



April 14, 2015

Dear Constituents and Friends,

It is a true privilege to be able to represent my fellow District 12 residents of Baltimore and Howard Counties and all Marylanders in the House of Delegates, and this first session has been really special. My Legislative Aide, Ann Goldscher, Legislative Fellow for the 3 month session, Dr. Rick Gustave, and Legacy Leadership Volunteer, Susan Cook have been indispensable in helping me meet the demands of the job and hugely supportive of all of my legislative efforts.

Accomplishments

Although I had anticipated a light agenda with respect to bill introductions, the issues presented on the by constituents on the campaign trail as well as those discussed with advocates who stopped by the offices here in Annapolis during those first weeks of session, led me to introduce several bills covering a range of issues and co-sponsor many more.

House Bill 181 (HB 181) - Sterile compounding permit repeal. Working with the support of the Maryland Board of Pharmacy, Maryland Board of Physicians and the State Medical Society (MedChi) this corrected an unintended consequence of previous legislation by repealing an impractical permit requirement that, had it been allowed to go into effect, would have made it nearly impossible for physicians and other practitioners to continue with the safe and routine mixing of medications for administration in a cost efficient, medically effective, and practical manner. I'm happy to report that the bill and its cross filed Senate Bill 69 were both passed by each chamber and the legislation was signed into law today.

HB 211 –Pay-it-Forward higher ed financing task force. Because our current system for financing college and trade school education is unsustainable due to the rapid rise in costs and the amount of debt incurred, this bill proposed an in depth study of an innovative approach to financing higher education and whether it might be part of the solution for our state. Though it did not pass, the questions will be part of a broader in a summer study on college affordability. It is hoped that this study will lead to comprehensive answers and sustainable solutions that can be addressed through future legislation.

HB 284 – Referendum. While not the lead sponsored, I initiated this bipartisan and bicameral legislation and worked with Sen. Gale Bates and Del. Bob Flanagan of District 9 to make it easier to bring a petition to referendum by requiring a determination of whether the format of the petition sufficiently meets the required standard before the petitioner(s) exert time and effort obtaining signatures. It also requires the Board of Election, in cases where the format

is not found to be sufficient, to give an explanation of why not. Even though this bill was introduced specifically to address a problem identified with the referendum process in Howard County, it has statewide implications. It too was signed into law today.

HB 823 – Sickle cell disease outreach. This bill sought to increase awareness of and access to available treatment advances for better sickle cell disease management and prevention of the painful and debilitating sickle cell crises events which can lead to organ failure and extensive and costly hospital stays. The bill did not make it out of committee, largely due to budgetary considerations, but progress was made with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and all stakeholders. With some additional work, I am hopeful that this important issue can move forward during the next session.

HB 838 - Infertility benefits parity. This bill brings Maryland law regarding mandated health care infertility benefits in line with our marriage equality laws, by ensuring that our laws do not create separate classes of married couples. The bill and its companion bill, SB 416, passed both chambers and awaits the Governor's signature.

HB 1071 -Circuit Court Judges and non-contested election. Currently, unlike district and appellate court judges who run in retention/removal elections only, circuit court judges (having been thoroughly vetted in an extensive process of disclosure forms, personal and professional questionnaires, background checks and multiple interviews) run in elections where unvetted and vetted but unselected candidates can run against them. The bill sought to constitutionally change their election and re-election races to the same uncontested election process as used for appellate court judges. Two similar house bills were also introduced and all three were heard before the Judiciary Committee. In part because of the high vote burden required to pass an amendment to the State constitution, the bills were later withdrawn. This will be revisited in future sessions.

HB 1122 - Non-Discrimination of Anatomical Gifts. This bill ensures that people with disabilities (who, incidentally, are often asked to consent to being transplant donors) are not excluded from receiving transplants solely on the basis of being disabled. This has not been much of a problem in Maryland, where our major transplant institutions have non-discriminatory policies in place, and the bill had strong support from the disabilities advocates and the transplant hospitals, who felt it was important that the policy be written into state law. The bill got stuck in the House Rules Committee but the Senate bill, SB 792, passed both houses and awaits the Governor's signature.

Delegation Accomplishments with Bond Bills

Baltimore County:

The Good Shepard Services Center earned funding to help renovate their Boys Unit. Located in Arbutus, Good Shepherd Services is a residential, non-profit center for adolescents with severe behavioral and emotional problems. This will benefit all of the patients.

Other county bond capital projects- Angel Park construction, Gilead House renovation, Greenspring Montessori Method Training Center, Lake Roland Educational Center, and Pikeville Volunteer Fire Company Building

Howard County:

The Community Action Council, which helps county residents in crisis, received money to help expand their food bank facility.

The Howard County Conservancy was awarded funds to expand and renovate the Environmental Education Center.

Both of these projects will benefit all of Howard County.

LEGISLATIVE BODY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Budget

As is usual and consistent with our constitutional obligation, the General Assembly passed a balanced budget on time.

With the State continuing to emerge from the great recession, and with the nation's top ranked education system, world class health care institutions, high quality of life, and transportation network as the foundation for meeting our shared priorities of creating more livable-wage job and expanding and diversifying our core industries and businesses, this year's budgetary difficulties cannot be overstated.

The Governor's budget was submitted in January with cuts that were, for the most part, viewed as unsparing and unweighted. And though some would say necessarily so, others argued that the same reductions, administered over two budget cycles instead of one, would yield the same net benefit with less pain. The General Assembly can restrict or cut funds in the Governor's proposal but may not increase the overall budget. The administration proffered that this was a starting point and that if the legislature were able to find funds to restore the cuts to schools, Medicaid for pregnant women, and payments for providers of behavioral health services and support, that he would fund it.

The legislature responded to the administration's challenge by producing a FY16 budget that meets both the priorities of the people of Maryland (i.e. schools, education, healthcare) and the obligations of the State (e.g. the promised COLA increase of 2% to state employees following static wages and furloughs since 2009, 80% pension funding by 2023 and full funding before 2040), without raising taxes or raiding funds. It shrinks the structural deficit by over 69% (vs. 65% in the Governor's budget and supplemental requests)- well above the 50% reduction recommended last year by the Spending Affordability Commission and on track to meet the goal of closing the structural deficit -, reinforces our reputation for good fiscal management that has allowed us to earn and maintain our AAA bond rating, and allows us to modernize our pension system as planned, by moving from the "corridor method" to an actuarial system, to buffer the budget and pension system against the volatility of the markets.

The members of the House Appropriations and in the Senate Budget and Finance Committees worked diligently and creatively to improve on the proposed budget and produced House and Senate products that initially passed with bipartisan support from each chamber - 129:10 from the House, and 46:0 from the Senate. The conference committee then worked through this last weekend to align the budgets and to incorporate and funding many of the programs requested as priorities in the Governor's supplemental budgets. This final F16 budget, of which I am proud, is both fiscally prudent **and** socially responsible. Alas, presumably because of political gamesmanship which is at this early stage of my legislative service beyond me, the final budget passed yesterday without a single one of the votes it had previously received from the minority.

At today's press conference Governor Hogan called the budget a "good deal for taxpayers", a sentiment with which I agree. He also stated, however, that he was unlikely to spend the monies identified and "fenced off" by the General Assembly to restore the education, behavioral health and state employees' COLA (he is prohibited by law from spending them in any other way). I remain hopeful that once he has had more time to study it in detail, he will decide otherwise.

Health and Government Operations

This is the committee to which I've been assigned and we heard and acted on a wide range of bills covering issues surrounding health care delivery, professional certification and licensure; mortuary services, professional conduct and consumer rights; state procurement practices; health insurance coverage disparities and stop-loss insurance markets; behavioral (mental and addiction) health services and delivery inadequacies; estates and trusts regulations; and commemorative recognitions. The committee worked hard on to ensure that any legislation it voted out had been worked on to bring all stakeholders on board and to bad bills good and good bills better.

HB 1021 – the Death with Dignity or Aid in Dying bill raise the most interest on all sides and was heard by our committee jointly with the Judiciary Committee. No action was taken. The bill will be worked on during the interim and is expected to be considered again next session.

Committee bills not previously mentioned that were passed into law include:

- a bill requiring that multi-line telephone systems connect directly to a public switched network system when dialing 9-1-1 so that emergency dispatchers can be reached without the caller knowing if a 9, 1 or any other exchange number must first be dialed to get an outside line.
- one raising the attachment points for stop-loss insurance, in advance of scheduled ACA changes, in order to help the self-insured and fully insured markets remain competitive enough to mitigate against opportunistic flipping between markets that would unfairly shift the risk burden and escalate premiums.
- the establishment of the Ethan Saylor Alliance for Self-Advocates as Educators in the Department of Disabilities to train developmentally and intellectually disabled individuals who wish to serve as trainers in training programs established to teach law enforcement personnel and others how to best manage professional interactions with persons having intellectual or developmental disabilities. Ethan Saylor, an adult Marylander with Down's syndrome, was killed when a confrontation with off duty sheriff deputies working security at a movie theater went horribly wrong.
- a bill allowing licensing, with certain restrictions, of direct-entry midwives (i.e. non-nurse midwives) to assist woman who opt to give birth at home.

Environment

Highlights include:

- passage of legislation clarifying the storm water management fee requirements to allow jurisdictions both greater accountability and greater flexibility in determining how best to meet and to pay for their obligation of addressing the contaminated runoff into local streams and tributaries that is the major contributor of Chesapeake Bay pollution.
- enactment of a moratorium on drilling and issuing of permits for hydraulic fracking until October 2017 and a requirement for rules to be promulgated by October 2016. This should allow

opportunity to vet the regulations in the context of the most recent safety, public health and environmental studies and respond accordingly.

- legislation that phases in a ban on in state manufacturing and sale of products containing synthetic microbeads which, because they do not biodegrade under natural conditions, build up in our waters, enter our food chain, and present risks of yet unrealized negative environment and health impacts.

- creation of a pilot program with concurrent study to expand access to solar energy to renters and others unable to install solar panels on their homes.

Justice, Economic Matters and Transportation

Bills of note during the session

- give interns protection against employer discrimination
- establish requirements and procedures allowing sexual assault survivors access to the results of their evidence collection kits
- establish a work group to study safe harbor policies for victims of human trafficking
- expunge records for conviction of crimes that are no longer crimes
- foster successful re-integration of ex-offenders into society by shielding certain misdemeanors after 3 years without reoffending and reinstating voting rights of felons upon release from prison
- allow licensure and insurance requirements for the operation of transportation network companies such as Uber and Lyft within the state
- authorize licensing as a vehicle dealer the manufacturer (i.e. Tesla) or distributor of electric or nonfossil-fuel burning vehicles, with provisions protecting State licensed dealers and franchise holders

Information

If you know a member of a high school Class of 2016 who would be interested in serving for two non-consecutive weeks as a page for the Maryland General Assembly during the 2016 session, which will run from the second week in January to early April, have them contact the Baltimore County () or Howard County () page coordinator about the application and selection process. Jane Hudiburg (janh@mlis.state.md.us, 410-946-55128) can give details about the program and the name and contact information of each county's coordinator.

For now, I have elected to distribute my Delegate Scholarships for high school seniors, full-time or part-time degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students, and students attending a private career school, through the Maryland Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA). This helps ensure an impartial system, but all of the awards are therefore based on need as demonstrated on the FAFSA. For more information, interested students should go to http://www.mhec.state.md.us/financialaid/programdescriptions/prog_delegate.asp

I am always interested in your state legislative concerns and hope you will feel free to get in touch with me to share them. If you are having difficulty working with state agencies or have local concerns, my Legislative Aide, Ann Goldscher, or I may be able to assist you in reaching a resolution or in putting you in contact with someone who can. We can be reached at 410-841-3378 and at terri.hill@houlse.state.md.us.

Sincerely,

Terri L. Hill, MD