

April 8, 2014
Sine Die Newsletter

This is my final newsletter for the 2014 Legislative Session. The past eight years have been truly exciting, often discouraging, and an incredible learning experience. Thank you for allowing me the honor and opportunity to serve you as your Delegate.

The Maryland General Assembly Session closed on April 7th at Midnight. As usual there was a lot of “hurry up and wait” between the House and Senate. I was fortunate to get three bills passed and bond bill funding for several great causes. Here is a brief summary of the closing days of the Session.

My Bills

- **HB 582, Licensed Tree Experts - Notification:** protects consumers by creating an official record of what companies are working under the license of a particular tree expert. This would ensure that tree experts will be held appropriately responsible for all users of their license, and it would provide clear information on liability on the part of the tree expert and their subcontracted companies.
- **HB 740, Economic Development – Maryland Technology Development Corportaiion – Cybersecurity Investment Fund:** This fund provides financial assistance to Maryland-based technology companies that focus on Information Technology Security also known as cybersecurity. It Invests in Maryland companies providing many economic opportunities for the state, the most important of which is jobs.
- **HB 1312, Program Open Space Sites – Public Access Bond Bills:** makes important improvements to Maryland’s Program Open Space allowing Program Open Space funding to be used in the actual development of outdoor recreation opportunities for public use.

Bond Bills funded in the budget:

- **Hospice of the Chesapeake** - \$1,000,000 for the new impatient facility
- **Chesapeake Arts Center** - \$150,000 for updating the gallery and 15 year old sound system
- **Calvary Food Bank** - \$75,000 for Water and Sewer to their food bank
- **YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County** - \$1,000,000 for the property and new “safe house” facility.

Anne Arundel County Delegation

The Anne Arundel County Delegation considered a wide range of legislation during the 2014 Session of the Maryland General Assembly. One of the most

controversial bills was legislation expanding the number of days during which deer hunting is permitted on private property in Anne Arundel County. Advocates and opponents of the bill both testified before the Delegation; an amended version passed the House of Delegates, however the bill failed in the Senate.

The Delegation was successful in shepherding the following bills through the process:

- **HB 87/SB 747, Anne Arundel County -- Superintendent of Schools - Compensation:** prohibits the Anne Arundel County Board of Education from compensating the county superintendent of schools for sick leave benefits earned while employed by any other board of education or public school system.
- **HB 552/SB 246, Public Safety - Anne Arundel Community College Police Force:** establishes a separate police force at Anne Arundel County Community College.
- **HB 591/SB 1015, Anne Arundel County – Alcoholic Beverages – Tasting Licenses:** creates a Class BWLT beer, wine, and liquor on-premises tasting license in Anne Arundel County, modifies the eligibility requirements, and also increases the annual fee.
- **HB 1381, Anne Arundel County – Sheriff – Salary Increases:** increases the Anne Arundel County Sheriff's salary to \$133,000 and removes the current connection to salaries of captains in the County's police force.
- **H.B. 1409, Anne Arundel County – Collection of Hotel Taxes and Distribution of Revenues – City of Annapolis:** authorizes Anne Arundel County to enable the City of Annapolis to collect revenue generated in the City of Annapolis from the hotel tax.

FY15 Capital Budget Highlights

The Capital Budget is the State government's best job creation tool. The funding in this budget will create and maintain **14,000 direct and indirect jobs** and another **17,000 jobs** from the \$1.5 billion of local and private funds leveraged by the State's capital spending.

- **The communities within 3 miles of Laurel Race Track are scheduled to receive impact fees.** This includes \$500,000 each year for 2015 to 2019.
- **Commitment to K-12 Education.** \$275 million for school construction and modernizing classrooms. Over the past decade, we have invested nearly \$3 billion in public school construction across the State.
- **Higher Education.** We provide \$369 million in funding for higher education facilities. Community colleges receive \$65 million in FY15 which will fund 12 projects on 9 campuses and will leverage \$18 million of local matching funds.
- Final funding for the new fleet of medevac helicopters.

Women's Caucus

The Maryland Women's Caucus worked hard this year supporting fourteen bills, eight of which passed. These bills include:

- **HB 559/SB 818**, Human Trafficking Address Confidentiality Program, protects the rights of human trafficking victims;
- **SB 434/HB 647**, Peace Orders and Protective Orders – Extensions, allows a person to still be covered by a peace or protective order if it expires while they are awaiting a hearing for an extension;
- **SB 333/HB 307**, Peace Orders and Protective Orders - Burden of Proof, alters the standards on which judge's grant a peace or protective order;
- **SB 50/HB 955**, Use of Personal I.D. Information or Identity of Another – Sexual Crimes - makes it a felony for an individual to use another person's information to solicit or encourage a sexual crime against that individual;
- **HB 963**, Hospitals – Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examinations and Planning Committee – establishing the Planning Committee to implement improved access to sexual assault medical forensic examination; requires hospitals to have a protocol to provide certain access to sexual assault medical forensic examination by forensic nurses or physicians to certain victims;
- **SB 460/HB 781**, Person in a Position of Authority – Sexual Offenses with a Minor - expands the definition of a “person in a position of authority” to further protect minors against sexual offenses;
- **SB 656/HB 27**, Healthy Births for Incarcerated Women - protects the health and safety of pregnant female inmates by preventing the use of restraints and by ensuring the inmate's access to sufficient medical care for delivery;
- **SB 737/1026**, Parental Leave – Birth or Adoption of a Child - expands the provisions of leave for adoption or birth of a child to include workers at companies that employ 15-49 people.

Other Bills of Interest

Marijuana

SB 364 – Possession of Marijuana – Civil Offense

The House and Senate agreed on a bill decriminalizing small amounts of marijuana. This bill passed the House with 78 votes in favor and 55 votes in opposition.

Marijuana is still illegal; however it is no longer a criminal violation. The bill provides that for a first offense of possession of less than 10 grams a fine of \$100 would be levied, a second violation would be \$250 and a third would be \$500. In addition to the fine, anyone under 21 or an adult upon a third offense would be referred for a substance abuse assessment and depending on the results required to attend a drug treatment program.

I supported this bill for several reasons:

- **it is not legalizing marijuana use**, it is only changing crime classification; this approach is currently in use in 17 other states successfully.
- it will reduce the overload of the Court system and will provide screening and treatment for those diagnosed with a problem.
- a single criminal conviction for marijuana under current law can have long lasting implications, ruining the job prospects of many individuals both young and old
- the ACLU reports that African-Americans are 2.9 times more likely to be arrested than whites

SB 923/HB881 – Natalie M. LaPrade Medical Marijuana Commission

This bill expands the purpose and responsibilities of the Natalie M. LaPrade Medical Marijuana Commission to include the registration of certifying physicians as well as conducting research on issues and disseminating information related to the medical use of marijuana. The bill limits the number of licensed growers and specifies the process by which a qualifying patient may obtain medical marijuana, including provisions related to issuing identification cards for qualifying patients and their caregivers. Additionally, the bill authorizes the commission to set reasonable fees to cover its operating costs and distributes any fees collected by the commission to the existing Natalie M. LaPrade Medical Marijuana Commission Fund. The commission must adopt regulations to implement the bill by September 15, 2014. Patients with specific illnesses will benefit greatly with the availability of Medical Marijuana.

Minimum Wage

The bill to raise the minimum wage passed. It is a very different bill that the House originally passed. The Senate made significant changes to the bill that were accepted by the House.

The current minimum wage is \$7.25. The Bill increases the minimum wage as follows:

- January 1, 2015 the new wage will be \$8.00 per hour
- July 1, 2015 it increases to \$8.25 per hour
- July 1, 2016 it increases to \$8.75 per hour
- July 1, 2017 it increases to \$9.25 per hour
- July 1, 2018 it increases to \$10.10 per hour

The bill also includes funding for the Department of Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) to provide raises for workers caring for the disabled.

The bill still has many exceptions to the proposed new wage. A few exceptions are individuals who are employed:

- a member of the immediate family of the employer
- at an organized camp , resident or day camp
- under the age of 16 and employed 20 hours or less
- under 20 years of age may be paid 85% of the minimum wage for the first 6 months of employment
- as an outside salesman
- in canning, freezing, packing, first processing of seasonal fresh fruits, vegetables, poultry or seafood
- in charitable activities, educational, not for profit or religious organizations
- in a café, drive-in, drugstore, restaurant, tavern or similar establishment that sells food or drink and earns less than \$400,000 or less annually
- as agriculture, livestock, and hand harvester laborers
- in amusement, swimming pool or recreational establishments operating less than 7 months annually
- in positions earning tips, these are handled differently

This bill was a difficult vote for me as a “small business owner.” However, I completed a calculation with the help of the “Dollar Times” website. I earned \$1.35 an hour in 1965, with inflation, that \$1.35 would be \$10.08 today. The minimum wage has not kept up with inflation. The Senate amendments made this bill much better for small business.

Public Candidate Forums

Several local groups have scheduled candidate nights. Here are a few for you to put on your calendar.

Linthicum Shipley Improvement Association: Wednesday, April 9. 7:30 PM at Lindale Middle School. Both Democratic and Republican Candidates for the State Legislature.

Harman’s Civic Association: May 22, 7:00 at Hebron Harman Elementary School. Both Democratic and Republican Candidates for the State Legislature.

District 32 Democratic Club: Thursday, April 17, at Ferndale Volunteer Fire Hall. 7:00 for dinner, 8:00 for the forum. Democratic Candidates for the State Legislature.

West County Democratic Club: Tuesday, April 29, 7:00 PM at Perry’s Restaurant in Odenton. Democratic Candidates

Northern Anne Arundel County Chamber: Monday, May 12. 7:30 AM to 9:30 AM at Gavigan’s Furniture 7319 Ritchie Hwy Glen Burnie, MD 21060 . Both Democratic and Republican Candidates the State Legislature for Districts 31, 32 and 33

Northern Anne Arundel County Chamber, Monday, April 28. 7:30 to 9:30 AM at Blues' Bistro, 7514 Ritchie Hwy, Glen Burnie, . Both Democratic and Republican Candidates for Council Districts 1, 2 and 3,

Anne Arundel County Priority Transportation Projects

The Anne Arundel County Executive has submitted her list of priority projects for State funding. Four of the six priorities directly affect District 32 residents.

- The first project on her priority list is the multi-lane construction of Maryland 175 from MD 295 to Telegraph Road.
- The third priority that affects our district is MD198 from MD 295 to MD 32.
- The fourth priority is MD 295 from MD 100 to MD I-95, including the Hanover Road interchange and the Hanover Connector Road from the Parkway to Aviation Blvd with separated pedestrian and bicycle facilities connecting the Patuxent Valley State Park to BWI trail.
- The sixth priority is initiation of a project of MD 32 from MD 175 to I-95.

Office Schedule

As the session ends, my office will return to part-time status. My office will usually be open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 am to 4 pm. My contact information remains the same, Pamela.beidle@house.state.md.us or 410-841-3370. I look forward to seeing you out and about in the Community.

A special thanks to my Legislative Assistant, Nancy Lipin Crawford and my intern, Lisa Johnson for your help and support during the 2014 Session.

Thank you for granting me the honor and opportunity to serve as your representative in the Maryland House of Delegates. I truly appreciate your support.