sparks. Tickets: \$200 and up

Monday, Jan. 6

** 7:30-9 a.m. House Rules Committee Chairwoman Anne R. Healey (D-Prince George's), Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$125 and up

** 7:30-9 a.m. Del. C.T. Wilson (D-Charles), Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$125 and up

** 7:30-9:30 a.m. Sen. Robert Cassilly (R-Harford), Independent Brewing, Bel Air. Tickets: \$100

** 8-9:30 a.m. Sen. Malcolm Augustine (D-Prince George's), with incoming Senate President Bill Ferguson (D-Baltimore City), Courtyard Marriott, New Carrollton. Tickets: \$100 and up

** 8-9:30 a.m. Del. Trent Kittleman (R-Howard), Glory Days Grill, Ellicott City. Tickets: \$65 and up

** 8:30-10 a.m. Del. Darryl Barnes (D-Prince George's), chairman, Legislative Black Caucus, Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$250 and up.

** 9-10:30 a.m. Sen. Michael Hough (R-Frederick) and Sen. Justin Ready (R-Carroll), Calvert House, Annapolis. Tickets: \$500 and up (to be split evenly between the two lawmakers' campaign committees)

** 9-10:30 a.m. Del. Courtney B. Watson (D-Howard), with House Economic Matters Chairman Dereck E. Davis (D-Prince George's), The Market House at City Dock, Annapolis. Tickets: \$35 and up for residents of District 9B, \$150 and up for all others

** 3-5 p.m. Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan (D-Montgomery), Chick & Ruth's Delly, Annapolis. Tickets: \$500 and up

** 4-5:30 p.m. Del. Andrea Fletcher Harrison (D-Prince George's), Red Red Wine Bar, Annapolis. Tickets: \$125 and up

** 4-6:30 p.m. Del. Karen Lewis Young (D-Frederick), Galway Bay, Annapolis. Tickets: \$100 and up

** 5-7 p.m. Del. Wayne Hartman (R-Lower Shore), Clarion Resort Fontainebleau Hotel, Ocean City. Tickets: \$100 and up

** 5:15-6:30 p.m. Del. Vanessa Atterbeary (D-Howard), Red Red Wine Bar, Annapolis. Tickets: \$125

** 5:30-6:30 p.m. Del. Nick J. Mosby (D-Baltimore City), with House Speaker Adrienne A. Jones (D-Baltimore County), House Economic Matters Chairman Dereck E. Davis (D-Prince George's), and former Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker III (D), Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$250 and up

** 5:30-7 p.m. Sen. Sarah K. Elfreth (D-Anne Arundel), Market House, Annapolis. Tickets: \$75 and up for residents of District 30, \$125 and up for others

** 5:30-7:30 p.m. Del. Neil C. Parrott (R-Washington), The Barn at The View, Hagerstown. Tickets: \$40 and up

** 6-7:15 p.m. House Speaker Pro Tem Sharee Sample-Hughes (D-Middle Shore), DRY 85, Annapolis. Tickets: \$75 and up

** 6-7:30 p.m. Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee Chairman Paul G. Pinsky (D-Prince George's), Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$250 and up

** 6-8 p.m. Del. Ronald Watson (D-Prince George's), with Prince George's State's Attorney Aisha N. Braveboy (D), state Sen. Douglas J.J. Peters (D-Prince George's), Prince George's County Council Chairman Todd Turner (D), retired federal judge Alexander Williams, Bowie City Councilmember Ingrid S. Harrison, attorney J. Wyndal Gordon, and comedian and radio personality Joe Clair, private home, Upper Marlboro. Tickets: \$125 and up

** 6-8 p.m. Del. Shelly L. Hettleman (D-Baltimore County), Earth, Wood and Fire, Baltimore. Tickets: \$111 and up

** 6-8:30 p.m. Sen. Mary L. Washington (D-Baltimore City), Gertrude's at the Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore. Tickets: \$250 and up

** 6:30-7:30 p.m. Sen. Brian J. Feldman (D-Montgomery), Harry Browne's Annapolis. Tickets: \$250 and up

** 6:30-8:30 p.m. Del. Jay Walker (D-Prince George's), The National Harbor, Oxon Hill. Ticket prices: \$100 and up

** 6:45-8 p.m. House Health and Government Operations Committee Chairwoman Shane M. Pendergrass (D-Howard), Red Red Wine Bar, Annapolis. Tickets: \$50 and up

** 7:30-8:45 p.m. Del. Ben Barnes (D-Prince George's), DRY 85, Annapolis. Tickets: \$125 and up

** 8:15-9:30 p.m. Del. Kris Valderrama (D-Prince George's), Red Red Wine Bar, Annapolis. Tickets: \$125 and up

Tuesday, Jan. 7

** 7-9 a.m. House Economic Matters Committee Republicans, Calvert House, Annapolis. Tickets: \$100 and up (donations can be made to any or all committee Republicans)

** 8-9 a.m. Sen. Katie Fry Hester (D-Howard), Miss Shirley's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$100 and up

** 8 a.m. Del. Dan Cox (R-Frederick), with House Minority Leader Nicholas R. Kipke (R-Anne Arundel), House Minority Whip Kathy Szeliga (R-Baltimore County), and Sen. Michael R. Hough (R-Frederick), Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$50 and up

** 8:30-9:30 a.m. Senate Minority Leader J.B. Jennings (R-Harford), Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$250 and up

** 8:30-9:30 a.m. Senate Finance Committee Republicans, Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$250 and up (to each of the three committee senators)

** 8:30-9:30 a.m. Senate Budget and Taxation Committee Republicans, Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$250 and up (to each of the four committee senators)

** 8:30-9:30 a.m. Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee Republicans, Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$250 and up (for each senator)

** 8:30-10 a.m. Del. Charlotte Crutchfield (D-Montgomery), with House Judiciary Committee Chairman Luke Clippinger (D-Baltimore City) and Vice Chairwoman Vanessa Atterbeary (D-Howard), Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$125 and up

** 8:30-10 a.m. Sen. Christopher R. West (R-Baltimore County), American Institute of Architects, Annapolis. Tickets: "Modest donation appreciated"

** 9-10:30 a.m. Sen. James C. Rosapepe (D-Prince George's), with outgoing Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. (D-Calvert), incoming Senate President Bill Ferguson (D-Baltimore City), and incoming Senate Budget and Taxation Chairman Guy J. Guzzone (D-Howard), Maryland Inn, Annapolis. Tickets: \$250 and up

** 5-6:30 p.m. Del. Alice Cain (D-Anne Arundel), Harry Browne's, Annapolis. Tickets: \$125 and up

** 6 p.m. Del. Debra Davis (D-Charles), Red Red Wine Bar, Annapolis. Tickets: N/A

** 6:30-8 p.m. Women Legislators of Maryland Foundation Inc., with House Speaker Adrienne A. Jones (D-Baltimore County), Calvert House, Annapolis. Tickets: \$125 and up