

Session Update March 20, 2015

The General Assembly will end in approximately 25 days. We are doing long Committee hearings and double sessions. The House has 1,287 bills and the Senate 935.

The Budget

We heard the “Second Reader” of the Budget on the Floor Wednesday. This is the time that we listen to Proposed Amendments for the Governor’s Budget offered by the Appropriations Committee. When the House has finalized their amendments, the amended Budget Bill will go to the Senate. The Senate will review and most likely make additional amendments. The House and Senate then meet in conference committee to agree on the final bill to be sent to the Governor. This all needs to be completed by April 13 at midnight or the Governor may extend the Legislative Session or come call us back for a Special Session. It is my hope that this does not happen again.

There have been a few questions from the Republican members on the amendments to the Governor’s Budget, but not has many questions as prior years. The Appropriations Committee voted unanimously—for the first time in 12years—on the Fiscal 2016 Operating Budget.

As amended the budget:

- Restores \$132 million of funding for K-12 education
- Erases 75% of our structural deficit without new taxes
- Avoids proposed salary cuts for State employees
- Restores funding for critical safety net programs
- Protects employee retirement savings.

The 2016 Budget has a 1% Growth, in lieu of 3 or 4% in prior years. However, instead of cutting the Structural Deficit by 88% as the Governor suggested, we cut the Structural Deficit by 75%, The Spending Affordability Committee recommended cutting the Structural Deficit by 50% this year and 50% next year, so the House Budget is more aggressive than Spending Affordability, but slightly less aggressive than the Governor’s Budget.

With cuts made by Appropriations, the following items were funded that were not funded in the Governor’s budget:

- \$69M: Avoids a 2% salary reduction for State employees
- \$68M: Geographic Cost of Education Index funding
- \$14M: Medicaid reimbursements for primary care physicians to ensure health care access for rural communities
- \$6.5M: Restored funding for community mental health providers

- \$4.8M: Health coverage and family planning services for low-income women
- \$4.8M: Safety net programs to help elderly and disabled individuals remain in their homes
- \$2.2M: Funds for high-need children with developmental disabilities
- \$2.1M: Grants to support adult-day care providers
- \$2.0M: Expanded substance abuse treatment to combat heroin addiction

The fiscal 2016 operating budget, as passed by the Appropriations Committee, makes two significant changes to the State's pension funding:

- Replaces our current funding methodology (Corridor) with the actuarial rate of contribution beginning in FY2017 (8 years ahead of schedule).
- Requires the State to pay an annual supplemental contribution of \$75 million per year until the system is 80% funded by 2023 and remains in place until 2028 until the system is 85% funded.

I will continue to update you as the Budget moves through the Senate.

The Delegation

This session, the Delegation has heard 29 bills, 12 of which were bond bills. Here is the current status of the other 17 bills:

[HB 15](#) - Maryland Transportation Authority Chesapeake Bay Bridge Toll Collections – Withdrawn

[HB 27](#) - Task force on Disposition of Crownsville Hospital Center Property – Delegation voted favorable with amendments, passed in the House 137-0

[HB 173](#) -Workers' Compensation - Heart Disease and Hypertension Presumption - Anne Arundel County Detention Officers – Delegation voted favorable with amendments, passed in the House 129-5

[HB 175](#) - Anne Arundel County - Police Officers - Secondary Employment – voted favorable in Delegation, awaiting committee vote

[HB 331](#) - Anne Arundel County - Alcoholic Beverages – Licenses – voted favorable with amendments in Delegation, passed in the House 133-0

[HB 368](#) -Civil Actions - Immunity From Liability - Emergency Medical Care for Drug Overdose – the Delegation did not vote because this would be a statewide bill, Judiciary voted it favorable with amendments.

[HB 371](#) - Gaming - Video Lottery Operation License - Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport – the Delegation did not vote on this bill

[HB 447](#) - City of Annapolis - Alcoholic Beverages - Election Days – voted favorable with amendments in Delegation, passed in the House 137-0

[HB 555](#) - Anne Arundel County – Semi-permanent Food Service Facilities - Wastewater Disposal – Delegation voted favorable with amendments, it is awaiting committee vote

[HB 727](#) - Anne Arundel County Board of Education - Wireless Telecommunications Towers - Moratorium and Report – the Delegation has not voted yet; the bill is currently being reviewed by the Education Subcommittee

[HB 734](#) - Anne Arundel County - Board of Education - Selection of Members – Delegation voted unfavorable

[HB 821](#) - Environment - Cox Creek Citizens Oversight Committee - Composition - Second Duties – voted favorable in Delegation, awaiting committee vote

[HB 848](#) - Anne Arundel County Public Schools Funding Accountability and Transparency Act – voted favorable in Delegation, awaiting committee vote

[HB 849](#) - Anne Arundel County Board of Education - Public School Holidays - References in Official Publications (Public School Holiday Protection Act) – Withdrawn

[HB 879](#) - Anne Arundel County - Property Tax Credit - Benefit Corporations and Benefit Limited Liability Companies – the Delegation voted unfavorable.

[HB 1152](#) - Anne Arundel County - Solicitation and Collection of Money or Donations from Occupants of Vehicles - Adoption of a Permit Program – voted favorable in Delegation

[HB 1204](#) - Anne Arundel County - Assistant to the Sheriff – Appointment – voted favorable in Delegation

My office is staffed by Nancy Lipin Crawford, my Chief of Staff and Lisa Johnson, is working as 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 is: 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