



REPORT FROM STATE CIRCLE
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REDISTRICTING REFORM

HB 427 Voters’ Legislative Redistricting Panel (Flanagan, et al.) would amend the Maryland constitution to establish a “Voters’ Legislative Districting Panel,” consisting of 21 members and 7 alternates to be chosen by a lottery conducted by the State Ethics Commission. The membership would have Republicans, Democrats, and unaffiliated voters in the same proportion as registered voters. Panel members would be chosen from those who submitted a request to the Ethics Commission to be included in the lottery for selection, and would be required to have voted in the three preceding primary and general elections (but the unaffiliated voters would not be required to have voted in the primary). Service as a public official (including as a member of a party central committee), either current or previous, would disqualify a person from selection for the panel. The current section of the constitution providing that the Governor submits a legislative redistricting plan which takes effect unless the General Assembly adopts a different plan within 45 days would be amended to provide that the Voters’ Legislative Districting Panel would submit such a plan. Hrg 3/2, 1 p.m. R&E

HB 428 Voters’ Congressional Districting Panel (Flanagan, et al.) would amend the Maryland constitution to establish a “Citizens’ Congressional Districting Panel,” which would consist of 21 members and 7 alternates to be chosen by a lottery conducted by the State Ethics Commission. Like the panel established in HB 427, the membership would have Republicans, Democrats, and unaffiliated voters in the same proportion as registered voters. Panel members would be chosen from those who submitted a request to the Ethics Commission to be included in the lottery for selection and would be required to have voted in the three preceding primary and general elections (but the unaffiliated voters would not be required to have voted in the primary). Service as a public official (including as a member of a party central committee), either current or previous, would disqualify a person from selection for the panel. The panel would be required to prepare a plan for the boundaries of Maryland’s congressional districts, which would be introduced in the House of Delegates and the Senate as a joint resolution. Unless the General Assembly adopts an alternative plan by a two-thirds vote, the panel’s plan would become law. On petition of any voter, the Court of Appeals would have jurisdiction to review the plan for conformance with federal and state law. Hrg 3/2, 1 p.m. R&E

HB 610 Elections - Study Commission on the Redistricting Process in Maryland (McComas, et al.) establishes a commission of 15 members, consisting of one member of each party in the Senate and the House of Delegates and 7 chosen by the Governor (which shall include a representative of the League of Women Voters), and 4 public members appointed jointly by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. The Commission would examine the redistricting process in Maryland, and in other states, and shall suggest any constitutional or statutory changes to the General Assembly by December 31, 2016. Hrg 3/2, 1 p.m. R&E

HB 850/SB 448 Congressional Districts - Standards and Process (Gutierrez, et al./Kelley, et al.) would amend the Maryland Constitution to require that congressional districts “consist of adjoining territory, be compact in form, and of substantially equal population.” It would also require that “Due regard shall be given to natural boundaries and the boundaries of political subdivisions.” The amendment would require the Governor to prepare a plan consistent with these standards and present it to the General Assembly. Unless the legislature adopts a different plan within 45 days of the Governor’s presentation, the Governor’s plan would become law. The Court of Appeals would have jurisdiction to review a claim by any registered voter arguing that the plan was not consistent with the United States or Maryland constitution. Hrg 3/3, 1 p.m. R&E. *Support.*

HB 906 Legislative and Congressional Districting - Standards and Procedures (Miele, et al.) proposes amendments to the Maryland constitution to change the way that legislative and congressional districts are drawn. The bill would change the current system of electing three delegates from most districts, to one in which each senate district would be divided into three house districts, each of which would elect one delegate. It would add to the existing requirement that districts consist of adjoining territory and be compact in form, and a requirement that they also be “concise.” This is further defined to require that, “to the extent practicable,” the lines “result in each legislative district being in the shape of a square” and that “communities of similar interests” be kept together. The bill proposes a “Nonpartisan Districting Commission” that would consist of equal numbers of Republicans and Democrats appointed by legislative leaders and five additional members chosen by lottery, three of whom would not be affiliated with any political party. To be eligible for the lottery, the voter must not have changed party registration during the preceding 4 years, and may not be a state employee. The Commission would have the authority to adopt the redistricting plan for the state legislature, and the bill would repeal the existing provision of the constitution requiring the governor to submit a redistricting plan to the General Assembly for its approval. If a majority of all members of the Commission were unable to agree on a redistricting plan, a majority of the three unaffiliated members would have authority to approve a plan. The bill would further amend the constitution to provide that congressional districts conform to the same standards as legislative districts, and that the Nonpartisan Districting Commission established for legislative districts would have authority to adopt the congressional district plan. As in the case of legislative districts, if the Commission were unable to agree on a plan, a majority of the unaffiliated members of the Commission would be authorized to adopt a plan. R&E

HB 921 House Legislative Districts - Single Member (Parrott) would amend the Maryland constitution to provide for single-member districts for the House of Delegates, in place of the current system in which most Senate districts elect three delegates. R&E

Update on Bills Reported in RSC 1 & 2:

HB 267 Legislative and Congressional Districting - Standards and Procedures Hrg 3/21 p.m. R&E

LWVMD supports the interest in reform, but recommends waiting for the Governor's study commission report before endorsing a specific redistricting model.

Ralph Watkins

ELECTIONS

SB 5 Election Law - Canvass of Votes – Public Observation clarifies that all parts of the canvass of votes after an election are open to public observation, including the vote tabulation of voters from early voting. It is the first election related bill to make it out of the chamber. It was amended to delete Sen. Getty as sponsor and substitute Sen. Bates. The bill passed out of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee, and then passed out of the Senate by a vote to 46-0. The bill is on its way to the House Ways and Means Committee. *Support.*

HB 253 Election Law – Interstate Crosscheck Program (McDonough) which had a hearing on February 18 in the

Ways and Means Committee. The League provided testimony in opposition to this bill, which would require the State Board of Election to enter into an agreement to become part of a consortium of states, now 28 in number, that provide voter registration to each other (through the Kansas Secretary of State's office) for the purpose of identifying duplicate registration and duplicate voting by registered voters. A recent study of this Crosscheck Program revealed that because it uses only name and date of birth information to crosscheck, it identifies many duplicate registrations and voters that are not actually duplicates. Maryland is already participating in a similar, but more accurate program, the Electronic Registration Information Consortium (ERIC) with 11 states. ERIC uses DMV data and Social Security data in addition to name and DOB information. *Oppose.*

SB 166/HB 604 General Assembly – Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office (Feldman plus 10/Moon plus 23) propose a constitutional amendment that would authorize the governing body of a county, and the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, to enact legislation authorizing a special election to fill a vacated General Assembly seat. Once such legislation has been enacted, a special election for a vacancy in the General Assembly would be held. If the vacancy occurred by January 1 of the year immediately following the year in which the senator or delegate took office, the election would be held among registered voters of the district in which the vacancy occurred. However, if the vacancy occurs after that time, only the remaining members of the General Assembly district in which the vacancy occurred would be able to vote in the special election. The League has a position in favor of a special election to fill a vacancy in the General Assembly, and we submitted testimony on SB 166 detailing our support for a regular special election, but not for the special election among only members of the General Assembly from the vacated district. Hrg 3/4 W&M. *Oppose.*

HB 997/SB 680 Blue Ribbon Commission on Voting, Openness, Transparency and Equality (VOTE) (Hixson, et al./Raskin and Pinsky) would create a commission to examine ways to encourage broader voter participation; including, studying open and closed primary elections, top two and top four primary elections, a system of public campaign financing for executive, legislative and judicial offices, and proportional representation voting systems. The composition of the commission would include members of the Senate and House of Delegates and representatives of bipartisan civic organizations, one representative from each of the League of Women Voters, the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, the NAACP, the ACLU, the University of Maryland, the State Board of Elections, as well as representatives of civil rights organizations representing Asian/Pacific Islanders, Blacks/African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos. Hrg 3/11 W&M; Hrg 3/5 EHEA. *Support.*

HB 1049 – Voter Registration Act of 2015 (Hixson plus 6) relates to designated voter registration agencies across the state, including all state offices that provide public assistance, or state-funded programs providing services for the disabled and public institutions of higher education. These agencies are now required to offer voter registration applications for each application for service, and provide other voter registration support. They would then accept the voter registration application and transmit them to the appropriate election board. With respect to higher education institutions, current law requires that when a student enrolls, registers or pays for course work, she is provided with the opportunity to register to vote. HB 1049 requires some of these agencies, including local departments of social services, the Office of Mobility Certification in Maryland Transit Administration, the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange and higher education institutions, to implement fully automated voter registration systems by July 1, 2016. Hrg 3/11 W&M

Updates on Bills Reported in RSC 1 & 2

Correction: In RSC 1, I reported on HB 63, an effort to repeal Maryland's participation in the "Agreement Among the State to Elect the President by National Popular Vote". I wrote that the agreement specifies that in a presidential election, presidential electors elected in the State are required to cast their votes for the candidates who received the plurality of votes cast in the State. That is incorrect. In fact, the agreement specifies that these presidential electors in Maryland must cast their votes for candidates who received the plurality of the votes cast in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. A hearing was held on the bill on February 11, but no further action has been taken.

SB 97 Election Law - Counting of Properly Cast Ballots (Previously titled SB 97 - Election Law - Death of Voter Before Canvass - Counting of Ballot, and reported in RSC 2) passed out of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs committee 11-0, and has passed Second Reader in the Senate. This bill requires that an absentee ballot cast by a voter who dies before the canvass is counted.

Lu Pierson

TAXES

SB 190/HB 1065 Sales and Use Tax - Taxable Price - Accommodations (Madaleno, et al./Hixson, et al.) Currently online travel companies pay Maryland taxes based on the discounted rate they pay to book blocks of hotel rooms. Instead companies will pay state taxes based on the retail price at which they sell rooms to online customers. Hrg 2/11 B&T; Hrg 3/11 W&M

SB 389/HB 240 State Individual Income Tax - Rate Changes (Montgomery, et al./Tarlau) adds higher tax brackets for incomes above \$500,000 per year and \$1,000,000 per year and lowers the tax rate for incomes under \$25,000/year. Hrg 3/11 B&T

SB 589/HB 774 Motorist Tax Relief - Motor Fuel Tax - Consumer Price Index and Sales and Use Tax Equivalent Rate Adjustments - Repeal (Bates, et al./McDonough) requested by the Administration, adjustments to the motor fuel taxes would no longer be based on the Consumer Price Index. B&T; Hrg 3/6 W&M. *Oppose.*

SB 763 Tax Amnesty Program - (Peters, et al.) requires the Comptroller to declare an amnesty period for delinquent taxpayers from September 1, 2015, through October 31, 2015, for civil penalties and half the interest attributable to nonpayment, non-reporting, or underreporting. It authorizes the Comptroller to enter into agreements to provide a waiver that a taxpayer agrees to pay. B&T

SB 1123 Income Tax - Flat Tax (Afzali) changes the state income tax rate to 3.5% for individuals with Maryland taxable income in excess of \$30,000. HRU

HB 454 Vehicle-Miles-Traveled Tax and Associated Mandated Devices - Prohibition (Szeliga, et al.) prohibits the State or a local jurisdiction from imposing or levying a vehicle-miles-traveled tax or other similar fees, tolls, or taxes. It also prohibits the State or a local jurisdiction from requiring the installation of a device in or on a privately owned vehicle to facilitate the reporting of vehicle-miles traveled. Hrg 2/25 W&M

HB 484 Transportation - Highway User Revenues - Phased Restoration (Speaker, et al. - at request of Administration) increases the portion of highway user revenues that is distributed to local governments; and it also alters the allocation of the local share of highway user revenues among Baltimore City, counties, and municipalities. Hrg 3/6 ET

HB 730 Maryland Estate Tax - Unified Credit (Platt, et al.) would continue the Maryland estate tax credit without reduction if Congress were to repeal or reduce the federal credit. W&M

HB 837 Transportation - Motor Fuel Tax and Highway User Revenue – Increased Local Share (Parrott, et al.) increases the portion of highway user revenue that is distributed to local governments. 2/13 ET

HB 899 Motor Fuel Tax – Distribution of Revenue – Local Governments (Vogt) would increase the portion of motor fuel tax revenue that is distributed to local governments. Hrg 3/6 ET

HB 1003 Motor Fuel Tax - Distribution of Revenue (Kramer) would govern how the fuel tax revenue would be distributed among counties and to the Transportation Trust Fund. Hrg 3/6 ET

HJ 4 Moratorium on Taxes and Regulations (McKay, et al.) A 4-year moratorium on increasing any existing state taxes, establishing any new state taxes, and mandating any additional state regulations. HRU.

Update on Bills Reported in RSC 1 & 2:

SB 37/HB 108 Tobacco Taxes - Healthy Maryland Initiative (RSC - 1) Hrg 2/4 B&T, FIN; Hrg 2/23 W&M, ECM

HB 221/SB 73 Commission on Tax Policy, Reform, and Fairness (RSC - 2) Hrg 2/24 W&M

Doreen Rosenthal

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

HB 294 - Election Law - Contributions – Disclosure (Morhaim) clarifies and tightens the reporting rules for raising funds for a campaign via games of chance. Currently, candidates who raise money at a political fundraiser by selling tickets for a spin, paddle wheel, wheel of fortune or a raffle, do not have to report the names of the individual purchasers as long as the spin or chance is sold at the event for no more than \$2, the net income of the sponsoring political committee does not exceed \$1,500 in a 24 hour period, and the total receipts in that election cycle from spins and chances does not exceed \$2,500. This legislation clarifies that the same requirements apply to raffles as well. The candidate does however, have to report the total number of people who purchase a raffle ticket, spin or chance at the event. If an event raises more than the limits specified above, the candidate may either donate the excess to charity, or report the amount received from each individual who made a purchase at the event. Apparently, individuals are allowed to make contributions by payroll deductions for which they are not given a receipt and these contributions do not need to be reported unless they result in a cumulative amount of \$25,000. This legislation would require a political committee to report the amount of each contribution and the name and address of each contributor unless they receive a confidentiality waiver regarding reporting their residential address from the Board of Elections. In which case, the Board of Elections will authorize the use of another suitable address. Hrg 2/18 W&M. *Support.*

HB 485/SB 593 - Election Law - Fair Campaign Financing Fund - Income Tax Checkoff (Speaker and President, at request of Administration) Like SB 47 reported on in RSC 1, this bill would reinstitute a check-off on income tax forms that would allow joint and individual filers to donate the portion of their refund that they designate, or increase their tax liability by an amount they designate, for the purpose of creating a fund for Gubernatorial candidates to use to for their campaigns. This check-off option was eliminated in 2010 because gubernatorial candidates had not been making use of the fund. Unlike SB 47, this bill stipulates a \$500 maximum donation to the fund. This bill also requires the Comptroller to explain the Fair Campaign Financing Fund in the packet that accompanies the Maryland Income Tax forms and filing instructions. This legislation was submitted by the Governor who used funds from this account for his successful election. Hrg 3/4 W&M. *Support.*

HB 573/SB 518 Fair Elections Act (Luedtke plus 6/Pinsky) is comprehensive bill that seeks to expand public campaign financing to include not only candidates for governor, but legislative candidates as well as those running for Comptroller or Attorney General. In addition to the voluntary check-off as a means to publicly fund these campaigns, this legislation proposes using filing fees and penalties collected from candidates who violate campaign finance laws. This legislation also tightens up the requirements (and penalties for failing to meet those requirements) for campaign finance reporting, including the reporting by candidates who use public financing. It also establishes criteria for receiving public campaign financing. If insufficient funds are collected to provide full matching funds for those who apply for them, they will be distributed on a proportional basis to the qualifying candidates. Hrg 3/4 W&M; Senate Hearing not yet scheduled. *Support.*

HB 769 Election Law - Persons Doing Public Business - Statements of Contributions (Turner) would require an officer of a company that is actively working on a government contract worth at least \$200,000 at the time they make a contribution of \$500 or more to a candidate (or incumbent office holder) to report the name of the candidate (and office they are seeking), or office holder and office they hold, and the amount of the contribution to Board of Elections. The bill specifies reporting dates and procedures, and defines what constitutes a government contract. Hrg 2/25 W&M. *Support.*

HB 775 Inaugural Committees - Required Disclosure of Donors and Donor Amounts (Frick) would require an Inaugural Committee to provide a list of donors to any individual upon request. Hrg 2/25 W&M. *Support.*

HB 1088 Election Law - Campaign Finance - Coordinated Expenditures Between Candidates and Outside Spending Organizations (Ebersole plus 13) *Support.*

Updates on Bills Reported in RSC 2

Correction and Update: In RSC 2, **HB 185 - Real-Time Transparency Act of 2015**, was listed as HB 85. It should have been HB 185. Hrg 2/18 W&M. There is now a cross-file bill **SB 667** (Young and Hough) Hrg 3/5 EHEA. *Support.*

Nancy Soreng

TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT

HB 755 General Provisions - PIA- Enforcement, Fees and Exemptions (Cullison plus 19). This bill, which is the expected cross-file of SB 695, was filed on February 13th. Negotiations are underway to clarify and augment some provisions of these bills. The outcome of these negotiations is unknown at this writing. Hrg 3/11 HGO

HB 583 Open Meetings Act - Requirements for Providing Agendas (Krebs plus 6) This is similar to SB 847/HB 157 from the 2014 session which failed because of the need for some clarifications. One of the clarifications included in this bill is that agendas are required only for open meetings. The troublesome aspect of this change is that not everyone correctly understands when meetings may be closed. The other changes are that agendas must be provided *24 hours in advance* and that *all available information regarding matters to be discussed* will be provided in advance. Sometimes information is not available before the meeting. Hrg 3/11, 1 p.m. HGO

HB 867 Public Information Act - State Public Information Act - State Public Information Compliance Act and State Policy (Carter plus 2) This bill provides for a Public Information Compliance Board similar to a Board that would be required under SB 695/HB 755. However, one of the differences between this bill and SB 695/HB 755 is that the maximum fee for providing public records may not exceed \$1,000, while in SB 695/HB 755 the maximum fee is \$250. The \$1,000 maximum is vastly more than most citizens can afford; thus, this bill is unacceptable on that basis alone. Hrg 3/11, 1 p.m. HGO.

Update on Bills Reported in RSC 1 & 2

SB 695 This bill (which is cross-filed with HB 755) will be heard in EHEA on 3/6.

Barbara Schnackenberg

ENVIRONMENT: HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

Marcellus Shale Hydraulic Fracturing

HB 449/SB 409 Protect Our Health and Communities Act (Fraser-Hidalgo plus 38/ Montgomer and Raskin plus 10) prohibits the Department of the Environment (MDE) from issuing permits for hydraulic fracturing (fracking) until April 30, 2023. The bills call for a ten-member expert panel to examine the peer reviewed scientific literature related to public health and environmental impacts, and assess whether fracking can be done without detrimental impact on either. The expert panel will be appointed on January 1, 2022, and report to the Governor and General Assembly by Jan. 1, 2023 on whether the state should issue permits for fracking for exploration or production of natural gas. Panel members will be experts in public health and science and engineering. Five members will be appointed by the President of the Senate and five by the Speaker of the House. The experts cannot be employed directly or indirectly by the state of Maryland or be anyone who has drilled or may drill for natural gas in Maryland or any other state. The bills describe concerns as the high volume of toxic chemicals that may be released, freshwater contamination, emission of carbon dioxide and methane, wastewater disposal, earthquakes, harm to wildlife, non disclosure agreements and industry secrecy. Hrg 3/11, 1 p.m. ENV; Hrg 3/03, 1 p.m. EHEA

The LWVMD supports this legislation to give sufficient time to complete studies that assess the full impacts of fracking on public health and safety. If the studies show that fracking can be done with minimum or no adverse impact on the health and safety of the public, this information will inform adequate regulations and enforcement. *Support.*

SB 438/HB 883 Environment - Well Drilling- Notice to Municipalities (Middleton/Frush) would eliminate the requirement that a well driller must notify municipalities of intent to drill and instead require that the Department of Environment notify the municipality when the driller applies for a permit to drill. The requirement includes drilling applications within the municipality boundaries or within one mile of outside of the boundaries. A County Board of Health can establish a permit fee to cover expenses even before the permit is issued. Hrg 2/24, 1 p.m. EHEA; Hrg 3/11, 1 p.m. ENV

SB 458 Civil Actions - Hydraulic Fracturing Liability Act (Zirkin and Raskin) holds the permittee of a fracking permit liable for any injury, death, or loss to a person or to property. Compliance with industry standards, state or federal law or conditions of a permit are not a defense to action brought by a plaintiff. Chemicals used in fracking would

not be protected as a trade secret and the burden of proof is on the permittee. Hrg 2/25, 1 p.m. JPR

HB 458 Environment - Exploration and Production Waste and Waste From Hydraulic Fracturing (S. Robinson plus 17) establishes that waste from fracking is a controlled hazardous waste and prohibits its collection, disposal, storage, and treatment in the state of Maryland. Hrg 3/11, 1 p.m. ENV

A similar bill was introduced in the 2014 legislative session.

HB 952 Public Health – Hydraulic Fracturing Chemicals – Information and Fund (Lam plus 26) requires fracking permits to include the names and health and safety data about each chemical constituent used in the fracking process. The information must be submitted to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The Department will make the information available to the Maryland Poison Control Center and health care providers. In the event of illness or injury, health care providers can also make the information available to the patient, other health professional involved in the treatment of a patient and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or other government agency. The bill establishes the Hydraulic Fracturing Chemical Education and Impact Fund, to be used for an educational program for health care providers about the potential health risks of chemicals used in the fracking process, and to provide financial assistance to individuals who suffer illness or injury from chemicals used in fracking. Permitting fees and other sources will support the Fund. Hrg 3/11, 1 p.m. ENV

A similar bill was introduced in the 2014 session as HB 1030.

SB 712 - Natural Gas Severance Tax and Impact Account – (Edwards) establishes a 2.5% severance tax imposed on the market value of natural gas produced at a wellhead. The Comptroller will collect and administer the tax and the bill establishes recordkeeping and payment requirements for well owners. Violations are subject to misdemeanor penalties and fines. Severance Tax revenues are deposited into a new Natural Gas Impact Account within the existing Oil and Gas Fund administered by MDE. Hrg 3/10, 1 p.m. B&T

A similar bill, SB 535, was introduced in the 2014 session.

Updates on Bills Reported in RSC 1 & 2:

SB 29 Environment – Hydraulic Fracturing – Prohibitions (RSC 1) *Support.*

Betsy Singer

ENVIRONMENT: RENEWABLE ENERGY STANDARDS

HB 656 Electricity - Energy Storage - Fuel Cells (Stored Energy and Power (StEP) Act) (Korman) requires the PSC to establish a pilot program to evaluate and encourage the use of on-line energy storage (primarily fuel cells, but other types as well), to enable energy produced at low demand times to be held until it is needed, and to provide incentives for participation in the pilot program. Annual reports to the Governor and General Assembly will be required. Hrg 2/20, 1 p.m. EM. *Support.*

HB 933 Energy Efficiency and Demand Management Programs and Services - Repeal (Parrot plus 4) repeals the requirement that the PSC require gas and electric companies to establish programs, services and rate-making policies to encourage more efficient use of electricity and to reduce the variation in demand for electricity by time of day, and to ensure that allowing customers to choose participation without adversely impacting the continuation of the programs. This would eliminate programs in place for several years and which have been effective in increasing the efficiency of energy use in the state. Hrg 3/12, 1 p.m. EM. *Oppose.*

SB 481/HB 1087 Electricity - Community Solar Energy Generating System Program (Ramirez plus 10/Clipping plus 15) establishes a Program on community solar energy generating systems under the authority of the Public Service Commission, and provides for the structure and operation of the Program, including the generation of electricity and allocation of costs to system subscribers. It authorizes an electric company to submit a petition to own and operate a community solar energy generating system to the Commission, and it also gives the Commission the authority to approve a petition if the Commission makes a specified determination. Hrg 3/03, 1 p.m. FIN; Hrg 3/05, 1 p.m. ECM. *Support.*

SB 760 Public Utilities - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Combustion Source (Montgomery) prohibits an electricity supplier from receiving renewable energy credits from a combustion source in an amount greater than a specified renewable energy credit amount on and after January 1, 2016, and states that energy from a combustion source is eligible for inclusion in meeting the renewable energy portfolio standard if it is generated at a system or facility that existed and was operational as of January 1, 2015, even if the facility or system was not capable of generating electricity on that date.

Update on Bills Reported in RSC 2

HB 378 Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Qualifying Biomass Unfavorable.

SB 154 Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Thermal Energy) now cross-filed with HB 636 (Stein plus 3). Hrg 2/17, FIN; Hrg 2/20 ECM

SB 353 Electric Companies - Installation of Solar Electric Generating Facility - New Interconnection Agreement passed FIN, reported favorable.

SB 373/HB377 Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Revisions (Maryland Clean Energy Advancement Act of 2015) Hrg 2/24 FIN; Hrg 2/20 ECM

SB 398 Public Service Commission - Community Solar Projects or Virtual Net Energy Metering - Study Hrg 2/24 FIN

Hugh Haskell

ENVIRONMENT: STORM WATER, POLLUTION & THE BAY

HB 514 - Maryland Commission on Climate Change (Stein plus 4) is the same as **SB 258** (see RSC 2), Hrg 2/25 ET. *Support.*

HB 551/SB 620 Community Greening and Cleanup Act (Lierman plus 20/Montgomery and Lee) would prohibit retailers from giving out plastic bags at checkout (with exceptions for meats, produce, and limited other items). Retailers would also be required to charge 10 cents for each paper bag distributed at checkout, as an incentive for shoppers to use reusable bags. Retailers would keep 5 to 7 cents of the charge, with the remainder returning to counties for local programs to reduce trash pollution, distribute free reusable bags, and improve access to fresh foods. Hrg 3/4, 1 p.m. ET; Hrg 3/10, 1 p.m., EHEA. *Support.*

HB 481/SB 588 Stormwater Management - Watershed Protection and Restoration Program – Repeal (Speaker/ Senate President for Administration) is similar to previous bills SB36 and SB 42 and new bill **HB 874** (Reilly and 23 others – hrg 3/4 1 pm ET) to repeal county and municipal taxing to fund control of water pollution from stormwater runoff. Hrg 3/3, 1 p.m. EHEA. *Oppose.*

HB 605 Agriculture - Neonicotinoid Pesticide - Labeling Requirement (Pollinator Protection Act of 2015) (Healey) is the same as the earlier SB 163, requiring a label if selling agricultural materials treated with neonicotinoid pesticides and restricting sales of “neonics” after January 1, 2016. Hrg 3/13, 1 p.m. ET. **SB 163** was scheduled for a vote by EHEA on 2/24. *Support.*

HB 701/SB 463 Agriculture - Cattle, Swine, and Poultry - Use of Antimicrobial Drugs (S. Robinson plus 12/Pinsky plus 4) would prohibit nontherapeutic use of antibiotics after October 1, 2016, and require various kinds of tracking of antibiotic usage.

HB 860 Aquatic Invasive Species - Inspection and Decontamination of Vessels (State Lakes Invasive Species Act of 2015) (Stein plus 9) would allow the Department of Natural Resources to detect and remove aquatic invasive species on vessels and would require that such an inspection and decontamination be done before placing a vessel in a lake. Hrg 3/6 1 p.m. ET

HB 881 Maryland Shoreline Risk Assessment, Preparation, and Adaptation Act is comparable to SB 256 (see RSC 2) in requiring regular assessments of impacts of climate change. Hrg 3/4 1 p.m. ET. *Support.*

HB 1075/SB 470 Agriculture - Antibiotic Drug Usage - Food-Producing (Morhaim/Nathan-Pulliam) would prohibit giving antibiotics to food-producing animals without signs of disease and without a veterinarian's prescription. Hrg 3/13, 1 p.m. ET; Hrg 3/3, 1 p.m. EHEA

HB 982/SB 684 Maryland Redeemable Beverage Container and Litter Reduction Program (Frush plus 2/Ferguson plus 3) – provides incentives for Marylanders to recycle and redeem their beverage containers, which reduces litter and the costs of handling litter. Hrg 3/4, 1 p.m. ET; Hrg 3/10, 1 p.m. EHEA. *Support.*

HB 987/SB 693 Environment - Ambient Air Quality Control - Cumulative Air Impact Analysis (Lam plus 22/Benson plus 8) would require the Department of the Environment to conduct a cumulative impact analysis to examine the full potential air pollution burden on a community before issuance of any new air permits for construction in Health Enterprise Zones. Hrg 3/11, 1 p.m. ET; Hrg 3/10, 1 p.m. EHEA

HB 1042 Environment - Nitrogen Oxide Emissions – Pollution and Combustion Control Technologies (Stein) would establish new protections against air pollution from coal-fired power plants, including giving plant owners multiple options and until 2020 to fully implement changes. According to the League of Conservation Voters, these protections will bring Maryland up to speed with the modern pollution control technology that is prevalent in Alabama, Kentucky, and West Virginia. Hrg 3/12, 1 p.m. ECM

SB 175 Public Health - Sales Receipts Containing Bisphenol-A - Prohibition (Manno plus 4) would prohibit the use of any sales receipt containing bisphenol-A. Hrg 2/12 FIN

Governor Hogan introduced on 2/23 his new proposal for phosphate management. No bill number is available yet. Environmental organizations and LWVMD continues to prefer **HB 381/SB 257** (see RSC 2) as a prompter and more comprehensive approach.

Update on Bills Reported in RSC 1 & 2

SB 36 and SB 42 Stormwater Management - Watershed Protection and Restoration Program - Repeal, Hrg 3/3, 1 p.m. EHEA. *Oppose.*

Linda Silversmith

TRANSPORTATION

HB 539 State Highway Administration – Evaluation of Urban Highways – Classifications and Speed Limits (Carr, et al.) differentiates and defines roads in urbanized areas that are under the control of the State Highway Administration (SHA) and lowers the maximum speed limit to make all modes of travel safer. It specifies that the SHA should evaluate roads and adjoining development patterns within a set time period to implement changes. Hrg 2/26, ET

HB 588/SB 547 Vehicle Laws – Passing Bikes, Personal Mobility Devices, or Motor Scooters (Lafferty et al./Klausmeier, et al.) would change the specificity of a current law for passing clearance of three feet to more general terms of passing in a safe manner. Based on variations in road widths, this would allow for variations for safe passing clearance. Hrg 3/5, ET; Hrg 2/24, JPR

HB 621/SB 656 State Highway Administration – Entrance to State Highway – Permit Process (S. Robinson, et al./Madaleno) ties the process of issuing a permit for an entrance to a state highway with a review process that more closely links to local jurisdictions. Hrg 3/5, ET; Hrg 3/10, EHEA

HB 762 State Highway Administration – Entrance to State Highways – Permit Process (Buckel, et al.) limits the time period to 45 days that the State Highway Administration has for granting or denying a similar permit. Hrg 3/12, ET

HB 808/SB 98 Vehicle Laws – Operation of Vehicle When Approaching a Service Vehicle (Beidle and Frush)

further defines that when passing a service vehicle that is stopped along a road, a driver must change lanes to give one full lane clearance if there is space available. Recent accidents involving stopped vehicles prompted this proposed law. Hrg 3/5, ET. Cross-filed **SB 98** unfavorable JP

HB 872 Drunk Driving Reduction Act of 2015 (Kramer, et al.) would require a person convicted of being under the influence of alcohol while driving to successfully complete the Ignition Interlock System Program and to have their license suspended for an indefinite period of time and not revoked. Similar to HB 1288 of 2014 and current **HB 423/SB 212** (RSC 2). Hrg 3/04, JUD

SB 605 Aggressive Driving – Punitive Damages (Raskin, et al.) makes aggressive driving a more serious offense when alcohol or malice are involved in accidents and under certain circumstances punitive damages may be awarded. In 2012 similar bill SB 351 was introduced. Hrg 2/25, JPR

SB 778/HB 172 Task Force to Study Issues Related to the Use of Self-Driving Vehicles (Serafini and Ferguson) With proposals for self-driving vehicles soon to be on the road, this task force would help to sort through issues and logistics and make recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly by 2017. Senate Rules, ET

SB 790 Vehicle Laws – Right-of-Way Violations – Death or Serious Bodily Injury Penalties (Muse) Penalties for certain violations that cause serious bodily harm or death will be strengthened, become more punitive and have further requirements than currently. Senate Rules.

Update on bills Reported in RSC 1 & 2

SB 44 Vehicle Laws - Maximum Speed Limits on Highways (RSC 1) was cross-filed as **HB 194**, Passed Senate; first reading in House 2/20

SB 371 State Highway Association (SHA) – Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Areas (RSC 2) was cross-filed with **HB 450**, Hrg 3/18 FIN; Hrg 2/26 ET

Barbara Ditzler

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Two new bills dealing with the election of Circuit Court judges have been proposed (see SB 367 RSC 2) They are HB 548 and SB 679.

HB 548 Circuit Court Judges - Elections (Kramer, et al.) is constitutional amendment requiring retention elections, without opposition, for Circuit Court judges at a general election one year after appointment or at the end of each 15 year term. The constitutional amendment proposed in SB 367/HB 582 provides for the appointment of Circuit Court judges, but does not include retention elections. Hrg 3/18, 1 p.m. JUD

SB 679 Election of Circuit Court Judges - Nonpartisan General Election (Raskin, et al.) calls for the election of Circuit Court judges on a nonpartisan basis at a general election. Candidates who file a Certificate of Candidacy would appear on the general election ballot without party affiliation. The League does not support contested elections for judges. Hrg 3/10, 1 p.m. JPR. *Oppose.*

HB 1013 Constitutional Amendment - Orphans' Court Judges - Election and Term Limits (Carter, et al.) Orphans' Court Judges would be elected at general elections and serve for a term of 8 years (previously, 4 years) Hrg 3/18, 1 p.m. JUD

Bills continue to be offered to respond to the Court of Appeals ruling that indigent defendants must be provided with counsel at an initial appearance (see HB 361, RSC 1): The League supports access by indigent criminal defendants to legal counsel at every decisional stage of the judicial process, including bail hearings.

HB 496 Criminal Procedure - Government Funded Legal Representation - Initial Appearance (Vallario, et al.) is a constitutional amendment providing that the due process provision in the state constitution's Declaration of Rights shall not be construed to require government funded legal representation for indigent defendants at an initial appearance.

This would, in effect, overturn the Court of Appeals ruling. Hrg 3/3, 1 p.m. JUD. *Oppose.*

HB 596 Criminal Procedure - Maryland Appointed Attorneys Program Corporation (Dumais) establishes a tax-exempt corporation to provide legal representation to indigent defendants, as required by the Court of Appeals. This corporation would be funded through a special state fund, administered by the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, but would not be a unit or instrument of the state. Hrg 3/3, 1 p.m., JUD

HB 121 Criminal Procedure - Drug Related Offenses - Repeal of Mandatory Minimum Sentences (Anderson, et al.) abolishes mandatory minimum sentences for drug related offenses and establishes maximum limits on sentences. Persons serving a mandatory minimum sentence for a drug related crime before September 30, 2015 may apply for a hearing before the court and a sentence review by a review panel to modify or reduce the sentence. The length of a sentence does not prohibit a person from participation in a drug treatment program. Hrg 2/26, 1 p.m. JUD

In the wake of recent events, state legislators have proposed several police accountability bills:

HB 112/SB 653 Criminal Procedure - Police-Involved Death - State Prosecutor (Conaway/Muse) The State Prosecutor shall investigate in the case of the death of an individual that results directly from the action of a law enforcement officer of the state or a political subdivision, unless the state's attorney in the jurisdiction where the death took place takes action. Hrg 3/12, 1 p.m. JUD; Hrg 2/26, 1 p.m. JPR

HB 365 Criminal Procedure - Felony Prosecution of Law Enforcement Officer - Attorney General (Anderson, et al.) When a state's attorney files felony charges against a law enforcement officer, the state's attorney shall immediately forward the case to the state Attorney General for prosecution. Hrg 3/12 1 p.m. JUD

HB 438 Criminal Procedure - State Prosecutor - Use of Force by Law Enforcement Officer (Rosenburg) The state prosecutor may investigate the death or serious injury caused by the use of force by a state or local law enforcement officer. Hrg 3/12, 1 p.m. JUD

HB 813 State Prosecutor - Law Enforcement Officer-Involved Deaths (A. Washington, et al.) requires the state prosecutor to investigate the death of a person resulting from an act or omission of a law enforcement officer while on duty. Hrg 3/12, 1 p.m. JUD

HB 308 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Video Cameras (Conaway, et al.) permits a law enforcement officer to wear a video camera attached to the officer's uniform while on duty. Any recording made by the camera shall be preserved for at least 30 days. Hrg 3/12, 1 p.m. JUD

HB 627/SB 482 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Body-Worn Cameras (Rosenburg, et al., Ramirez, et al.) Both audio and video capabilities of a body-worn camera shall be activated during an encounter between an officer and a member of the public. However, the officer may not record a constitutionally protected activity such as a protest or a religious activity unless there is suspicion of a crime. The officer must inform persons that the camera is activated and consider requests to turn it off. Restrictions on the use of the recorded materials are specified. Hrg 3/12, 1 p.m. JUD; Hrg 2/26, 1 p.m. JPR

Update on Bills Reported in RSC 1 & 2:

HB 111/SB 332 Judgeships - Circuit Courts and District Courts JUD favorable report. Hrg 3/10, 1 p.m. JPR

HB 402/SB 188 Task Force to Study the Establishment of Health Courts Hrg 3/11, 1 p.m. JUD; Hrg 3/10, 1 p.m. JPR

SB 36/HB 582 Circuit Court Judges - Selection, Qualifications, and Term of Office, Hrg 3/3, 1 p.m. JPR; Hrg 3/18, 1 p.m. JUD

Marlene Cohn

GUN CONTROL

SB 326/HB 477 Public Safety - Handgun Permits - Term (Klausmeier, et al./McComas, et al.) A permit may be

renewed for successive periods of 3 years each if, at the time of an application for renewal, the applicant possesses the qualifications for the issuance of a permit and pays the renewal fee. Hrg 3/10 JUD; Hrg 3/12, JPR

SB 407 Public Safety – Handgun Permits (Brochin, et al.) requires the State Police to issue handgun permits within 120 days of application (changed from “within a reasonable time”), and to notify, in writing, each applicant for a permit of the decision to approve or deny a permit within 120 days after receipt of the application. Hrg 3/12 JPR. *Oppose*.

SB 454 Handgun Permits –Reciprocity (Waugh, et al.) specifies that a permit to carry a handgun, including a concealed handgun, issued to an individual by another state is valid in Maryland. Hrg 3/12 JPR

SB 736 Public Safety – Handgun Identification Requirements – Repeal (Reilly, et al.) repeals the requirement that a manufacturer that transports a handgun for sale, rent, or transfer in Maryland include in the box with the handgun in a separate, sealed container: a shell casing of a projectile discharged from the handgun and additional information required to identify the type of handgun and shell casing. SRU; JPR

SB 781 Public Safety – Handgun Permit –Temporary Training Waiver (Norman and Waugh) authorizes the State Police, on making a determination that an applicant has demonstrated evidence of imminent danger to himself, to waive temporarily the requirement to complete a firearms training course in order to receive a permit. SRU

HB 306 Firearm Decriminalization Act of 2015 (Grammer plus 35) This 45 page bill is a major attempt to weaken **The Firearms Safety Act of 2013 (SB 281/ HB 294)**, the most comprehensive, far-reaching of any Maryland gun legislation. In general it would repeal or reduce the requirements for obtaining a license to own or sell a regulated fire arm including repealing the authorization for the State Police to suspend a dealer’s license if the licensee is not in compliance with record keeping and reporting requirements. Hrg 3/10 JUD. *Oppose*.

HB 432 Public Safety – Handgun Permit – Applicant Qualifications (Impallaria, et al.) Repeals the requirement that the State Police find that a person has a good and substantial reason to carry, wear, or transport a handgun before issuing a handgun permit to the person. Hrg 3/1 JUD

HB 464 Handgun Permits – Reciprocity (Rey, et al.) A permit to carry a handgun, including a concealed handgun, issued to an individual by another state would be valid in Maryland. Hrg 3/1 JUD

HB 735 Public Safety – Regulated Firearms and Ammunition – Transport Through State (Szeliga, et al.) A person who is not a resident of Maryland and who is not prohibited from possessing a regulated firearm in the person's state of residence may transport a regulated firearm through Maryland. Hrg 3/10 JUD

HB 743 Handgun Permits – Firearms Training Course –Renewal Application (Saab, et al.) Reduces the training requirement for hand gun permit renewal from “a minimum of 16 hours” to “a 2 hour refresher course”. Hrg 3/10 JUD

HB 767/SB 100 Public Safety – Permit to Carry, Wear, or Transport a Handgun – Qualifications (Reilly, et al./ Norman) Self-defense qualifies as a good and substantial reason for a permit to wear, carry, or transport a handgun. Hrg 3/10 JUD

HB 772 Public Safety – Firearms Safety Training Course –Repeal (Buckel, et al.) Repeals (1) the requirement that a person complete a firearms safety training course in order to be issued a handgun license or a permit to carry, wear, or transport a handgun; and (2) the prohibition on selling, renting, or transferring a regulated firearm to a person that has not completed a firearms safety training course. Hrg 3/10 JUD

HB 1024 Public Safety - Renewal of Handgun Permits - Fingerprinting (Saab, et al.) A person who applies for the renewal of a handgun permit is not required to be fingerprinted unless the fingerprints are necessary to resolve a question of the person’s identity. Hrg 3/10 JUD

Update on Bills Reported in RSC 1 & 2:

HB 13 Regulated Firearms - Licensed Dealer or Secondary Seller - National Instant Criminal Background (NICS) Check (RSC - 1) Withdrawn, unfavorable report, JUD

HB 25 Public Safety - Assault Weapons - Replacements (RSC - 1) Hrg 3/10 JUD

HB 38 Crimes - Use of a Firearm in the Commission of a Crime - Diminution Credits and Sentencing, (RSC - 1) Hrg 3/10 JUD

HB 39 Public Safety - Handgun Identification Requirements - Repeal (RSC - 1) Hrg 3/10 JUD

HB 160 Handgun Locking Devices - Repeal Exclusivity of Internal Locks (RSC - 2) Hrg 3/10 JUD

HB 189/SB 261 Public Safety - Handgun Permit Background Investigation - Armored Car Company Employees Hrg 3/10 JUD; Hrg 3/12 JPR

Doreen Rosenthal

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

HB 439/SB 685 Family Law – Information and Services for Foster Children and Former Foster Children (M. Washington plus 17/Benson plus 17) This bill is designed to ensure that for a youth leaving the foster care system at the age of 18, the Department of Social Services has made reasonable efforts to enroll the youth in health insurance that will continue, to assist with applications for public benefits, to ensure that the youth will have stable housing for at least 12 months and that he (or she) has or will have sufficient income to live independently – and that the youth is informed of the process to apply to re-enter the system (until age 21) if he (or she) wants to do so. Hrg 2/19 JUD 2/19; Hrg 3/3 JPR

HB 575/SB 524 Family Law – Protecting the Resources of Children in State Custody (Valentino-Smith plus 10/Raskin plus 11) This bill deals with the Department of Human Resources’s responsibility to manage the assets of a child in the foster care system and requires, in part, that when the Department applies for and receives federal benefits for an older foster youth, an increasing percentage of those benefits shall be placed into an account for the foster child’s use when he (or she) exits the foster care system. Hrg 3/5 JUD; Hrg 2/18 JPR

HB 641/SB 487 Family Child Care – Registration Requirements for Participants in the Maryland Child Care Subsidy Program (Kelly plus 21/King plus 9) This bill requires that a family child care home that participates in the Maryland Child Care Subsidy Program must be registered with the State Department of Education and comply with the regulations adopted by the Department. Hrg 2/26 HGO; Hrg 2/25 EHEA

HB 643/SB 567 Department of Human Resources – State Child Welfare System - Report (Zucker plus 6/Gladden) This bill would require the Department of Human Resources to submit to the General Assembly by December 1 each year a report including information about the number of youth entering and leaving the foster care system, receiving certain services, achieving certain goals – and that this information be disaggregated by county, age, gender, race and ethnicity. Analysis (including cost estimate) is not yet available. Hrg 3/3 APP; Hrg 3/3 JPR

HB 807/SB 277 Family Law – Protective Orders – Additional Relief (Glass plus 27/Cassily plus 9) would authorize a judge in a final protective order to order the respondent to remain a specified distance away from the residence, place of employment, school or temporary residence of a person eligible for relief. Hrg 2/27 JUD; Hrg 2/18 JPR

HB 1022/SB 609 State Government – Office of the Child Welfare Ombudsman – Establishment (Wilson plus 19/Brochin plus 11) would establish an Office of the Child Welfare Ombudsman in the Office of the Attorney General for the purpose of assuring that children and families involved in the child welfare system, mandatory reporters, and the general public have a well-publicized, easily accessible, and transparent complaint process for voicing concerns about the child welfare system, along with the expectation that their concerns will be heard and addressed in a timely manner. The bill includes qualification and term for the Ombudsman and would require the Governor to include funding for the Ombudsman and staff in the State budget. Hrg 3/19 JUD; Hrg 3/3 JPR

Update on Bills Reported in RSC 1 & 2

HB 163 Child Support – Adjusted Actual Income – Multifamily Adjustment. Hrg 2/12 JUD

HB 171/SB 609 Courts – Child Abuse and Neglect – Waiver of Reunification Efforts Hrg 2/12 JUD; JPR favorable with amendments

HB 220/SB 273 Maryland Collaborative Reproduction Act Hrg 2/12 JUD; Hrg 2/18 JPR

HB 225/SB 269 Domestic violence – Additional Relief Hrg 2/27 JUD; Hrg 2/18 JPR

HB 227 Family Law – Domestic Violence – Definition of Abuse Hrg 2/27 JUD

SB 78/HB 503 Rape Survivors Family Protection Act Hrg 2/5 JPR; Hrg 2/19 JUD

Judy Morenoff

MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

Housing

HB 420/SB 480 Commission on Rental Housing Stabilization (Washington/Ramirez) creates a commission to investigate strategies for stabilizing rental housing conditions in the state; establishment of an Office of the Tenant Advocate; and a statewide mechanism for limiting excessive rental increases. Hrg 3/10 ET; Hrg 3/5 JPR

HB 500 Sustainable Communities Tax Credit – Residential Units for Lower Income Individuals (Haynes) This bill would require that in order to be eligible for the Maryland Sustainable Communities Tax credit, a rehabilitation that includes at least 30 units of residential housing must reserve at least 10% of the units for households at or below 60% of area median income. Hrg 3/13 W&M

HB 824 Real Property - Landlord & Tenant – Residential Lease & Just Cause Evictions (Hixson)

This bill prevents a property owner renting four or more units to evict a tenant in the absence of just cause, and identifies allowable ‘just causes’. Hrg 3/3 ET

Economic Justice

HB 882 Maryland Workers Fairness Act (McDonough) This bill requires an employer to grant US citizens and those with green cards preference in hiring over individuals who have applied for deportation relief under the President’s Immigration Accountability program. Hrg 3/3 ECM

HB 1051/SB 424 Labor & Employment – Equal Pay for Equal Work (Valderama/Lee) This bill adds “gender identity” to the law requiring equal pay for equal work, and requires that employers not prohibit employees from disclosing or discussing their wages with another employee. Hrg 3/10 ECM; Hrg 3/5 FIN

SB 659 Maryland Wage & Hour Law – Tip Credit – Repeal (Madaleno) This bill would repeal the authority of an employer to include as part of an employee’s wage a certain amount to represent the tips of the employee. Hrg 3/19 FIN

Other Basic Human needs

SB 676 Richard E. Israel & Roger “Pip” Moyer Death with Dignity Act (Young) identifies conditions and requirements that would allow a doctor to prescribe medication that a terminal patient may self-administer to aid in dying. Hrg 3/10, JPR (See also “Health” **HB 1021**, p. 15)

Updates on Bills Reported in RSC 1 & 2

SB 58 Housing & Community Development – Notice of Proposed Projects received an unfavorable report from EHEA and was withdrawn

Ruth Crystal

HEALTH

Governor Larry Hogan’s cuts in Medicaid are coming under increasing criticism especially the cuts in Pregnant Women and Children. Governor O’Malley had already cut physician reimbursements, but these cuts affect women who meet the

Federal Poverty Level and will amount to a \$9 million savings in the program (\$4.5 million in state tax dollars and \$4.5 million in Federal matching funds.) Pregnancy is not a life altering event that allows women to sign up for coverage through the Health Exchange. Also, if a husband has coverage through his work, his wife cannot access the exchange for insurance, even if family coverage is not offered at the work place.

Physician fees have been augmented by Federal funds to bring them up to Medicare in the past few years. Governor O'Malley cut the fees to 87 percent of Medicare and Governor Hogan's budget maintains these cuts. He says the State cannot afford to continue matching Medicare even with the Federal funds. They are worried about physicians dropping out of Medicaid and an influx of patients in the Emergency Rooms where the cost of care is covered in the hospital rates.

HB1021/SB 676 Richard E. Israel and Roger (Pip) Moyer Death with Dignity Act (Pendergrass plus 37/Young plus 7) would allow a terminally-ill patient to ask a physician for life-ending drugs to bring on death. The specific illnesses are delineated in the bill as are criteria for the physicians. Mr. Israel, who was an Annapolis Alderman and has worked behind the scenes with Legislators for many years, helped to draft the bill. It is based on the Washington state law. The bill was referred to Health, Government and Operations (HGO) and to Judiciary (JUD) in the House. The hearing in Judiciary for March 6 has been cancelled HGO; Hrg 3/10 JPR

HB 553/SB 585, Maryland No-Fault Injured Baby Fund (Morhaim and Pugh) would create a fund for children born with a birth related neurological injury. The bill sets the criteria for payment and funding mechanisms. It also sets up a Perinatal Clinical Advisory Committee to oversee the dissemination of best practices and guidelines for hospitals that have obstetrical services. The committee will also collect data on the services. There have been similar bills before, but this seems to be aimed more at the hospitals and their employed physicians. HGO; JPR, FIN

HB 949/SB 471 Task Force to Study the Provision of Health Care Coverage for the Uninsured (Kelly, et al./Nathan-Pulliam, et al.) would set up a legislative task force to study the availability of health care in the state and make recommendations for covering all residents of the state, even those excluded from the Federal ACA. The task force is also asked to look at barriers to coverage and health care in the state. HGO; FIN.

SB 612 Vehicle Laws – Protective Headgear Requirement for Motorcycle Riders – Exemption (Astle) is the proverbial attempt to exempt the use of helmets for motorcycle riders and usually draws a large contingent of riders to Annapolis for the hearing. This bill would require that they be 21 years of age and have \$10,000 of health insurance (not nearly enough for a serious accident) to exempt them from the helmet requirement. Hrg 2/24 JPR

SB 599 Public Health –Expedited Partner Therapy for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea (Conway) would allow obstetrical physicians and nurse practitioners to immediately prescribe drugs for either of these conditions for sexual partners without additional examination. This makes sense as both infections have increased in recent years. EHEA

SB 723 – Nurse Practitioner Full Practice Authority Act of 2015, (Conway) would allow a nurse practitioner to practice in Maryland without the current requirement of a collaborative agreement with a physician. EHE.

Updates on Bills Reported in RSC 1 & 2

HB 181/SB 69, State Board of Pharmacy – Sterile Compounding - Compliance by Nonresident Pharmacies and Repeal of Permit Requirement, (Hill/Conway) (RSC # 2) repeal the State permit requirement and fees for reconstituting and mixing medications was voted out of EHE and passed third Reader in the Senate and has moved to HGO in the House.

SB 119, Health Maintenance Organizations – Premium Tax and Transfer of Premium Tax Exemption Value – Repeal, (J. Brochin), (RSC #2), withdrawn by the sponsor.

Neilson Andrews

EDUCATION

Funding

HB 502 State Department of Education - Financial Advisory Board (Kaiser) This bill provides for a Financial Advisory Board in MSDE to evaluate Maintenance of Effort (MOE) waiver requests from counties. Hrg 2/26 W&M

Another set of bills prohibiting inclusion of some leases in calculating MOE include HB 1079 (Shoemaker) and SB 627 (Eckard). Hrg 3/5 W&M; Hrg 3/10 B&T

SB 440 Education - Expenditures of Revenues -Reporting by County Boards of Education (Pinsky) All expenditures in major budget categories would need to be reported by a county board of education to the State Department of Education at both the school level and the local board level. Hrg 3/4 EHEA

SB 691 Maryland After-School and Summer Opportunity Fund (Benson plus 3) \$5 million in annual funding would be required if this fund was established. Hrg 3/4 EHEA

SB 683 State Board of Education - Next Generation Schools - Established (Ferguson) Next Generation Schools would be public, statewide schools with innovative teaching and learning methods and 35-55 percent high poverty students. The bill provides for a proposal process and state and county funding requirements. Hrg 3/4 EHEA

Accountability and Curriculum

HB 1137/SB 699 Primary Education - State Standardized Assessments - Moratorium (Shoemaker/Jennings) This bill places a moratorium on standardized tests through the 16-17 school year. Hrg 3/4 W&M

SB 806 State Board of Education - High School Assessment - Government (Simonaire plus 10) Students graduating from high school beginning in the 16-17 school year would need to take a standardized assessment that includes at least 10 of the 100 questions used in the civics portion of the naturalization test. SRU

Charter Schools

HB 486/SB 595 Public Charter School Expansion and Improvement Act of 2015 (Miller) Public charter schools would be allowed to give greater weight to high poverty students, students with disabilities, limited English proficient (LEP) students, homeless students, students who live in a specific geographic area, etc durin(a lottery for admission. The bill defines the per pupil allocation. The State Board of Education (in addition to local boards) can authorize a charter school. The contents of a charter school application are included. Teachers would not be required to belong to the county union. Charter schools could get construction funds through the county school's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Hrg 2/26 W&M; Hrg 3/4 EHEA

Update on Bills Reported in RSC 1 & 2

HB 965 Hunger Free Schools Act (Haynes plus 13) is a companion bill to SB 334 (RSC 2). Hrg 3/13 W&M

HB 406 Education - Implementation of the Common Core State Standards - Prohibition (Long plus 27) Similar to HB 34 (RSC 1) Hrg 2/26 W&M

HB 487 Maryland Education Credit (Speaker plus 59) Similar to SB 405 (RSC 2) Prior year bill HB 1262. The League of Women Voters opposes these bills. Hrg 2/26 W&M. *Opposes.*

Lois Hybl