

March 10, 2010

With only five weeks of the 2010 Legislative Session left, bills are finally moving to the floor here in the House of Delegates. This week will be a short week for me, my son, Nate, and his fiancée, Heather, get married on Thursday, March 11 in Roatan, Honduras. I have an “excused absence” from session for March 10 to March 12. A full day of travel is required each way to reach Roatan. It is unfortunate that I will miss a few votes in Committee and on the floor, but family is first. The next four weeks will be very busy and 90% of our work for the session will be completed in the final four weeks.

Stormwater Management Legislation

New Stormwater regulations were scheduled to become effective on May 4, 2010. However, there was a great deal of concern from the development communities and local government, that projects that were already in process would not be “grandfathered.” With the current economic situation and the need for job creation, a compromise was needed. The second issue was the effect that these regulations would have on “redevelopment” which is an important issue in our older communities. Delegate Marvin Holmes presented House Bill 1125 and with much negotiation, a compromise was reached. Here is the site for a Baltimore Sun article from March 9, 2010: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/features/green/baltimore-gr.pollution09mar09,0,330331.story> I cosponsored Delegate Holmes Bill 1125, and congratulate him on achieving this compromise.

State Budget

The good news is that Maryland is, once again, one of only seven states that continues to have a AAA bond rating, saving us money when funding bonds.

Both the House and Senate are continuing to work through Governor O'Malley's proposed budget, looking at essential needs, trying to protect education funding while reducing spending and further shrinking state government. At the end of February, both the House Republican Caucus and two Republican Senators presented their recommendations for budget cuts. The Senators' proposal would reduce funds to Anne Arundel County by over \$40 million, including cutting the retirement funds for teachers, community college employees and librarians by 50% while requiring employee contributions to increase. At the same time they would increase our highway funds by 500%.

The House Republicans also recommended numerous cuts, including across the board cuts to state agencies, eliminating positions, reducing public education funding by \$686 million and higher education by \$78 million and eliminating all

funds for stem cell research, the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund and the Critical Area Commission.

Bond Bill hearings will be heard here in Annapolis on Saturday, March 13 and Monday, March 15.

Wine Shipments

The direct shipment of wine continues to be a heavily debated issue. The bill has been heard in Economic Matters but I do not believe it will pass this year since it would directly change the way alcohol is shipped into Maryland. There is also a legitimate concern about minors having easy access to the wine. At the same time, the Maryland Winery Modernization Act, HB 921, has a great chance to pass. I am a cosponsor of House Bill 921. It would change the requirements of the Limited Winery License and allow wineries to regularly serve food and sell wine outside of the winery.

Status of the Bills that I sponsor

House Bill 831, regulating certain items sold at Flea Markets, was heard on February 12, 2010. The hearing was well attended with representatives from the Maryland Retail Association, Safeway and Rite Aid, as well as our own, Sharon Jones from Linthicum, a representative from Mary Kay. Economic Matters has not voted on this bill yet.

House Bill 1229, prohibiting diminution credits if guns are used in a gang related crime, was heard in the Judiciary Committee on March 2nd. There has not been a committee vote.

House Bill 1344, allowing for extensions on building permits and related construction permits, will be heard in the Environmental Matters committee on March 18th.

House Bill 1514, which clarifies the number of days specified to cancel a Condominium Master Policy, is currently in the Rules Committee waiting for approval to be heard.

House Bill 736, which I am the primary co-sponsor, has been heard in Delegation and forward to the Judiciary Committee. This is an Anne Arundel County bill that would prohibit a sex offender from living within 1000 feet of a school or daycare.

If you are on Facebook, you can find short comments on House of Delegates activities two or three times a week. Just search for Delegate Pam Beidle and join my Fan Page. I always welcome comments from my constituents and 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.