



Gov. Wes Moore: "While I am honored to have made history, making history is not the assignment. Doing the work is the assignment." (File photo by Robyn Stevens Brody)

Gov. Wes Moore is not the type who shies away from wearing his patriotism on his sleeve.

"I am proud to be an American because I understand just what my ancestors had to go through in order for me to be called American," he said in his first public speech, as a student at Valley Forge Military Academy and College.

But Moore, 46, is far more than simply Maryland's first Black governor (and the third in the nation). He is a Rhodes scholar with a master's degree from Oxford and a bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins. He also served as a captain in the U.S. Army in Afghanistan.

In addition, Moore has worked as an investment banker, an entrepreneur and CEO of a New York City-based foundation. He is also the author of several non-fiction books and young adult novels.

A native of Takoma Park, Maryland, Moore grew up in New York and Pennsylvania. He and his wife, Dawn, have two children, Mia and James.

Jmore recently spoke with Moore, who is frequently touted as a possible contender for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2028, about the challenges faced by Maryland and the country in general.

What are the ways in which you are seeking to meet the state's current fiscal challenges?

This year, our work is guided by three principles:

- * Modernize the tax code, and not on the backs of middle-class families;
- * Grow our economy and diversify the economy off of Washington, D.C.;
- * And invest in our people.

We worked with the leaders of the General Assembly to turn this year's long-forecasted deficit into a \$315 million surplus, all the while providing 94% of Marylanders with a tax cut or no change in their income taxes.

We also preserved 8% in Maryland's rainy-day fund — more than the recommended amount. The Government Modernization Initiative we set in motion in January will save Maryland taxpayers up to \$50 million in fiscal year 2026 alone. In addition, it's expected to save \$250 million across procurement, IT and vehicle fleet management over the next five years, and more than \$326 million in real estate savings over the next 20 to 25 years.

I am committed to continuing our work in partnership with the General Assembly, local leaders and others involved in growing Maryland's economy, ensuring the long-term fiscal stability of the state, and creating pathways to work, wages and wealth for all.

What does the Democratic party need to do to show it can help lead the nation?

They need to look no further than right here in Maryland. We're focused on results. In partnership, we turned a deficit into a surplus, gave the middle class tax relief and reduced spending by over \$2 billion, the largest amount that's been cut from a

Maryland budget in 16 years.

We've broken the back of violent crime, and we're seeing decreases in crime across Maryland, with Baltimore reporting some of the lowest homicide rates in decades. We've also created nearly 100,000 jobs, more in two years than the last administration created in two terms.

We've achieved some of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation, and we've experienced one of the fastest job growth rates.

The secret of all this success is that we are working in partnership with our state legislature, our local leaders and our communities.

Meanwhile, many Republicans in Congress are proposing shifting costs for Medicaid and SNAP to the states. This move would mean fewer people will receive health care or food assistance. That's putting people's lives at risk.

How can leaders of state and city governments, as well as non-profits, work with the Trump administration while maintaining their guiding principles?

In Maryland, I have been clear in saying that while I will work with anyone, I will bow down to no one. We know that Maryland is uniquely vulnerable to the draconian federal workforce and funding cuts coming out of the White House. And as the home to more than 60 federal facilities and 260,000 federal workers, Maryland and the federal government are deeply intertwined.

We cannot control the actions of the Trump White House, but we can control how we respond.

Earlier this year, I announced five steps Maryland is taking to protect our public servants and our economy:

- * Build out our online resources;

- * Connect federal workers with opportunities in education;

- * Move in partnership with local leaders to meet people where they are;
- * Recruit federal workers into state jobs;
- * And update our internal processes to expedite hiring.

What can citizens do to help promote democracy and uphold the U.S. Constitution?

During these challenging times, I encourage Marylanders to think as my grandfather did: "This country would be incomplete without me."

Remember that patriotism is a responsibility of a lifetime. To protect democracy and the Constitution, we need to adopt a new form of patriotism.

I'm the governor of a state that is the birthplace of redlining and some of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War. I work in an office that was built by the hands of enslaved people and overlooks one of the country's first and largest slave ports.

Still, I have the honor to serve as the first Black governor of Maryland and the only sitting Black governor in the country. While I am honored to have made history, making history is not the assignment. Doing the work is *the* assignment.

What values are most important to you?

In the military, I learned the creed that all of us who have worn the uniform of this country live by: *Leave no one behind.*

I joined the U.S. Army when I was 17 years old. I was so young that my mom had to sign the paperwork. I served in the 82nd Airborne Division, where I led soldiers in combat in Afghanistan.

When in combat, I learned it doesn't matter what political party you represent. Your success depends on the person to your right and the person to your left. I lean on that maxim every day as we work to make this Maryland's decade.

What are the best ways to eradicate racism, antisemitism and other forms of

hate?

My message is always the same: antisemitism and other forms of hate have no place in Maryland. We must do all that we can to address this rise in hate head-on.

Public safety is my top priority. When I took office, I said I refuse to be a governor who attends funerals and offers thoughts and prayers without delivering any real, substantive change to deal with the human conditions that caused the tragedy in the first place.

In response to rising incidents of antisemitism nationwide, my administration doubled funding for the Protecting Against Hate Crimes grant from \$5 million to \$10 million. And we enhanced investments in public safety, directing over \$121 million in local aid for police protection.

At a time when we're seeing horrific acts of violence that go to the heart of our principles, we need to stand together and refuse to be intimidated by those who seek to divide us.

What can be done to bring the citizens of this country together during this time of great division?

Partnership is the only way to progress. While the federal government has doubled down on divisiveness and fear, in Maryland we've shown there's a better way: by working in partnership to deliver for our people.

When I was in the army, I never asked my soldiers about their political affiliations. That's the kind of spirit we need to get back to. A country that doesn't believe in who or what party came up with a good idea. It just gets behind the idea because it's something great.

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Peter Arnold July 2, 2025