

Over 100 Marylanders Attend 6th Annual MAACCE/SBLC Sponsored Press Conference Featuring Senator Cardin and Congressmen Sarbanes and Ruppensberger!

By Cynthia M. Campbell, Ed.D.

On Oct 22, on a rainy Wednesday morning, over 100 people gathered at South Baltimore Learning Center (SBLC) to hear United States **Senator Ben Cardin**, **Congressman John Sarbanes** (Maryland's 3rd District), **Congressman C. A. Dutch Ruppensberger** (Maryland's 7th District) and others speak about the importance of adult education and the new Workforces Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The event was co-sponsored by SBLC and the Maryland Association of Adult, Community and Continuing Education (MAACCE).



Sonia Socha, Executive Director of SBLC welcomed the attendees, speaking about the importance of adult education and the role that SBLC has played. **Heather Ritchie**, President of the MAACCE Board, spoke about the work of adult education across Maryland, noting that "MAACCE provides a central forum for staff, and instructors to participate in professional development and exchange information across programs, modelling the process of life-long learning that we all believe in, in order to best serve the adult learners across Maryland."

Senator Cardin spoke about the importance of adult education funding and applauded the courage of adult students like the ones who attend South Baltimore Learning Center.



Congressman Sarbanes, who had taken a photo with the green MAACCE literacy wristband during national Adult and Family Literacy Week, shared his commitment to adult literacy education a nation, invest in **Congressman**

the importance of WIOA and the need for 110,000 Baltimore residents lacking a high



and noted that "we must, as adult education."
Ruppensberger highlighted adult education with school diploma.

Other guest speakers included the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, **Leonard J. Howie**, who spoke about the importance of education and WIOA in helping adults access employment and the need for adult education and workforce development to develop a unified state plan. **Patricia Tyler**, Director of Adult Education and Literacy, DLLR Division of Workforce and Adult Learning, spoke about how understanding WIOA will be a continuous process and that there will be more questions than answers for a while. **Karen Sitnick**, Director of the Baltimore Mayor's Office of Employment Development, expressed her thoughts on the critical role adult education programs play in helping Baltimore residents prepare for the workforce. **Jeff Carter**, President of the National Coalition for Literacy, gave a more national perspective, noting that it will take some time to see the full implications of WIOA.



A highlight of the program was hearing from adult learner speakers. **Sierra Musgrove**, a GED® learner at SBLC spoke about the difficulties she encountered in the Baltimore City Public Schools and how she appreciated the support from the teachers at SBLC. **Gloria Smith**, a graduate of SBLC's National External Diploma Program, expressed what getting her high school diploma meant to her. A photo of Gloria and Sonia Socha appeared on page 2 of the Baltimore Sun the next day. **Xiaoshu "Liz" Liu** shared about learning

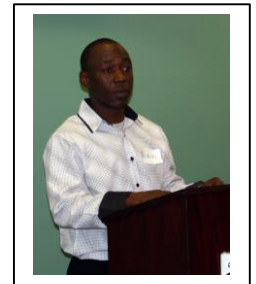


English at the **Greater Homewood Community Corporation** and how she can now do job interviews and make new friends. **Alain Aristide Valea**, who graduated from the **Accelerated**



Connections to Employment Program at Baltimore City Community College, spoke about his excitement about receiving job training and learning English at the same time.

After hearing from the speakers, Secretary Howie, Patricia Tyler, Karen Sitnick and others remained to participate in a round table discussion of WIOA, moderated by Jeff Carter and Cynthia Campbell. Concerns discussed included making jobs and training accessible to those yet to earn their high school diplomas, serving ESOL adult learners, and bridging the digital divide. Patricia Tyler spoke of the upcoming USDE state director's meeting in November she will be attending regarding the new regulations to be drafted in compliance with WIOA, and she encouraged everyone to find information, provide feedback, and ask questions at www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/wioa.shtml. Email questions can go directly to DLWDALWIOA_DLLR@maryland.gov.



MAACCE and SBLC were pleased with the many adult education supporters who turned out for the event.



Participants came from the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Goodwill, the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, Catholic Charities, Learning Is For Tomorrow, Greater Homewood Adult Learning program, Corrections education, Howard County Library System Project Literacy, Anne Arundel Workforce Board, Community College of Baltimore County, Literacy Council of Montgomery County, Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy, Allstate Careers, and many others. Michele Brown represented Senator

Barbara Mikulski's office, and Philisha Lane represented Congressman Elijah Cumming's office. To see more photos, check out MAACCE's Facebook page, SBLC's Facebook page, and Cynthia Campbell's Twitter feed at <https://twitter.com/CMCampbellGA>