

Legislative Update

The 90 day session is almost over Monday, March 20th was “Crossover”. “Crossover” is the day that all House Bills must cross to the Senate and all Senate Bills cross to the House. Bills must pass in both houses in the “same posture” to become laws. We worked late into the night on Friday, all day Saturday, and about 10 hours Monday to get as many bills as possible to the Senate. The House considered over 1600 hundred bills, but many do not make it through our vetting process.

A few bills from my Committee, Environment and Transportation, that recently crossed over include a bill to allow people driving rental cars to be charged when running past a stopped school bus, requiring the left lane to be used for passing on a highway of three lanes or more and enabling legislation for local jurisdictions to enforce jay walking laws for those that do not use cross walks. I was also pleased pass the Task Force to Study Bicycle Safety and the bill to ban fracking. Now we wait on the Senate.

Budget Update

This year the House of Delegates reviewed the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY2018) budget bill first. The House passed a fiscally sound, balanced budget that resolved the structural deficit this year, leaving \$137 million in reserve, plus nearly \$1 billion in the Rainy Day Fund.

The budget passed by the House 135 – 6. It fully funds K-12 education, restores after-school funding for our impoverished students, invests in healthcare, and continues to fund health care for the poor and elderly.

The Senate will further amended and pass the budget. Members of both the House and Senate will “conference” to work out any necessary compromises, and send it to the Governor. No budget item referenced is final until the Budget bills are signed.

Education

Some budget highlights are:

- fully funds Maryland public schools with \$6.4 billion for FY 18, a record amount.
- increases funding to community colleges - \$300 million for Community Colleges.
- reduced the Governor’s request for “Boost” to \$2 million from \$7.5 million, and requires that the students qualify for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS). BOOST is a tuition payment program for students that transfer from public schools to private schools. Last year \$5 million dollars was included in the budget for BOOST and we were told it was to give other educational opportunities to students. We recently learned that 78% of the funding went to students that were already in private and parochial schools.

- restored \$4 million for FY 18 and restored full funding for FY 19 the funding for the Teacher Induction, Retention, and Advancement Pilot Program, which provides stipends to teachers in Maryland's poorer schools.
- caps Maryland State College's tuition at 2% for next year.

Health Care

Under this budget:

- total health care funding increases, including over \$11 billion in funding for 1.4 million Medicaid enrollees.
- provides a 2% increase for most social service providers in Maryland.
- restores full funding to the Prince George's County Regional Medical Center's operating grant.

Miscellaneous

- Public safety - 1.8 billion in funding including moving civilians into 50 positions now filled by Troopers. These moves will be done by attrition.
- Department of Commerce is fully funds tourism and state arts.
- No salary increases for State employees, 400 vacancies cut.
- Lottery reduced by one half percent.

Capital Budget

The Capital Budget was passed by the House, it includes several Bond Bill projects for the County. They are:

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| • Maryland Hall | \$1,000.000 |
| • Fort Meade Resiliency Center | 500,000 |
| • YWCA | 400.000 |
| • The ARC | 200,000 |
| • Bestgate Park | 200,000 |
| • Hotsox Park | 200,000 |

Office Information

REMINDER: All scholarship applications need to be completed in my office, or postmarked, by March 31, 2017. The application can be found on my website.

My office continues to be staffed by Nancy Lipin Crawford, my Chief of Staff and Maggie J. Hobbins, my Legislative Assistant.

My office is open full time during the Session. Please feel free to contact me with your thoughts and concerns. My contact information remains: pamela.beidle@house.state.md.us or

410.841.3370. You can also find updates at my website www.pambeilde.com and on Facebook at Delegate Pam Beidle.

It is truly an honor to serve you in the Maryland General Assembly.