

# The Maryland Journal

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The Maryland Public Policy Institute

## THE MARYLAND JOURNAL

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## INTRODUCTION

THE LATE GEORGE STIGLER, a Nobel Laureate in economics, once remarked, “At most only a tiny set of policies have been studied with even moderate care.” Prof. Stigler’s conclusion holds true at the national, state, and local levels of government. Here in Maryland, the paucity of serious analysis of state and local government policy, while significant, is not unusual.

I have had some first-hand experience with policymaking and policy evaluation in Maryland. Allow me to reflect. When Marvin Mandel became Maryland’s 56<sup>th</sup> Governor in 1969, he acknowledged that the analysis of government programs was long overdue. To inform his governance, independent of state lobbyists and legislators, one of former Governor Mandel’s initial acts was to establish Maryland’s first (and last) Governor’s Council of Economic Advisors. The Council was mandated to conduct economic and financial analysis of government programs and policies and to advise the Governor in confidence.

I served as a Member of the Council, along with Prof. Clopper Almon of the University of Maryland and Prof. Carl Christ of The Johns Hopkins University. The Members served on a part-time, *pro bono* basis. We directed a full-time staff ably managed by Dr. Peter Karpoff. We had access to former Governor Mandel and met with him regularly.

Two things struck me about this experience. First, the Council’s work was conducted under very high quality standards. And second, the Governor paid the most careful and anxious attention to our products.

Shortly after former Governor Mandel left office, the Governor’s Council of Economic Advisors was forced, without a patron or funding, to close shop. Apparently, the new Acting Governor and the political class, as well as the lobbyists, didn’t have an appetite for careful analysis and continued scrutiny. Since 1977, the analytical shop in the name of the Governor’s Council of Economic Advisors has remained ‘closed for business’—a fact that amply demonstrates the validity of Prof. Stigler’s conclusion.

The purpose of *The Maryland Journal* is to fill the analytical void that surrounds Maryland’s public policies. To that end, the Journal welcomes analysts who have established records of integrity, competence, and humility.

I am pleased to introduce the inaugural volume of *The Maryland Journal*. Readers will find that the Journal’s coverage is topical. Indeed, since the turn of the New Year, every topic covered in this maiden volume has received a front-page billing in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, or *Baltimore Sun*.

Prof. Dr. Steve H. Hanke  
Baltimore  
January 11, 2011

