

January 23, 2013

Today, Colonel Rothstein from Fort Meade, presented a briefing to the Senators and Delegates concerning the current status of BRAC and Fort Meade. The Colonel stated BRAC is completed, 5,600 new jobs have come to Fort Meade. However, NSA and the Cyber Command continue to grow and expand. 56,000 people work on the Fort Meade installation and 40,000 of those commute daily, so transportation and traffic continues to be an issue. State Highways is currently conducting a survey of Route 32, including an increase in mass transit is being studied. The Governor has funded the remaining two intersections of Route 175. [http://www.capitalgazette.com/maryland\\_gazette/news/military/o-malley-puts-million-in-budget-for-fort-meade-roads/article\\_ed990f2e-20f6-573d-987a-98954ac02c65.html](http://www.capitalgazette.com/maryland_gazette/news/military/o-malley-puts-million-in-budget-for-fort-meade-roads/article_ed990f2e-20f6-573d-987a-98954ac02c65.html) The Colonel did share with us that the current budget crises has required a hiring freeze and possible budget cuts.

We are currently two weeks into the 2013 Session. Our time is filled with short legislative sessions and long briefings from the various State agencies. My committee, Environmental Matters, will begin bill hearings on February 1<sup>st</sup>. I encourage all of you to follow any legislation of interest you at the new and improved Maryland General Assembly website: [www.mgaleg.maryland.gov](http://www.mgaleg.maryland.gov).

## **Budget**

Last week Governor O'Malley submitted his Fiscal Year 2014(FY14), \$37.3 billion proposed budget. The FY14 Budget places an emphasis on job creation, education, health, public safety, and the environment. Among other items, his budget proposal includes:

- \$6 billion overall in K-12 public education
- \$7.4 billion for Medicaid
- \$325 million in spending cuts
- \$336 million for school construction and \$280 million for public colleges and universities
- \$229 million for community colleges
- \$25 million for school security enhancements
- \$1.5 million to study the effects of "fracking" (hydraulic fracturing) in Western Maryland

The Spending Affordability Committee (SAC) recommended that the FY14 budget resolve at least \$200 million of the remaining structural deficit. The Department of Legislative Service believes that meeting this goal will resolve the structural deficit. In 2007 the structural deficit was \$1.7 billion, because of our responsible choices, we are on the verge of closing the deficit.

Maryland has recovered 80% of the jobs lost during the recession, ranking Maryland as the 9<sup>th</sup> fastest state in the nation in job recovery. The infrastructure investments contained in the Capital Budget are expected to support 43,000 jobs. Maryland's Unemployment Rate has dropped to 6.6%. As a result of our hard work and sacrifice, Maryland is persevering in these difficult economic times.

## **Education**

For the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row, Maryland's public schools rank #1 in the nation. We have cut the achievement gap in elementary school students by more than 25%, and Governor O'Malley's proposed budget provides a huge investment in K-12 public education. Additionally, our public universities continue to thrive. Five of Maryland's public colleges appeared in the Kiplinger's list of 100 Best Values in Public Colleges, with the University of Maryland in College Park ranking at No. 5, followed by St. Mary's College (41), Salisbury University (72), University of Maryland in Baltimore County (78), and Towson University (90).

Maryland is working hard to keep college tuition affordable and thereby available to Maryland citizens. Although tuition is expected to go up by 3%, we went from the 6<sup>th</sup> highest tuition in 2007 to the 27<sup>th</sup> lowest today. Comparatively, tuition for public universities increased by 29% in Virginia, and by 14% in Pennsylvania. Investing in Maryland's education is one of the best ways to invest in our future.

## **CSX Facility Site**

CSX Transportation has chosen the location of its facility site, and it will **not** be in Anne Arundel County. The intermodal facility will be built at the CSX Mount Clare property in Southwest Baltimore.

Thank you for allowing me the honor to represent the constituents of District 32. Please continue to stay in touch. My contact information is: Pamela.beidle@house.state.md.us or (410)841-3370. Nancy Lipin Crawford remains my Legislative Aide and I welcome Joanna McKee as my intern from University of Maryland College Park during the session. Also, please visit my facebook page by searching Delegate Pam Beidle, or my website: [www.pambeidle.com](http://www.pambeidle.com).