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MARYLAND BRIEFING

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Council Approves Contractor Wage Bill

The Montgomery County Council approved legislation yesterday that will require county contractors to pay prevailing wages on construction projects worth more than \$500,000.

Montgomery joins [Prince George's County](#), the District and the state of Maryland in requiring certain government contractors to pay construction workers a wage that reflects what is commonly paid in the region.

"Government has a responsibility to make sure that working families are paid a fair wage," said council member Valerie Ervin (D-Silver Spring), the leading sponsor of the bill.

Council members, who voted 6 to 2, debated whether the measure would drive up construction costs at a time when the county is struggling to keep up with a backlog of bricks-and-mortar projects. The bill does not apply to public school construction.

The bill has the support of County Executive [Isiah Leggett](#) (D) and was backed by Progressive Maryland and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters. Council member [Phil Andrews](#) (D-Gaithersburg-Rockville), who authored the county's living wage law in 2002, said the bill was not affordable.

He was joined by Don Praisner (D-Eastern County) in opposing the measure.

-- [Ann E. Marimow](#)

Woman, Badly Hurt, Found in Roadway

A 22-year-old woman was found critically injured on a road in the Colesville area of Silver Spring yesterday as [Montgomery County](#) investigators continued to probe how she was hurt.

About 3:35 a.m., police and rescue workers were called to Fairland and Randolph roads, where they found "indicators that made it appear" that a pedestrian had been struck by a vehicle, police said in a news release.

But police said it was not clear that the woman had been hit by a car, and detectives have broadened their inquiry.

The victim was taken to a hospital, where she was listed in critical condition yesterday with life-threatening injuries. Police ask anyone with information to call 301-840-2435.

-- [Dan Morse](#)

Rash of Vehicle Fires Probed in Montgomery

Montgomery County arson investigators are probing at least 12 recent vehicle fires or attempted arsons in Kensington and Silver Spring, and said yesterday that they might be linked to a Monday night arson at Woodlin Elementary School that caused \$70,000 in damage to a portable music classroom and an outdoor walkway. No injuries have been reported in the fires.

Investigators have questioned a "person of interest" in the case, but made no arrests, a spokesman for the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service said yesterday.

In the most recent fire, an alarm at the school on Luzerne Avenue in Silver Spring drew firefighters shortly before midnight Monday. They quickly extinguished several fires.

Early Saturday morning, an automobile was burned in the 3200 block of Fayette Road in Kensington. Two mornings earlier, fire officials investigated a series of attempted vehicle arsons, also in Kensington.

A week before that, there were several attempts to burn vehicles on Brunswick Avenue in the [Forest Glen](#) area, a fire service spokesman said. Anyone with information is asked to call the county's arson tip line at 240-777-2263.

-- **Dan Morse**

Leggett to Expand 4-Day Work Week

Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett (D) said yesterday that he plans to significantly expand the number of employees working a four-day week, as have a growing number of businesses and local governments trying to reduce road congestion, energy costs and protect the environment.

Leggett said workers would be encouraged to work 10-hour-days, four-days a week. About 20 percent of Montgomery's employees have nontraditional work schedules. Leggett said the number of employees working longer hours but fewer days would vary by department and that schedules would be staggered so as not to disrupt public services.

[Howard County](#) has given employees the option of a more flexible schedule, and [Fairfax County](#) is considering offering employees a four-day work week.

-- **Ann E. Marimow**

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