The 21st-century interpretation of the State House takes place every day as the governor, Lt. governor, speaker of the House and president of the Senate, all of whom have their offices in the building, carry out the business of governing Maryland.

The Senate Chamber
This chamber features historical portraits of Maryland’s four signers of the Declaration of Independence: William Paca, Thomas Stone, and Samuel Chase by John Sully. Portraits of Andrew Jackson, President of the Senate, and Thomas V. “Mike” Miller, Jr., were added to the chamber in 2020; Welcome was the first African American woman to become a state senator, and Miller was the longest-serving state Senate president.

The House of Delegates Chamber
The portraits in this chamber are of former speakers of the House at the end of the Revolutionary War. In May 1784, Congress appointed Thomas Jefferson minister plenipotentiary to France, the first diplomatic appointment by the new nation.

The House of Delegates Chamber Four Centuries of History
The Maryland State House was the first peace-time capital of the United States and is the only state house ever to have served as the nation’s capitol. Congress met in the Old Senate Chamber from November 26, 1783 to August 13, 1784. During that time, General George Washington came before Congress to resign his commission as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army and the Treaty of Paris was ratified, marking the official end of the Revolutionary War. In May 1784, Congress appointed Thomas Jefferson minister plenipotentiary to France, the first diplomatic appointment by the new nation.

The Maryland State House was designated a National Historic Landmark by the Department of the Interior in 1960, on the same day as Mount Vernon and Monticello.

Governor Larry J. Hogan
Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford
Speaker of the House Bill Ferguson
President of the Senate Bill Ferguson

Maryland State House Facts
♦ Capitol of the United States, November 1783–August 1784
♦ America’s first peace-time capital
♦ Oldest state house in America still in continuous legislative use
♦ Declared a National Historic Landmark in 1960, the first state house in the nation so designated

18th Century Building
Date of construction: 1772–79
Architect: Joseph Horatio Anderson
Builder: Charles Wallace

Dome
Date of construction: 1785–94
Architect: Joseph Clark
Largest wooden dome of its kind in North America

State House Annex
Date of construction: 1902–05
Architect: Baldwin and Pennington

Basic Facts
Square footage: 120,900 square feet
Height of dome, exterior to weather vane: 181 feet
Height of dome, interior: 113 feet

Visiting the State House
The State House is open every day from 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., except Christmas and New Year’s Day. To help make your visit to the Maryland State House more enjoyable, and to provide you with an understanding of its rich and historic past, self-guided tour information is available in the Archives Room on the first floor. For information about the Maryland General Assembly’s educational programs, visit the Department of Legislative Services website http://dls.maryland.gov/library/educational-tours. Group curatorial tours may be arranged in advance by calling the Maryland State Archives at 410-260-6418.

Please note that security measures are in place at the State House and other state buildings. Picture ID is required for entrance and metal detectors are in operation.

The Office of Interpretation is a program of the Maryland State Archives. Donations to support the interpretation of the building are appreciated and may be made to The Friends of the Maryland State Archives. To learn more about the Maryland State House and its history and artwork, please visit our website at statehouse.md.gov
The Old Senate Chamber

The Old Senate Chamber has been restored to its original appearance when the United States Congress met here from November 1783 – August 1784. On December 23, 1783, General George Washington came before Congress to resign his commission as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. Just three weeks later, on January 14, 1784, Congress ratified the Treaty of Paris, officially ending the Revolutionary War, thus making Annapolis the new nation’s first peacetime capital.

The arrangement of the furniture reflects the way the room looked on December 23, 1783 according to carefully researched protocols for important Congressional events in the late 18th century. Washington is shown facing the dais where the president of Congress, Thomas Mifflin, would have been seated. Above Washington is Molly Ridout, watching from the gallery as women were not then allowed to be present on the Senate floor. Her surviving first-hand account informs our understanding of the ceremony.

The Senate Committee and Stairwell Rooms

In these two rooms, visitors will find new, interactive exhibits interpreting the events that took place during the time that Congress met in Annapolis in 1783–84, as well as information about Annapolis in the 18th century and the men and women who played important roles in these events.

Two very important historical portraits are featured in these three spaces: William Pitt over the fireplace in the Old Senate Chamber and Washington, Lafayette and Talhofman at Yorktown in the Committee Room. Both were painted by renowned Maryland artist Charles Willson Peale and have hung in the State House since the 18th century.

The Calverts: The Lords Baltimore of the Colony of Maryland

In the rotunda and on the grand staircase are 17th and 18th-century full-length portraits of the Calvers. These portraits portray an entire dynasty of colonial proprietors, the Barons (or Lords) of Baltimore, and bring to life the earliest history of Maryland. The family owned the Colony of Maryland under a charter that conveyed one of the most extensive grants of powers conceded by the crown of England during America’s period of colonization. Its proprietary rule ended with the American Revolution in 1776.

The Rotunda

The rotunda is the space below the dome and is the center of the 18th-century State House, built between 1772–79. The dome was added to the building between 1785–94 and is the largest wooden dome in North America. It was built entirely without nails.

Under the dome is the case displaying George Washington’s personal copy of the speech he gave resigning his commission as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army in the Old Senate Chamber on December 23, 1783. Considered by historians to be the fourth most important document in American history, Washington’s resignation from power set the impor-

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