

# Bill Bronrott

State Delegate, District 16, Maryland

As a native son to Montgomery County, Bill Bronrott, 47, is a product of Maryland's public school system - grades K-12 in Montgomery County. After graduating from Montgomery Blair High School, Bill earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Maryland at College Park.

For his entire adult life, Bill Bronrott has never hesitated to stand up against powerful special interests to stand up for what was in the public interest.

"I have dedicated my 20-year career to work within the political system to advance public policy issues in the public interest. And I succeeded in fulfilling these goals during my four year term in Congress."

Starting as a college student working with investigative reporter Jack Anderson's "National Suggestion Box" in 1976, Bill was among the first to prod gun manufacturers to consider equipping handguns with lifesaving trigger locks, pressured the powerful tuna industry to stop the destruction of the fragile Pacific Ocean dolphin population, and urged McDonald's to use paper wrappers instead of the environmentally unsafe Styrofoam containers.

Inspired by Ralph Nader's call for consumer activism, Bill Bronrott spent his senior year of college working for the Maryland Public Interest Research Group in 1977 to promote alternative energy sources to reduce our nation's dependency on oil and nuclear energy. It was then that he first met a consumer advocate member of the Maryland Public Service Commission named Mike Barnes.

Early Years in the Congress One year later, Democrat Mike Barnes unseated the incumbent Republican congressman from Montgomery County, and in 1979 Bill Bronrott became Barnes' press secretary on Capitol Hill. Over the next eight years Bill Bronrott worked with Mike Barnes to win support for a wide range of issues of importance to the people of Montgomery County, such as:

- Gaining federal funding to build Metrorail in Montgomery County
- Standing up to Reagan Administration attacks on federal workers and federal retirees
- Putting the spotlight on international human rights and the plight of Soviet Jews
- Urging the clean up of our precious Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay
- Reducing airline noise along the Potomac River corridor
- Establishing the annual Montgomery County Thanksgiving Hunger Relief Drive
- Organizing a campaign to prevent drownings at Great Falls and the Potomac River
- Sparking A War On Drunk Driving In 1980, after learning about a Maryland infant named Laura Lamb who tragically became the nation's youngest quadriplegic when she was struck by a repeat offender drunk driver, Bill Bronrott was inspired to initiate and spearhead numerous congressional efforts that resulted in:

- The launching of the national Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) movement in 1980.
- Passage of a federal incentive grant program in 1982 that has brought many millions of extra highway safety funds to Maryland and other states that enact laws to combat drunk driving and require child safety seat use. Since 1982, drunk driving deaths have been cut by nearly 40 percent, and today every state has a law requiring child passengers to be buckled in their car safety seats.
- Passage of the national 21 minimum drinking age law in 1984. This law has erased dangerous "blood borders" between Maryland, DC and Virginia, and today every state in the nation sets the minimum drinking age at 21. The U.S. Department Transportation estimates that the nationwide 21 drinking age law prevents 1,000 deaths every year.
- Establishing the annual National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Week campaign every December holiday season and the National Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week every Valentine's Day.

Bill Bronrott's interest in preventing death and injury on our highways was not limited to his work for Mike Barnes on Capitol Hill. In 1981, Montgomery County Executive Charlie Gilchrist appointed Bill to the Montgomery County Task Force on Drinking and Driving, and in 1982 he became an original member of the Montgomery County Commission on Alcohol and Highway Safety. Bill worked with county officials to establish the first county wide Project Graduation program to combat the number one threat to the lives of teenagers - drinking and driving.

In 1983, Bill Bronrott co-founded the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP). He brought together top elected officials, business leaders, law enforcement and media throughout the DC area to join forces in a coordinated campaign to curb drunk driving year-round. The first accomplishment was spreading Montgomery County's successful Project Graduation program to each of the jurisdictions around the Capital Beltway.

### **As a Public Interest Advocate**

After Mike Barnes left the Congress in 1987, Bill Bronrott moved to the private sector to continue his crusade on behalf of public interest issues by building coalitions of groups and teams of people who share his vision of a safer society for our children and families. As a result, many lifesaving laws and standards have been passed and numerous dangerous proposals have been defeated, such as:

- **Passage of Maryland's motorcycle helmet law in 1992:** Since the law was enacted, motorcyclist deaths have been cut by 50 percent in Maryland. Each year, Bill organizes campaigns in Maryland to fight off repeated attempts to repeal this lifesaving law.
- **Passage of Maryland's Per Se Intoxication law in 1995:** Introduced by State Senator Ida Ruben and Delegate Gil Genn, that closed a loophole in the state's drunk driving statute.
- **Defeat of special interest legislation in Annapolis:** This legislation would have increased the number of hours truck drivers could operate their big rigs. The legislation would have put more tired truckers on our highways in spite of the fact that, according to

the Department of Transportation and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, truck driver fatigue is the most frequently cited cause of fatal truck crashes in our country.

- **Enactment of a federal law in 1991:** This law stopped the spread of dangerous triple trailer trucks and mammoth double-48-foot trucks into Maryland and other states.
- **Enactment of a federal safety standard:** This standard required truck manufacturers to build safer rear impact guards on the backs of truck trailers to reduce violent under-ride crashes.
- **Defeat of a trucking industry federal proposal:** This would have dramatically increased the number of hours truck drivers could stay behind the wheel of their big rigs nationwide.
- **Working with Senator Ida Ruben in 1997:** Bill also played an integral role to win the enactment of Maryland's seat belt law in 1997, and he was an architect of the Maryland and national campaign during 1997 to stand up to the alcohol industry in support of legislation - sponsored by Senator Ruben and Delegate Gil Genn - to draw the line against drunk driving at .08 percent.
- **Consumer and safety advocate:** Bill has organized campaigns to preserve the federal safe children's sleepwear standard, promote toy safety, combat insurance fraud, support Maryland's first-class statewide system of Shock Trauma centers, and cut traffic congestion in Montgomery County by promoting greater mass transit and alternative transportation options.
- **Pedestrian Safety in 1997:** Bill spearheaded the effort that resulted in the county extending the amount of time pedestrians have to safely cross the busy intersection at Bethesda and Woodmont Avenues in the heart of downtown Bethesda.

## **Montgomery County and Maryland in the 21st Century**

"I am committed to continuing to take my 20 years of experience and record of accomplishments as a political activist advocating public interest issues and my current four years of delegate experience to work for my neighbors in District 16 and the citizens of Maryland to protect our gains and to improve our quality of life. My goal is to help build a safer and more civilized society where we all can live in peace and prosperity. I want our citizens to have a state legislature that they can count on to put people first and politics a very distant second."

## **Congressional Record**

Bill has been a leader on transportation and public safety, Bronrott launched Montgomery County's pedestrian safety and walkable communities movement, chaired the Blue Ribbon Panel on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety, and sponsored legislation to boost sidewalk-bikeways funding.

He authored the felony hit-and-run and child booster seat laws, and was a sponsor of the .08 blood-alcohol-content, repeat offender drunk driver and open container laws. A leading voice urging a balanced multi-modal transportation system that moves people and products safely and efficiently, and a strong advocate for gun safety, tobacco control, drug-alcohol prevention and treatment, education and the arts.