



REPORT FROM STATE CIRCLE
 Published by the League of Women Voters of Maryland, Inc.
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 February 12, 2016

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 Issue No. 2

Maryland General Assembly website: <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov>

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ELECTIONS

SB 170 – Voter Registration – Affiliation with Political Party and Participation in Primary Election, Caucus or Convention, sponsored by Senators Kagan and Hershey, requires that the voter registration application be changed to include the statement “You must register with a political party if you want to take part in that political party’s primary election, caucus or convention.” This statement is intended to educate registrants of their limitation with respect to participating in primary elections if they do not affiliate with a political party. The bill was heard in the Senate EHEA committee on February 4th. The League supported this legislation, but urged a clarifying amendment. State Election Law allows for political parties to open their primary to voters not affiliated with that party if the chairman of the party’s State central committee gives notice to the State Board of Elections 6 months prior to the primary. We suggested an amendment to include this information in the proposed statement required by this legislation to be included on the voter registration application. Our proposed amended required statement reads “You must register with a political party if you want to take part in that political party’s primary election, caucus or convention, unless the political party has notified the State Boards of Elections that it intends to allow unaffiliated voters to participate in that political party’s primary election.” The sponsor of the legislation pointed out that she was proposing to use the language that is currently printed on the voter registration application, just moving it to a different location on the application. The bill is cross-filed with **HB 344** (Delegates Afzali and C. Howard), and will be heard in the House Ways & Means Committee on February 17th.

Delegate Moon and 8 other delegates are sponsoring an interesting bill that would require a Constitutional amendment: **HB 288 – Attorney General and Comptroller – Special Elections to Fill a Vacancy**. Currently, if a vacancy occurs in either the office of Comptroller or Attorney General, the Governor appoints an individual to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term. This amendment to the constitution would require the Governor to appoint a replacement but issue a proclamation for a special primary and general election to fill the vacancy, if the vacancy occurs 21 days or more before the filing deadline of the primary election held in the second year of the term. If the vacancy occurs after that date, the Governor’s appointment would serve the remainder of the term. The League has no position on special elections for the office of Attorney General or Comptroller, but we do support special elections in the event of a vacancy in the General Assembly.

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HB 592 – Blue Ribbon Commission on Voting, Openness, Transparency and Equality (VOTE) in Elections sponsored by Delegate Barnes and 22 other delegates, would create a Commission to examine ways to encourage broader voter participation and engage a new voting population. The bill was introduced in both the Senate and House last session; it received a hearing on each side, but no action was taken by either the House Ways and Means or Senate EHEA Committee last year. The League is mentioned in the bill as having a required representative on the Commission. The League supported the bill last year, but suggested an amendment to include representatives of non-major political parties, instead of just representatives of the Republican and Democratic parties. No hearing date has been set. We previously reported on **SB 11 – Universal Voter Registration Act, sponsored by Sen. Manno**. Because he wanted to add additional co-sponsors and was unable to do so on his pre-filed SB 11, he has now filed **SB 350**, which is practically identical to the first bill. **SB 350** has an impressive additional 19 co-sponsors, including Senator Ramirez who also pre-filed another universal registration bill, SB 11. A hearing is scheduled on both bills for February 18 in the Senate EHEA Committee.

Senator Pinsky and 20 other senators have **introduced SJ002 – United State Constitution – Amendments Convention – Democracy Amendment**. This bill is an application to the U.S. Congress for an Article V Constitutional Convention to propose an amendment to the Constitution that affirms every citizen's individual right to vote, reserves political rights to natural persons and authorizes regulation of contributions and expenditures intended to influence elections. Such a constitutional convention was the subject of Unit Meetings in Maryland's local Leagues recently, leading to a newly adopted position by LWVUS on the topic.

Lu Pierson

BUDGET

The Governor's budget (**SB190/HB150**) was introduced on January 20 by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. Although the proposed budget is \$2 billion or 4.9% higher than last years, it is about \$100 million under the 4.85% limit set by the Spending Affordability Committee. The total proposed budget is \$42.3 billion of which the general fund is \$17.1 billion. In addition to the budget itself, the Governor has proposed separate legislation that will have a direct impact on the current proposed budget in some cases, and future budgets in others. (See **Taxes** below). Salary increments are budgeted for state employees but no statewide general increase is proposed. A net of 553 positions are proposed to be eliminated. Some of these positions will be the result of privatization of food and housekeeping services at Springfield State hospital and food services at the Regional Institute For Children and Adolescents. The food services contract at the Baltimore City detention and correction facilities has been terminated and contractual positions already have been administratively created to provide the service.

Approximately \$140 million over last year's appropriation is proposed for public education K-12 for a total of \$6.4 billion. The Geographic Cost of Education Index is fully funded (it was half funded last year). Because of declining enrollments and an increase in property values, the City of Baltimore will receive \$24 million less in education aid. The proposed budget also includes a 6.1% increase in state aid to community colleges for a total of \$314 million and \$74 million additional aid to public higher education.

Generally, increases for proposed or mandated programs are fully funded. Notably the contribution to the State Pension Plan includes an additional \$25 million than is required under State law (the pension plan is seriously underfunded), \$73.7 million for police aid to local governments and municipalities, a 9.6% increase over FY 2016 in addition to local law enforcement grants of \$26.6 million.

According to the governor's report, FY 2017 will be the first time that no funds will be diverted away from bay restoration efforts to support the General Fund. \$53 million is proposed for the Chesapeake and Atlantic Bays 2010 Trust Fund, \$60 million for Project Open Space and other land preservation programs over the next two years and first time funding of \$2 million for the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund.

More than \$10 billion for the Medicaid program which provides basic health coverage for more than 1.2 million Marylanders would be appropriated. For the first time, general fund support for services to the Affordable Care Act expansion population are included. \$1.1 billion is to provide for the Developmental Disabilities Administration and \$35.7 million to fully fund the minimum wage increase for providers of services to individuals with development disabilities. Rates for most providers of health and human services would be increased.

State Aid to local governments would increase by 3.9% to \$7.4 billion. The largest increase is to counties/municipalities – almost 20%.

In addition to specific legislation, the governor has proposed reducing a variety of fees, including those for birth and death certificates, fishing licenses, handgun licenses and vanity license plates. DIS studied 100 fees proposed to be reduced. Of the 100 fees, 84 are specified in regulations which must be changed before they can be implemented. The remainder can be changed or already have been changed. It is estimated that the FY 2017 budget will have reduced revenues of approximately \$5.2 million.

The budget is structurally balanced in FY 2017 and is forecast to be in FY2018. It is projected that we will have structural imbalance after that if the Governor's fee and tax reduction plan is adopted as proposed.

Barbara Hankins

TAXES

Three bills have been submitted by the President of the Senate and the Speaker for the Governor. **SB0384/HB0452 Income Tax, Earned Income Credit Refundability; SB0386/HB0450) Tax Credits-Manufacturing Empowerment Zones; and SB0387/HB0465 Tax Exemption Amount – Elderly Individuals.**

The explanation for SB0384 can be found in the Meeting Basic Human Needs Section of this report.

HB455/SB387 Income Tax – Seniors Tax Exemption. The current additional income tax exemption of \$1000 for senior citizens would be phased in to \$5000 over Fiscal Years 2018-2021. The full exemption for Social Security income and eligible retirement income would continue. DLS estimates that revenues would be reduced by approximately \$23 million in fiscal 2018 and \$100/year million when fully implemented. Since this applies to the local income tax as well, local revenues would be reduced by \$14 million in FY 2018 and \$60 million/year when fully implemented. **W&M, B&T**

SB0386/HB0450 Tax Credits – Manufacturing Empowerment Zones. This bill would eliminate the corporate income tax for a 10 year period beginning in FY2018 for new manufacturers locating in manufacturing empowerment zones. Individuals employed in those zones who earn less than \$65,000 would also be exempt from State income tax. Counties and municipalities would be authorized to provide property tax incentives to qualifying manufacturers in the empowerment zones. **W&M, B&T**

HB0453 Maryland Education Credit (Speaker et al for the Governor) This bill would allow a tax credit for contributions to specified student assistance organizations and establish the Maryland Education Tax Credit Reserve Fund. LWVMD has opposed similar bills in the past. **W&M 2/25 1 pm**

Hearings for Bills Previously Reported on: HB0071/SB0514 W&M 2/17 1pm, B&T 2/24 1pm; HB0116, W&M 2/10 1pm. HB0159, W&M 2/2 2 pm

The explanation for HB683/SB379 can be found under Transparency on page 7.

Barbara Hankins

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

HB 241/SB0408 - Election Law - State Elected Officials - Campaign Fund-Raising During General Assembly Session - Civil Penalty (Rosenberg and A. Washington in the House and Manno in the Senate) would authorize the Board of Elections to impose a civil penalty on a candidate or campaign entity that violates the campaign finance rules regarding fundraising during the General Assembly session. Current law allows the State Board, represented by the State Prosecutor, to institute a civil action in the circuit court. Allowing the Board of Elections to issue a citation would expedite the process of holding elected officials accountable for their actions. Those who receive citations would have the option to request a trial in District Court, in much the same way that one may appeal a traffic citation. This bill also states that all fines paid would be deposited in the Fair Campaign Financing Fund which is the fund that provides public funds for gubernatorial candidates. The League Supports. Hearing 2/17 W&M, 2/18 EHEA

HB0297- Election Law - Business Entity Campaign Contributions – Prohibition (Moon) This bill directly confronts the idea that businesses have the right to support candidates by prohibiting them from making contributions to any campaign finance entity unless it is a ballot measure campaign. The League supports this concept, however it has little chance of passing and if it does it would likely be challenged in court. Hearing 2/17 W&M

SB0290 - Election Laws - Loans to a Campaign Finance Entity (Bates, Kelley and Waugh) would strengthen the law that defines loans (versus contributions) to a candidate's campaign fund by adding language that any loan to a candidate for their campaign must be repaid no later than the end of the second year of the election cycle immediately following the election cycle for which the loan was made. This law also states that if the loan is not repaid within the time-frame specified by this legislation, a penalty may be assessed against the lender, the candidate's campaign fund or both. The League supports. Hearing 2/18 EHEA.

SB0459 - Campaign Finance - Ballot Issue Committees - Prospective Questions (Conway). This legislation would apply the same reporting requirements to campaigns that are seeking to get enough signatures on a petition to place a question on the ballot that are required of campaign entities that are formed to seek the passage or defeat of a ballot question. If the petition sponsor's ballot issue committee fail to meet the reporting requirements, the Board of Elections may not certify the petition. The League will support. Hrg 2/25 EHEA

SB0501 - Shareholders United Act (Raskin and 14 others) would prohibit corporations from using any money or other property in connection with a political expenditure without the advanced authorization of a majority of their shareholders. The shareholders would have to authorize the specific amount and purpose of the expenditure at an annual or special meeting of the shareholders. The bill does not say, but I would assume that the same proxy procedure would be in place for such decisions as is in place for other business decisions made by a Board of Directors of a corporation. The bill also requires notification to all shareholders within 48 hours after the political expenditure is made as well as posting that information on their web-site and reporting it in their annual report. The League supports. Hearing 2/25 EHEA.

Nancy Soreng

REDISTRICTING REFORM

SB 380/HB 458 General Assembly and Congressional Legislative Redistricting and Apportionment Commission (The President of the Senate plus 14; The Speaker plus 44 by request of the Administration) These bills propose an amendment to the Maryland Constitution's guidelines on redistricting. The bills call for the creation of an independent redistricting commission to draw the congressional and legislative lines in the year following each decennial census or by court order. In fashioning these bills, the Administration took into consideration the recommendations of the Governor appointed study commission on redistricting, discussed in RSC 1.

The makeup of this commission is to be 3 members from the largest party in the state, 3 members of the second largest party in the state, and 3 who are unaffiliated. Beyond political affiliation, the bill sets out a number of restrictions for commission members. A member 1) must have been registered in the state for 5 years, and may not have changed affiliation during that time; 2) may not have run for or served in state or federal office during the 5 years preceding appointment, nor may they have an immediate family member who has done so, and may not be or have been staff, consultant, or under contract with such a person, or their family member at any time.; 3) may not be a regulated lobbyist in this state; and 4) for 5 years after the date of their appointment, the commissioners will be ineligible to hold appointive public office, serve as paid staff in the General Assembly, or register as a lobbyist.

The bill makes the activities of the Commission, subject to state law that governs open meetings and access to public information. The commission must give 14 days' notice to the public prior to each of its meetings, except for the meetings in September upon the commission's initial appointment, which will only require 3 days' notice prior to each meeting. The Commission is to establish a public hearing process prior to the drawing of any maps. The hearings are to be designed to encourage public input, and will be supplemented by activities if needed for the public to participate. The General Assembly is to ensure that the software made available and utilized by the Commission, is also accessible to the public, so that the process used is transparent. Ultimately, any map that is drawn is to be displayed for public comment for at least 14 days.

The bill explicitly states the intent to ensure that neither the General Assembly legislative districts, nor the districts for Maryland's representatives in the United States Congress are drawn for the purpose of favoring or discriminating against an incumbent, officeholder, a candidate, or a political party. To fulfill this goal, the bill sets out a number of standards and processes that must be adhered to in the drawing of the district lines. The bill proposes no more than a 2 percent variance in population between legislative districts, and for congressional districts to be as equal as practicable, in compliance with the U.S. Constitution. The bill requires specific compliance with the Voting Rights Act, which has merely been implied in the process before now. Geographical standards of contiguity and compactness have also been included, so as to keep populations together, and not to favor the residence of any incumbent, political party, or any other person.

Upon completion of a map, the commission will submit its map to the Secretary of State, with explanation. A vote of 7 members of the commission would constitute a quorum, while 6 affirmative votes are required for any official action. Under the bill, the Secretary of State will submit the maps to the General Assembly, who will introduce a separate bill for a legislative and congressional districting plan. The map introduced may not be amended, and no member of the General Assembly may introduce a districting plan that differs from that proposed by the Commission and introduced by the presiding officers. For adoption of the plan, each house must pass the bill by a three-fifths vote (this differs from the Governor's study commission's recommendation which offered *rejection authority* requiring a supermajority). Upon passage, the bill will be submitted to the Governor for signature or veto. A veto would be eligible for override in the General Assembly. If the bill fails due to veto or passage in the General Assembly, the bill will return to the Commission with recommendations, so that they may create a new map and plan. If at this point, the bill once again fails to pass or is vetoed, the Court of Appeals will have the power to establish a new districting plan and map. If any registered voter wishes to challenge the map, they may also do so with the Court of Appeals. The League supports this legislation with an amendment that would require a simple majority to adopt the maps drawn by the Commission. EHEA; Hrg. 2/29, 3pm R&E

SB 408 Commission to Study Legislative and Congressional Districting (Hill plus 5) calls for the formation of an 8-member commission to study and provide recommendations on legislative and congressional districting. The composition of the commission outlined is two members from both the Senate and the House, appointed by the leadership of each. One of the Senate members, and one of the house members would serve as co-chairs of the commission. The remaining members would be the Secretary of Planning (or designee), the Attorney General (or designee), the State Administrator of Elections (or designee), and a Governor-appointed member of LWVMD. The bill would require the commission to study Maryland's redistricting processes and make a recommendation regarding criteria for drawing districting lines, who should draw district maps, how to remove partisanship from the process, and a way to coordinate with other states to improve the process of redistricting across the country. The commission would be required to deliver its findings on or before December 31, 2016, to the Governor, Senate President, Speaker of the House, EHEA Chair, and the Chair of Ways and Means. Hrg. 2/29, 3pm R&E

SB 474 Congressional Districting Process (Pinsky) calls for the establishment of a temporary redistricting commission during the year following the decennial census. This commission would be composed of 5 people, one appointed by the President of the Senate, one by the minority leader of the Senate, one by the Speaker of the House, and one by the minority leader of the House. These four will elect, by a 3 to 4 vote, the fifth member of the commission, who will serve as chair. The only restrictions provided for this fifth member is that they may not currently hold an elected or appointed office in the executive or legislative branches of state or federal government, they may not hold a political party office, and they must be a registered voter of the state. The commission will be provided staff and technical support by the Department of Legislative services, and will use the census data to create a redistricting plan. The plan will be adopted by a majority vote of the commission, and filed with the Secretary of State within 7 days. This plan would become effective upon filing, and until the adoption of a new plan after the next decennial census. However, all of that is contained within this act is to be contingent upon the enactment of a nonpartisan districting process by another state that has between 6 and 10 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, and both houses of their legislature must be controlled by a party other than the one that controls Maryland's General Assembly. Simply put, since Maryland's houses are currently controlled by the Democratic party, if state whose houses are controlled by the Republican party enacts reform that leads to a nonpartisan districting process in their state, all of the aforementioned will be set into motion. EHEA

SJ 3 United States Congress – Call to Congress and the President to Act on Redistricting Reform (Conway) This joint resolution requests that the Senate and the House send a request to the President of the United States, the Vice President/President of the U.S. Senate, the Secretary of the U.S. Senate, and the 10 members of Maryland's Congressional Delegation, to urge federal legislation establishing uniform national districting standards. The resolution charges that the varied methodologies employed in redistricting throughout the states result in uneven delegations to the U.S. Congress, which leave voters feeling disenfranchised and unrepresented. It cites the redistricting issue as a bipartisan issue across the country. The resolution purports that the congressional action affecting all 50 states uniformly would eliminate local political considerations from the process, and remove partisanship. Finally, it states that federal legislation mandating uniform standards in districting for all states would result in more uniform, even and representative districts, restoring voter confidence, and making them feel more empowered and enfranchised. EHEA

HB 467 Legislative and Congressional Districting – Standards and Processes (Reznik plus 7) proposes an amendment to the Maryland Constitution. However, it begins with the caveat that for the changes to be enacted in Maryland, it must be determined by the Department of Legislative Services that Virginia and Pennsylvania have adopted “substantially similar” legislative and congressional districting processes.

In this bill, the commission size and composition shall be determined by the Executive Director of the Department of Legislative services, and may vary every 10 years. The members of the commission proposed here must include a demographer, cartographer, applied mathematician, computer scientist, and a lawyer or legal expert who specializes in election and redistricting law. The Executive Director will make the determination on whether an individual meets the educational and professional requirements to serve in these roles on the commission, but may not deviate from traditional standards. These commission members will be full-time employees of the Department of Legislative Services, unless it is determined the need cannot be met by such an employee, at which point commissioners may be hired on a contractual basis to serve on the commission. A member of the commission may not be an elected official, an official whose appointment is subject to Senate confirmation, nor a candidate for elected office.

The commission will hold public hearings after the decennial census, and prepare a plan to be presented to leadership of the General Assembly. They will then present the plan as a joint resolution to the General Assembly no later than the first day of regular session in the second year following the census. The plan proposed by the commission may not be amended, nor can a member of the General Assembly propose an alternative plan. The plan will become law by a majority vote of both houses. If the plan is not adopted by the 17th day of regular session, the commission will prepare an alternative plan to be submitted. If that plan fails to pass by the 52nd day of regular session, the Court of Appeals will formulate a redistricting plan. The Court of Appeals will also handle any challenges to plans adopted by the General Assembly, and will have original jurisdiction to review any such plan.

The only substantial distinction in this bill between the process and requirements for legislative versus congressional redistricting, is that geographical standards for congressional districting are proposed. The bill calls for compact congressional districts, made up of adjoining territory, giving “due regard” to natural and political boundaries, and that are of substantially equal population. Hrg. 2/29, 3pm R&E

Ashley Oleson

TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT

HB 413 Open Meetings Act-Minutes-Video and Audio Streaming-(Carr and Cullison) provides that a public body need not prepare written minutes of an open session under the Open Meetings Act if live and archived videostreaming is available in specified manner and an electronic index of the meeting is available to allow an individual to navigate to the specific agenda item or portion of the meeting. Hrg 2/24 HGO

SB 370/HB 368 Board of Public Works Budget Transparency Act of 2016-(Madaleno plus 9/Korman plus 16) requires the Secretary of Budget and Management to provide notice in writing at least 10 days before the Board of Public Works may approve a reduction in an appropriation and to provide a written notice of such a proposed reduction to certain committees of the House and Senate. These committees are the Legislative Policy Committee, the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee. Hrg 2/17 B&T; 2/16 APP

SB 528/HB 2510 General Provisions-Open Meetings Act-Required Training and Certificate of Compliance-(Bates plus 2/Miller plus 11) would require that all employees, officials and members of a public body receive training on the Open Meetings Act. The public body will forward to the Open Meetings Compliance Board a list of the persons required to receive this training and within 90 days of being designated to receive the training, they must complete the course offered by the Attorney General's office or by the Maryland Association of Counties or the Maryland Municipal League. Generally a new member, official or employee of a public body must receive this training within 30 days of joining the public body. In addition new or returning members of the General Assembly must have training on the Open Meetings Act within 10 days of the beginning of each General Assembly session. These bills require reports to the Attorney General's office on who requires training and a certificate of compliance for each person who completes the training, including members of the General Assembly. Further the proposed legislation requires posting on the public bodies' and General Assembly websites a list of each individual who has complied with the training requirement, and a copy of the certificate of compliance with the requirements of the Act must be available for public inspection. Hrg 2/25 EHEA; 2/24 HGO

SB 529 Open Meetings Act-Requirement for Providing Agendas-(Bates plus 7) would require that a public body provide all available information about matters to be discussed in the open session of a meeting and whether part of the meeting shall be closed. Such an agenda shall be provided at the time notice of the meeting is given or if information is not available at the time notice is provided, the agenda must be provided at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting. Hrg. 2/25 EHEA

SB 671/HB 402 Public Information Act-Personnel and Investigatory Records-Formal Complaints Against Public Employees-(Muse plus 10/Barron plus 5) provides that a person who has filed a formal complaint against a government employee or a governmental unit is a person in interest under the Public Information Act, establishes that records that relate to a formal complaint of job-related misconduct against a public employee are not personnel records under the Public Information Act and authorizing the custodian of the record to deny inspection of a record related to job-related misconduct. Hrg. 2/24 HGO

Update on Bills Reported in RSC 1

HB 217 Open Meetings Act- Requirements for Providing Agendas (RSC 1) Hrg 2/24 HGO

Barbara Schnackenberg

ENVIRONMENT: RENEWABLE ENERGY

SB 323/HB 610 - Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act – Reauthorization - SB 323 (Pinsky plus 26). HB 610 (Barve plus 29). These bills reauthorize the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA) of 2009, which is due to expire on Dec. 31, 2016.

SB 323/HB 610 require that MDE submit a new Plan to the Governor and the General Assembly by Dec. 31, 2018 that reduces statewide GHG emissions by 40 percent from 2006 levels by 2030. MDE is also required to adopt the final new plan by the end of 2019.

The bills also provide for public comment on the Plan and require appointment of a task force to the Maryland Commission on Climate Change to oversee an independent study of the economic impact of requiring GHG emission reductions from the State's manufacturing sector. The Reauthorization will take effect October 1, 2016. Hrg. 2/9, 1 p.m. EHE. The LWVMD supports legislation for the reauthorization of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act of 2009 and is submitting written testimony to the EHE hearing on 2/9/16.

Clean Energy Jobs Act

The introduction of bills in the Senate and the House that would increase the renewable energy portfolio in Maryland to 25 percent of its electricity by 2020 is expected by Feb. 8. These bills are also expected to include a substantial financial commitment to clean renewable energy jobs training and support for minority and women owned clean energy businesses.

HB 440 Electric Companies - Installation of Solar Electric Generating Facility - Completion of Interconnection (Kramer and Fraser-Hidalgo) This bill is to facilitate solar installations by reducing delays in getting solar systems approved and connected. This bill outlines how approvals are handled. The primary change is to require that an electric company complete interconnection of a customer-generator's solar electric generating facility with the electric company's distribution facilities within 20 business days after receiving notice of the completion of the solar installation process. Hrg, 2/11, 1 p.m. EM

SB 398/HB 820 Reducing Environmental Degradation for the Underserved Through Community Engagement (The REDUCE Act) (Ramirez plus 4/Lam plus 18) This bill requires disclosure of the diesel truck impacts from new industrial development in communities with high poverty or non-white populations. Diesel trucks in overburdened communities may result in many adverse health impacts including infant development, asthma, cardiovascular disease, cancers and more. It is hoped that encouraging community feedback will result in better decisions to improve the health of these communities. Hrg, 2/16, 1 p.m. EHEA; E&T

Betsy Singer and Ruth Alice White

ENVIRONMENT: STORM WATER, POLLUTION & THE BAY

HB325 Environment – Bay Restoration Fund – Use of Funds – Nutrient Credit Purchases (Chair, ET by request of the Governor and Dept. of Environment) the bill authorizes funds in the Bay Restoration Fund to be used for the costs associated with the purchase of cost-effective nitrogen and phosphorous nutrient credits in support of the efforts by the State to restore the health of the Chesapeake Bay. The Department of the Environment to consult with the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Natural Resources when adopting regulations. Hrg 2/10, ET

HB394 Public Health – Hydraulic Fracturing Chemicals – Information and Fund (Morhaim) requires an applicant for a permit for the hydraulic fracturing of a well for the exploration or production of natural gas to submit specified information to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in a specified manner. It establishes the Hydraulic Fracturing Chemical Education and Impact Fund to address the potential health risks associated with chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing; establishing a maximum civil penalty of \$100,000 for each specified violation of the Act; Hrg 2/17 ET

HB443 Agriculture – Industrial Hemp – Agricultural or Academic Research (Fraser-Hidalgo + 3) authorizes the Department of Agriculture or an institution of higher education to grow or cultivate industrial hemp if the industrial hemp is grown or cultivated for agricultural or academic research purposes. It requires a site used by the Department or an institution of higher education to grow or cultivate industrial hemp to be certified by and registered with the Department; Hrg 2/10, ET

HB599/SB496 Poultry Litter Management Act (Lam + 43; Madaleno + 12) these bills require that a specified integrator place poultry only at a contract operation that maintains a specified nutrient management plan. It requires an integrator to be responsible for the removal and delivery of all excess manure in accordance with specified requirements. An integrator must be responsible for the removal and delivery of all excess manure; integrators, manure brokers or manure transporters working under contract with an integrator, must deliver excess manure only to specified facilities; Hrg 2/24 ET; 2/23 EHEA

HB610/SB323 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act – Reauthorization (Barve + 29 - House; Pinksy + 26 - Senate) repeal the termination date for a provision of law requiring the State to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 25% from 2006 levels by 2020; to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 40% from 2006 levels by 2030. The Department of the Environment must submit specified plans in accordance with specified requirements to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before specified dates; etc. Hrg 2/9 WHEA. LWVMD supports these bills.

HB797 Nontidal Wetlands – Nontidal Wetland Mitigation Bank (Chair ET for Governor and Dept. of Environment) repeals a requirement that the Department of the Environment develop standards and adopt regulations to establish specified compensation ratios for mitigation through mitigation banks. It alters a requirement that the Department develop standards and adopt regulations to establish specified public notice and comment requirements; repealing a requirement that specified standards and regulations adopted by the Department ensure that on-site mitigation is

examined before conducting mitigation off site; First reading, ET

HB829/SB607 Agriculture – Cattle, Swine, and Poultry – Use of Antimicrobial Drugs (Robinson + 10; Pinsky + 9) prohibits an owner of cattle, swine, or poultry from administering or authorizing an agent to administer specified antimicrobial drugs in cattle, swine, or poultry without a prescription or veterinary feed directive issued by a licensed veterinarian in accordance with specified conditions. A veterinarian who issues a veterinary feed directive would be required to submit to the Department of Agriculture specified information in a specified manner; providing for the application of the Act; Hrg 3/1, EHEA

SB367 Maryland Redeemable Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Act (Ferguson + 9) establishes the Maryland Redeemable Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program. It requires the Maryland Environmental Service to develop, implement, and administer the Program. Every redeemable beverage container sold in the State would be required to indicate a 5-cent refund value in a specified manner on and after July 1, 2017. A specified refund value would be added to the retail price of a specified container at the time of purchase on and after a specified date; Hrg 2/18 FIN; EHEA. LWVMD supports this bill.

SB645 Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund – Allocation of Funds (King + 15) requires that money in the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund, beginning in fiscal year 2017 be allocated in accordance with specified provisions of law. It requires that a minimum of \$5,000,000 in the Trust Fund be allocated to the Department of Agriculture annually for distribution to soil conservation districts to assist farmers and counties with nonpoint source pollution control projects; establishing the intent of the General Assembly; Hrg 3/01 EHEA; B&T

SB 688 Task Force to Develop a Strategic Plan for State Park Development (Middleton) establishes the Task Force to develop a strategic plan for State Park Development and provides that the purpose of the Task Force is to develop strategic principles and a policy framework for mid- to long-term decisions on the allocation of the funding provided to the State Parks. It requires to the extent practicable, that the composition of the Task Force reflect the gender, racial, ethnic, and geographic diversity of the State. The Task Force has to report its findings and recommendations by December 31, 2017; First reading, EHEA

SB0719 Environment – Stormwater Remediation Fees – Municipalities (Young) authorizes a municipality to charge a stormwater remediation fee to property owned by the State, a unit of State government, a county, or an institution of higher education that is located within the municipality under specified circumstances; First reading, EHEA.

Updates

HB0126 Worcester County - Recycling at Special Events – Exemptions (Carozza). Hrg 2/24, ET

HB0132 State Government - Pollinator Habitat Plans (Lafferty). Hrg 2/10, ET

HB0178 Natural Resources - Roadside Trees - Preservation and Protection (Lafferty). Hrg 2/10, ET

HB0189 Environment - Liquid Waste Hauler - Vehicle License and Inspection (Rosenberg). Hrg 2/10, ET

HB0211 Neonicotinoid Pesticides - Labeling, Signage, and Restrictions on Sales and Use (Pollinator Protection Act of 2016) (Healey). Hrg 2/10, ET. LWVMD testimony supports this bill.

SB0004 Natural Resources - Maryland Environmental Trust – Trustees (Conway). Passed Senate; first reading, ET

SB0061 Natural Resources - Forest Lands and the Chesapeake and Atlantic (Simonaire). Passed Senate; first reading, ET

SB0105 Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority - Name and Authority (chair, EHEA). Passed Senate with

amendments.

SB0112 Pest Control Compact – Repeal (chair, EHEA). Passed Senate; first reading, ET

SB0113 Department of Agriculture - Bees, Bee Colonies, and Used Bee Equipment - Transportation and Shipment(chair EHEA). Passed Senate; first reading, ET

SB0201 Environment - Paint Stewardship Program (Conway) Hrg, 2/16, EHEA

SB0263 Payment in Lieu of Taxes - State Forests, State Parks, and Wildlife Management Areas (Edwards) Hrg, 2/10, EHEA

SJ0001 Patuxent River Watershed - Amendment of Patuxent River Policy Plan (chair, EHEA). Passed Senate; first reading HRU

Linda Silversmith

TRANSPORTATION

HB 182 Vehicle Laws- Accidents Resulting in Injury – Mandatory Drug and Alcohol Testing (Valentino-Smith) would mandate that if an individual is involved in a motor vehicle accident that results in serious injuries needing

medical attention, an officer, who suspects drugs or alcohol are involved, may administer a test to confirm or deny suspicions. Introduced in 2013 as **HB627**. Hrg 2/24 1 p.m. JUD

HB 373 Motor Vehicles – Passenger Seat Belt Requirement – Primary Offense (Stein) requires that any person in either a front or rear seat be required to wear a seat belt regardless of age and failure to do so becomes a primary and not secondary traffic offense. Hrg. 2/18 1 p.m. ET

HB 547 Motor Vehicles – Tires, Exterior Lights, Windshield Wipers – Biennial Inspection (Turner et al) requires that during the emissions control inspection, a vehicle must also pass inspection of its tires, lights, and windshield wipers. Hrg. 2/18 1 p.m. ET

HB 628 Criminal Procedure – Traffic Stops – Official Disclosures (Moon et al) determines the procedures that when an enforcement officer makes a traffic stop of an individual, the officer must disclose his name, badge number, and reason for the stop. Hrg. 2/23 1 p.m. JUD

SB 126 Task Force to Study Issues Related to the Use of Self-Driving Vehicles (RSC 1) Unfavorable JPR

SB 168 Real Property – Installation and Use of Electrical Vehicle Recharging Equipment (RSC 1) Unfavorable JPR

Barbara Ditzler

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Several bills concerning sentencing and correctional reform have been filed.

SB 590 Correctional Services - Solitary Confinement- Restrictions (Gladden and Hough) Provides that a prison inmate may not be placed in solitary confinement unless: the inmate poses a risk of physical harm to the inmate or others; all other less restrictive options have failed; the inmate's physical or mental health is not compromised. An inmate may only be held in solitary confinement for the minimum time to prevent risk. The correctional facility must make quarterly reports to the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services documenting the reasons, length of time and inmate demographics on all instances of solitary confinement and the reports will be published on the Department's web site. Hrg. 2/24 JPR

SB 433 Correctional Services - Special Requirements for Elderly, Chronically Ill and Terminally Ill Inmates (Nathan-Pulliam + 12) Requires correctional facilities to address the special needs of elderly or ill inmates in accordance

with National Institute of Corrections' standards. The Department of Public Safety and correctional Services shall designate special sites for such inmates, with specially trained staff. Allows inmates over 64 years old who have served for more than 15 years to apply for compassionate release. Hrg. 2/24 JPR

SB 531 Inmates - Life Imprisonment - Parole Reform (McFadden + 2) Repeals the provision that requires the Governor to approve an application for parole for an inmate serving life imprisonment. JPR

HB 518/ SB 259 - Criminal Procedure - Life Without Parole - Imposition (Carter + 12, Kelley + 20) Prohibits a court from imposing a sentence of life imprisonment without parole on a defendant who was under 18 when the offense was committed. Hrgs. 2/16 JUD, 2/11 JPR

Two bills were filed concerning the accountability of police officers who harm individuals in police custody.

HB 629 Criminal Law - Law Enforcement Officers - Misconduct (Moon + 9) Makes it a misdemeanor for a law enforcement officer to disable a body camera or video or audio recording, or to cause injury to a person detained or in custody, or to intentionally fail to request medical assistance, or discharge a firearm in violation of use of force established by the agency that employs the law enforcement officer. Hrg. 2/23 JUD

HB 475 Courts - Grand Juries - Prohibited Action (Sydnor + 7) A grand jury may not inquire into an offense that involves a shooting or alleged use of excessive force by a law enforcement officer that results in the death of a person in police custody Hrg. 2/23 JUD

SB 502/ HB 481 Judges - Mandatory Retirement Age (Miller + 26, Vallario + 10) A proposed constitutional amendment increasing the mandatory retirement age for judges from 70 to 73. Hrgs. 2/16 JPR, 2/17 JUD

HB 448 Circuit Court Judges - Selection, Qualifications and Term of Office (Sydnor +27) Cross-filed with SB 179 (RSC #1) Hrg. 2/25 JUD

Update on Bills Previously Report in RSC # 1:

HB 153 Law Enforcement Officials' Bill of Rights - Time Period for Filing Administrative Changes - Reduction Hrg. 2/23 JUD

HB 221 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Whistleblower Protection Hrg. 2/23

HB 223 Circuit Court Judges - Election Hrg. 2/25 JUD

HB 224 Circuit Court Judges - Election Hrg. 2/25 JUD

HB 74/ SB 117 Judgeships - Circuit Court and District Courts Hrgs. 2/17 JUD, 2/4 JPR

SB 194/ HB 496 Ethics Commission, Commission on Judicial Disabilities, Judicial Ethics Committee and Joint Ethics Committee - Duties Hrgs. 2/4 EHEA, 2/16 ET

Marlene Cohn

GUN CONTROL

SB615 Criminal Law - Theft of a Firearm - (Jennings) Prohibits a person from knowingly or willfully taking a firearm from the possession of its owner (1) without the owner's consent, or (2) knowing or having reason to know that the firearm was obtained illegally. In addition, it establishes penalties for violation. A person who violates this act is guilty of the felony of theft of a firearm, and on conviction, is subject to imprisonment not to exceed 5 years or a fine not to exceed \$5,000, or both. First Reading JPR, 2/5/16

HB466 - Handgun Permits - Qualifications - Former and Retired Law Enforcement Officers - (Cluster, et. al.) Presumes that an applicant for a permit to wear, carry, or transport a handgun, who is a former or retired law enforcement officer has a good and substantial reason, if the applicant (1) is a former or retired law enforcement officer who separated or retired from service in good standing with a law enforcement agency of the U.S., the state, or any local

law enforcement agency in the state, or (2) was assigned in the state during employment as a law enforcement officer, and (3) is a resident of the state. First Reading JUD

HB 573 Possession of Loaded Handgun or Regulated Firearm – Enhanced Penalties (Clippinger et. al.) Establishes specific penalties, including mandatory minimum terms of imprisonment; however this may not be imposed unless the States Attorney notifies the defendant, 30 days before the trial, of the intent to seek a mandatory minimum sentence. First offence: guilty of a misdemeanor; 2nd offence: guilty of a felony. First Reading JUD, 2/3/06

HB703 Public Safety - Firearms Disqualifications - Antique Firearms (Miller, et. al.) The same rules that apply to possession of fire arms will pertain to antique firearms. First Reading JUD

HB 725 Handguns - School Employees - Handgun Permits and Carrying Weapons on School Property (Impallaria) A County Board may authorize school employees in that County Board's school system to carry a hand gun on school property. It requires that a handgun permit be issued to a person who is otherwise qualified and who is a school employee in a school system in which the county board of education has authorized school employees to carry a handgun. It does not apply to (1) law enforcement officers in the regular course of duty (including off-duty, or retired); (2) a person hired by a county board of education specifically for the purpose of guarding public school property; (3) a person engaged in an organized shooting activity for educational purposes. First Reading JJUD

[Note: this bill was Introduced in the 2013 Regular Session as: HB 436]

Additional Information

A federal appeals court dealt a potentially serious blow to Maryland's landmark 2013 gun control law and similar measures across the country, ruling Tuesday that a lower court was wrong when it upheld the state's ban on assault rifles, reports Michael Dresser for the Sun. In a 2-1 decision applauded by gun rights advocates, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit concluded that the semiautomatic weapons and high-capacity magazines banned by Maryland's Firearm Safety Act "are in common use by law-abiding citizens" and thus don't fall under the exception to the right to bear arms that applies to "unusual" weapons such as machine guns and hand grenades. (Baltimore Sun, 2/5/2016)

Doreen Rosenthal

JUVENILE JUSTICE

HB 216 Juvenile Causes – Disposition on Delinquency Petition – Required Considerations (Sydnor + 7) This bill requires the Juvenile Court in review of a petition to declare a child delinquent to consider a list of factors including the child's intellectual capacity, history of abuse or mental illness, and family and community environment. hrg 2/18 1pm JUD

HB304/SB243 Juvenile Court – Jurisdiction (Sydnor + 3/Kelley +15) These bills repeal provisions of law that exclude from the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court a list of major offenses committed by youths 16 or older and in some instances youth 14 and older. Hrgs 2/18 1pm JUD, 2/11 1pm JPR

HB 772/SB 262 Family Law – Protecting the Resources of Children in State Custody (Moon + 14/Raskin + 17) These bills deal with the responsibility of the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to manage the assets of children in the foster care system and require, in part, that when DHR applies for and receives Federal benefits for an older foster youth, an increasing portion of those benefits be placed into an account for the foster child to use when he (or she) exits the foster care system. These bills were introduced as HB 575/SB 524 in the 2015 session; the Fiscal Note recognized they would reduce funds currently available to DHR. SB 524 (with amendments) passed the Senate unanimously, but HB 575 received an unfavorable report in JUD. Hrgs 3/3 1pm JUD, 2/18 1pm JPR

Update on Bills Reported in RSC 1

HB 007/SB 031 Family Law – Child Abuse and Neglect – Expungement of Reports and Records – Time Limit (RSC #1) HB 007 hearing cancelled, SB 031 favorable with amendments JPR

SB 189 Juveniles – Restraint & Searches – Limitations (RSC #1) Unfavorable report JPR, withdrawn

SB 209/HB 634 Juvenile Law – Adjudication of Delinquency – Collateral Consequences (RSC #1) hrgs 2/18
1pm JUD, 2/4 1pm JPR

Judy Morenoff

MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

HUMAN RIGHTS

HB292 Police training commission – training requirements- human trafficking (Robinson +6) This bill requires entrance level and in-service police training to include criminal laws concerning human trafficking and the appropriate treatment of victims of human trafficking. Hearing Jud 2.9

HB623 Criminal procedure – post-conviction review – conviction of human trafficking victim (Dumais and Morales) This bill allows a person to vacate a conviction if it was the result of having been a victim of human trafficking.

SB527 is the companion bill to HB219 reported on in RSC-1. Hearing in JP 2.17, hearing for HB219 is in Jud 2.9.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

HB445 Food stamp program-minimum benefit-state supplement (Lierman +6)

This bill would increase the amount of food stamps a household receives to a minimum of \$30 per month, there is currently no minimum amount. The League supports this bill based on our position that benefit levels should be sufficient to provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing, and shelter”. Hearing in App 2.16

Several bills address the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

HB452/SB384 Income tax – earned income credit-refundability (Speaker by request of the Governor/President by request of the Governor) This bill increases from 26% to 28% the percent of the federal earned income tax credit (EITC) used to determine what an individual can claim for a refundable credit under the Maryland credit. The League supports this bill based on our position that one of the goals of social policy should be to promote self-sufficiency and that work should be encouraged. The EITC provides a refund of tax withheld from a low income working person based on their income and the size of the family.

SB294 Earned income tax credit – expansion (Madeleno + 17) This bill allows the credit against the state income tax for an individual without a qualifying child to equal 100% of the federal credit and allows the individual to claim a refund of the amount of credit that exceeds the total tax payable by the individual. The League supports this bill. Hearing B&T 2.17

SB295 Income tax- earned income credit – refundability (Madeleno + 18) This bill increases from 26% to 28% the percent of the federal earned income tax credit (EITC) used to determine what an individual can claim for a refundable credit under the Maryland credit for this year, and 30% beginning in 2017. The League supports this bill. Hearing B&T 2.17.

HB580/ SB472 Labor and employment – Maryland Healthy Working Families Act (Clippinger +80/Pugh + 23) This bill, a modification of a similar bill introduced before, requires employers with more than nine employees to provide employees with earned sick and safe leave and requires employers with nine or fewer employees to provide employees with unpaid earned sick and safe leave. Many caveats have been added to address specific concerns raised when the bill was considered last year. The League supports this bill based on our position that one of the goals of social policy is to promote self –sufficiency and that work should be encouraged. Paid sick leave is critical to advancing these goals.

Ruth Crystal

HEALTH

Delegate Dan K. Morhaim (D Dist. 11) will introduce four bills to address the growing addiction problem in the State and the rising health care costs associated with the problem. The first bill advocates for treatment on demand in an emergency room. Studies have shown that for every \$1 spent on treatment \$12 is saved in health care and criminal justice costs. The second bill would allow individuals to use drugs in an approved facility under supervision and where treatment can be offered. Canada experienced a 37 percent increase in treatment when such centers were introduced. The third bill advocates for the creation of a poly-morphone-assisted treatment study. The project would allow physicians to use pharmaceutical grade opioids to treat a small group of addicts who have failed other treatments. The fourth bill would decriminalize the possession and use of small quantities of drugs keeping the users out of the criminal justice system. The bills do not have numbers as of this writing and will be summarized in the next report.

HB 29, Education, Participation in Youth Sports Programs - Concussions – Penalties for Coaches (Del. M. Chang) would require the Boards of Education to establish penalties for coaches who return a player to the game when a concussion is suspected. The boards must also set up an appeal process for the coaches. The Youth Programs provide another problem as the coach must appeal to the circuit court.

HB 180, Public Health, HIV Testing During Pregnancy, (Dels. West, Pena-Melnyk, & Aumann) would require the medical community to inform and obtain consent from the patient for HIV testing in the first trimester and again in the third trimester if no testing has been done. The bill also requires a rapid test and prophylaxis antiretroviral during labor and delivery. The medical community is in support of this bill. Hrg 2/16 HGO

HB 216/SB289, Public Health – Preventive Medical Care – Consent by Minors, (Sample-Hughes, Lam et al/Selfman et al.), would add information on preventive care for sexually transmitted infections and diseases to the information which a minor may obtain without parental consent. Hrg 2/2 HGO; 2/10 FIN

HB 377/SB 513 – Maryland No-Fault Birth Injury Fund, (Del. D. Morhaim & Sen. Natham-Pullium, et.al) was introduced as HB 553/SB 585 in 2015. The bill has 31 House sponsors and 11 Senate sponsors. It has been assigned to both Judiciary (J) and HGO. Hrg 2/12 JUD & HGO; 2/26 JPR & FIN

HB 404/SB 418, Richard E. Israel and Roger (Pip) Moyer End of Life Option Act, (S. Pendergrass + 42; R. Young + 13), is similar to HB1021 in 2015, but changes, recommended by the study committee, have been added to the bill. The current bill would allow a terminally-ill patient to ask a physician for life-ending drugs to bring on death. The request would be private and others could not make the request. There are also specific requirements for written requests. The bill was referred to (HGO) and to Judiciary (J) in the House. Hrg 2/19 HGO - there still must be a hearing in JPR.

HB 416, Health Care Decisions Act – End of Life Discisions-Making Informational Booklet, (Del. Hill, et.al) requires the Health Department to develop a booklet on end of life options and requirements and specifies who should receive the booklet and requires placing it on the web. A hearing has not been scheduled.

HB 568 – Health Occupation – Exemptions from Participation in Aid in Dying, (Del. S. Aumann) provides protections for hospitals and practitioners who do not want to aid a patient to end his or her life. Hearing has not been scheduled by HGO.

HB 394 – Public Health – Hydraulic Fracturing Chemicals – Information and Fund, (Del. D. Morhaim) (HB 952 in 2015) would establish a fund to address the potential health hazards of Hydraulic Fracturing and would require companies participating in fracturing or applying for a license to pay a fee to the fund. Hrg 2/17 ET

HB 559 - Vehicle Laws – Protective Headgear Requirement for Motorcycle Riders – Exemption (Bromwell + 31) is the proverbial attempt to exempt the use of helmets for motorcycle riders, but it is slightly different than last year. This bill would require that they be 21 years of age and have taken a motorcycle course. There are also specifications for eyewear to be worn. Hrg 2/18 ET

SB 91 – State Identified HIV Priorities, (Finance Com for DHMH), would mandate the use of funds from the General Fund that are rebated from the State AIDS Drug Assistance Program be to put in a new fund and to be used by

the State on approved HIV prevention, surveillance and care. The bill was heard on January 21 and received a favorable report and has passed third reader in the Senate. It has been assigned to HGO in the House.

SB 258/HB 710 – Workers Compensation – Payment for Medical Services and Treatment, (Sen. Klausmeier & Dels. Glenn, Miller) would reduce the number of days a medical provider has to report to employers and to submit his bill for reimbursement. The medical community will fight this bill. It was heard in Finance on February 9 with no action. Economic Matters has not set a hearing.

SB 334 – Health Insurance – Access to Accurate Provider Directories (Sen. D. Kelley) upgrades the requirements for Provider Directories provided by insurance entities and gives the Maryland Insurance Commissioner enforcement powers if the directories are not accurate. Patients have been calling for this type of legislation for years as the directories are notoriously inadequate. It was heard in Finance on February 10.

Update from RSC1

HB 104, Medical Cannabis – Written Certifications – Certifying Providers, (Del. D. Morhaim) (RSC #1) Hearing was held in Health, Government Operations (HGO) 2/2. No vote at this time.

HB 6, Criminal Law – Improper Prescription of Controlled Dangerous Substance Resulting in Death, (Del. K. Young) (RSC #1) Hearing was held 1/16, but no vote has been held.

Neilson Andrews

EDUCATION

Funding K-12 Education

HB 285/SB 455 State Education Aid – Real Property Valuation – Tax Increment Financing (McIntosh et al./McFadden). This is similar to HB 45 (RSC 1) but with many more sponsors. Hrgs. 2/9, 1 pm APP/2/24, 1 pm B&T

State Aid to Private and Parochial Schools

HB 453 Maryland Education Credit (Speaker by Request - Administration + 50). This bill would provide a 60% credit up to \$200,000 per taxable year to a business entity for contributions to student assistance organizations which provides assistance for expenses to students in public or nonpublic prekindergarten, elementary or secondary schools. Schools whose students receive aid cannot charge tuition greater than the statewide average for public schools. Students eligible for free and reduced price lunches would receive priority for assistance. To cover the cost of the tax credits, a nonlapsing Maryland Education Tax Credit Reserve Fund is established. The limits for the fund are \$5 million for FY2017, \$10 million for FY2018 and \$15 million per year for FY2019 and after. Similar to SB 405 in 2015 which the League opposed. Hrg. 2/25, 1pm W&M.

Pre-Kindergarten

SB 369 Education – Prekindergarten Programs – Notification of Eligibility by Local Departments of Social Services (Ferguson) Requires that a parent or guardian of a 4-year-old child with a family income of no more than 185% of the federal poverty guidelines who applies for economic aid should receive oral and written notice that the child may be eligible for a publicly funded pre-K program. Hrg. 2/11, 1 pm EHEA.

SB 461 Education - Prekindergarten Students – Funding (Conway) requires that children from economically challenged backgrounds who are eligible for free public pre-K programs be counted as .5 if they are attending half days and 1.0 if they are attending full day prekindergarten for purposes of state aid beginning in FY2018. Currently, local districts have had to bear the costs of prekindergarten programs. Hrg. 2/24, 1 pm B&T

Teaching

SB493 Teacher Induction, Retention, and Advancement Act of 2016 (Pinsky et al.) establishes a program for mentoring first year teachers in schools with comprehensive needs. The cost would be shared 80% by local districts and

20% by the state. This bill increases the maximum stipend for the teachers to \$5000. Hrg. 2/24, 1 pm EHEA

Update on Bills Reported in RSC 1

HB 45 State Education Aid - Real Property Valuation - Tax Increment Financing. Unfavorable Report APP,

withdrawn.

HB 141/SB407 Education - Education Accountability Program - Limits on Testing. Hrg. 2/11, 1 pm W&M; EHEA

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Aid to Education budget which includes the \$5 million for **Student Assistance Organization Business Entity Grants.** Hrg. 2/24, 1 pm House Education and Economic Development Subcommittee of APP, Room 120, HOB/Hrg. 2/25, 1 pm Senate Education, Business, and Administration Subcommittee B&T.

Lois Hybl