

February 10, 2010

Pam's News from Annapolis

The 2010 Legislative Session was off to a fast start, and then the snow arrived. We did not have a legislative session Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup> for one of the few times in history. I made the decision to stay in Annapolis this week due to the snow and blizzard conditions, it was just not safe to make this daily drive, however, I would much rather have been at home. Public hearings were canceled on Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup>; there is no reason to have a public hearing if the public cannot attend!!

### **Committee Votes Available Online**

You will now be able to view our committee votes online. This is an effort to make State government more transparent. This information is important because very often a bill does not get out of committee for a full vote and citizens will be able to view the bill and find out which legislators supported the bill. The Environmental Matters Committee, my committee, has not taken any Committee votes yet this year, but as soon as we start voting you will be able to find my votes by viewing the bill online at <http://mlis.state.md.us/>

### **Over 900 Bills filed for the House**

Over 900 bills have already been filed in the House. I have sponsored or cosponsored 44 bills and there are quite a few bills that I support but did not have an opportunity to sponsor. Our Anne Arundel County Delegation is working on legislation to address gang violence, particularly gang violence in schools.

### **No Raises for Legislators or the Governor**

**You may have read that the General Assembly Salary Commission and the Governor's Salary Commission made recommendations for salary increases. The House passed the House Joint resolution, HJ3 and HJ-5, with no increases to salaries, travel expenses or benefits.**

### **Mandatory Use of Ignition Interlock System**

This bill, HB 515, is another approach to dealing with "drunk drivers". If passed, it will require that individuals who are convicted of, or granted probation for, specified alcohol- or drug-related driving offenses, install a device in their vehicle that prohibits the starting of the vehicle if they are impaired.

### **Budget Update**

The Appropriations Committee is currently holding public hearings on the FY 2011 budget. This will be another tough budget year, with the budget dropping below the 2006

budget funding level. Furloughs will continue and some employees will be terminated. Unlike the Federal government, we are required to pass a balanced budget. Local governments will see revenues cut. We are continuing to support K-12 education, however, we also want to help small business with the increasing cost of *Unemployment Insurance*, help our retirees and Veterans with tax credits and reduce the long waiting lists for people with disabilities to get services. The state of our national economy is certainly affecting Maryland.

### **Environment Update**

My committee, Environmental Matters, continues to be busy with bills concerning clean energy including solar and wind energy. The Committee is reviewing a controversial bill on stormwater regulation. It is controversial because while we want to protect the environment, it is not the time to put increased regulation on business. Economic development is vitally important at this time.

I am working on a bill to require the Maryland Department of the Environment to fully fund, from the flush Tax, the required upgrade to Nitrogen Reducing Septic Systems in Critical Areas. Since, the Critical Area is the State first priority for Septic System Upgrades, I think this should be our funding priority.

### **MY Facebook FAN PAGE**

**If you are a member of facebook, look for my fan page, search “Delegate Pam Beidle” and become a fan. I am doing updates one or two times a week concerning issues in Annapolis.**

**I hope you will continue to stay in touch on issues that concern you. My office phone is 410-841-3370, email is [Pamela.Beidle@house.state.md.us](mailto:Pamela.Beidle@house.state.md.us). Also, please welcome Laura Vykol, my intern for this session. Laura is a junior at University of Maryland and lives in Linthicum.**

**Thank you for allowing me to represent you in Annapolis.**