



REPORT FROM STATE CIRCLE
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 111 Cathedral Street, Suite 201, Annapolis MD 21401
 410-269-0232



lwvmd.org lwvmd@verizon.net facebook.com/LWVMD [@lwvmd](https://twitter.com/lwvmd)

Co-Presidents: Barbara Schnackenberg & Nancy Soreng
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TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT

HB 1363-Property Tax-Appeals-Provision of Information to Taxpayers (McMillan plus 6) assures that taxpayers who are appealing an assessment or reassessment of the value of their property will have available to them information needed to make a reasoned argument for the appeal of such assessment or reassessment. Since the Department of Assessment and Taxation has all of the information specified as necessary to make an appeal, it is only reasonable to provide that information to taxpayers in sufficient time for them to use it in preparing their appeals. If the Department does not provide the information on a timely basis, postponing the hearing and delaying the effective date of any increased property tax assessment is the appropriate remedy. Hrg, 3/9 W&M

Update on Bills Reported in RSC 1-3

SB 370/HB 368 Board of Public Works Budget Transparency Act of 2016- Reported favorably by APP on 2/24, Passed House 96-43 on 3/2. Reported favorably with amendment by B&T 3/4.

HB 984/SB 17 Open Meetings Act-Retention of Minutes and Recordings-Revision-Reported favorably by HGO 3/3; passed Senate 46-0 on 2/12.

Barbara Schnackenberg

EDUCATION

HB 1466 Task Force to Study Restorative Justice Discipline Practices in Maryland Public Schools (A. Washington plus 4) Establishes a task force to study restorative justice discipline practices to report its findings and recommendations for training by January 1, 2017, and its final findings and recommendations before January 1, 2018. The League supports this bill. Hrg. 3/3, 1 pm W&M

Update on Bills Reported Previously

HB 285 State Education Aid - Real Property Valuation - Tax Increment Financing. ([RSC 2](#)) Passed House with amendments. B&T

SB 369 Education – Prekindergarten Programs – Notification of Eligibility by Local Departments of Social Services ([RSC 2](#)) Passed Senate. W&M

SB 493 Teacher Induction, Retention, and Advancement Act of 2016. ([RSC 2](#)) EHEA Favorable with amendments.

SB 948 Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary Schools - Discrimination – Prohibition ([RSC 3](#)) Withdrawn.

Lois Hybl

ELECTIONS

We previously reported on **SB 170 – Voter Registration – Affiliation with Political Party in Primary Election**, which requires the voter registration application to specifically state that one may not vote in a primary election unless one is affiliated with a political party that holds a primary election. This bill passed the Senate 47-0 and was forwarded to the House. The cross-filed House bill, HB 344, passed out of the Ways & Means Committee, with amendments, on March 7th.

HB 1009 – Task Force to Study Increased Voter Participation, sponsored by Del. Platt, was heard by the House Ways & Means Committee on March 3.

HB 592 - Blue Ribbon Commission on Voting, Openness, Transparency, and Equality (VOTE) in Elections, was heard by the Ways & Means Committee on Feb. 24.

HB 1559 – Elections – Nomination by Petitions for Statewide Office – Required Signatures was introduced by Del. A. Washington. Currently, state law requires that a candidate for ANY office file with the appropriate election board a petition signed by not less than 1% of the registered voters eligible to vote for the office for which the candidate filed petitions. Under HB 1559, a candidate for STATEWIDE office would have to submit petitions containing not less than 10,000 signatures. The bill is currently in the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee, but no hearing is yet scheduled.

Voting rights advocates, including the League, are still working hard to garner support for Automatic Voter Registration legislation. Del Luedtke's **HB 1007 – Freedom to Vote Act**, was heard in the House Ways & Means Committee on March 3rd, and Sen. Manno's **SB 350 – Universal Voter Registration Act**, was heard by the Senate EHEA Committee on February 18th, at which time a number of amendments were offered. Advocates are hoping for a subcommittee vote on that bill this week, with a full committee vote this week or next.

Lu Pierson

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

No new campaign finance bills were introduced since RSC 3 was published. Below are updates on bills that were reported on in previous issues.

Bills Reported in [RSC 1](#)

HB0112 – Election Law – Campaign Finance Entities – Activity and Forfeiture of Salary passed the House and crossed over to the Senate. Hrg EHEA 3/24

HB0156 - Election Law - Campaign Material - Clarification of Definition received an unfavorable report from Ways and Means

HB0174 - Election Law - Campaign Finance Violations - Injunctive Relief received an unfavorable report from Ways and Means

Bills Reported in [RSC 2](#)

HB 241 - Election Law - State Elected Officials - Campaign Fund-Raising During General Assembly Session - Civil Penalty passed the House with amendments. Assigned to EHEA, no hearing scheduled yet.

Nancy Soreng

REDISTRICTING REFORM

Hearings on each of the redistricting bills introduced this session were held last week (see [RSC 2](#) & [RSC 3](#) for details). LWVMD testified in support of the Governor's bills, SB380/HB 458. No action has been recorded thus far.

Ashley Oleson

ENVIRONMENT: RENEWABLE ENERGY

UPDATES RSC 2 & 3

SB 323/HB 610 - Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act – Reauthorization ([RSC 2](#)) Passed the Senate with amendments, sent to ECM and E&T, Hrg. 2/26, 12 pm. LWVMD testimony submitted in support.

SB 921/ HB 1106 Clean Energy Jobs – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard Revisions ([RSC 3](#)) Hrg. 3/8, 1 pm FIN; Hrg. 3/3, 1 pm ECM. LWVMD submitted testimony in support.

HB 105/SB 173 –Local Government – Clean Energy Loan Programs-Commercial Property Owners- Renewable Energy Projects ([RSC 2](#))

Passed the House (109-29); Passed the Senate (45-0)

HB 440/SB 811 Electric Companies - Installation of Solar Electric Generating Facility - Completion of Interconnection ([RSC 2](#)) Passed the House (138-0); Passed the Senate (47-0)

SB 398/HB 820 Reducing Environmental Degradation for the Underserved Through Community Engagement (The REDUCE Act) ([RSC 2](#)) Hrg, 2/16, 1 pm EHEA; Hrg. 2/24, 1 pm E&T

HB 705/SB 726 Maryland Clean Energy Center - Clean Energy Technology Funding (*Green Bank*) ([RSC 3](#)) Hrg, 2/25, 1 pm ECM; Hrg, 3/8, 1 pm FIN LWVMD testimony submitted in support.

HB 405/SB 018 Sales and Use Tax-Exemption - Energy for Homeowners. ([RSC 3](#)) Hrg. 2/24, 1 pm W&M; Hrg. 1/27, 1 pm, B&T

HB 821 Energy Storage Portfolio Standard (Storage Technology and Electric Power (STEP) Act) ([RSC 3](#)) Hrg. 2/25, 1 pm, ECM

HB 1354 Gas and Electricity – Smart Meters – Customer Rights and Required Reports ([RSC 3](#)) Hrg. 3/11, 1 pm ECM

HB 1412 Real Property – New Residential Property – Information on Renewable Energy Alternatives ([RSC 3](#)) Hrg. 3/8, 1 pm E&T

Betsy Singer

ENVIRONMENT: STORM WATER, POLLUTION & THE BAY

ENVIRONMENT: STORMWATER, BAY, PHOSPHORUS, PESTICIDES, RECYCLING, TREES, & OTHER:

Updates

HB0061 Environment - Solid Waste, Recycling, and Anaerobic Digestion (chair, E&T). Passed House. Hrg, 3/22, EHEA

HB0065 Tree Expert License - Application and Renewal - Repeal of Sunset Provision, (chair E&T). Passed House. Hrg 3/22, EHEA

HB0090 On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems - Operation and Maintenance Costs - Low-Income Homeowners (Lafferty). Passed House. Hrg 3/22, EHEA

HB0122/ SB0132 Critical Area Commission for the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays - Membership From Ocean City (Stein). Passed House. First reading, EHEA. (Mathias) passed Senate. First reading, E&T.

HB0132 State Government - Pollinator Habitat Plans (Lafferty). E&T favorable report with amendments

HB0189/SB0348 Environment - Liquid Waste Hauler - Vehicle License and Inspection (Rosenberg/Gladden). Unfavorable reports by E&T, EHEA; bills withdrawn.

HB0443 Agriculture – Industrial Hemp – Agricultural or Academic Research (Fraser-Hidalgo). E&T favorable report with amendments

HB0829 Agriculture – Cattle, Swine, and Poultry – Use of Antimicrobial Drugs (S. Robinson) Hrg 3/02, E&T vote likely week of 3/07-3/11.

HB1110/SB645 Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund – Allocation of Funds (Frush). Hrg, 3/09, E&T

HB1346/SB0045 Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund - Use of Funds (Simonaire). Hrg, 3/09, E&T

HB1409/SB 348 Payment in Lieu of Taxes - State Forests, State Parks, and Wildlife Management Areas (Otto). Hrg 3/8, E&T

SB0004 Natural Resources - Maryland Environmental Trust – Trustees (Conway). Passed Senate. House, first reading, E&T

SB0061 Natural Resources - Forest Lands and the Chesapeake and Atlantic (Simonaire). Passed Senate. House, first reading, E&T

SB0105 Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority - Name and Authority (chair, EHEA). Passed Senate. House, first reading, E&T

SB198/ HB211 Neonicotinoid Pesticides - Labeling, Signage, and Restrictions on Sales and Use (Pollinator Protection Act of 2016) (Nathan-Pulliam). Special order until 3/7 (Middleton) adopted. (Healey). LWVMD testimony supports this bill.

SB0688 Task Force to Develop a Strategic Plan for State Park Development (Middleton). Cancellation of hrg of 3/01, EHEA

SB0719 Environment – Stormwater Remediation Fees – Municipalities (Young). Hrg, 3/01, EHEA

SB1010/HB1307 Environment - Municipal Water Supply Contamination - Remediation Costs (Hershey), Hrg, 3/15, EHEA.

Linda Silversmith

ENVIRONMENT: HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

HB 394 Public Health – Hydraulic Fracturing Chemicals – Information and Fund (Morheim and 6) ([RSC 3](#)). Hrg, 2/17, 1 p.m. E&T,

HB 1112 Environment - Gas Storage Wells and Facilities - Safety Regulations (Platt) ([RSC 3](#)) Hrg, 3/2, 1 p.m. E&T. LWVMD testimony submitted In support of.

SB 361 Civil Actions – Hydraulic Fracturing Liability Act (Raskin and Zirkin) ([RSC 3](#)). Hrg, 2/16, 1 p.m. JP, Favorable report with amendments, 3/7, JP

Ruth Alice White

TRANSPORTATION

Updates on Bills Previously Reported

HB 182 Vehicle Laws – Accidents Resulting in Injury – Mandatory Drug and Alcohol Testing Unfavorable Report by JUD ([RSC 2](#))

HB 373 – Motor Vehicles – Passenger Seat Belt Requirement – Primary Offense Favorable Report by E T ([RSC 2](#))

HB 547 – Motor Vehicles – Tires, Exterior Lights, and Windshield Wipers – Biennial Inspection Unfavorable Report by E T ([RSC 2](#))

HB 628 – Criminal Procedure – Traffic Stops – Officer Disclosures Unfavorable Report by JUD
([RSC 2](#))

HB 1342 – Drunk Driving Reduction Act of 2016 Favorable Report with amendments by JUD
([RSC 3](#))

Barbara Ditzler

GUN CONTROL

Updates on bills reported in RSC 3

HB1000 (SB1040) Public Safety - Firearms - Terrorist Watchlist ([RSC 3](#))
Hrg 3/16 JPR

HB1002 (SB 906) Weapon-Free Higher Education Zones ([RSC 3](#)) Hrg 3/1 APP. Report:
Favorable with Amendments

Doreen Rosenthal

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Two groups convened by the legislature in 2015 submitted reports in December, the Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Counsel and the Public Safety and Policing Work Group. Omnibus bills addressing these recommendations have been proposed by the leadership.

HB 1016/SB 1026 Public Safety and Policing Workgroup - Recommendations (Speaker/President) Combines legislation concerning police training and accountability based on the recommendations of the Public Safety and Policing Work Group. Major provisions include:

- * an independent Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission in the executive branch that would require efforts be made to recruit women and African American, Hispanic and other minority candidates; emphasis on antidiscrimination and use of force de-escalation in police training and standards for the mandatory psychological evaluation of officers involved in a traumatic incident and the periodic evaluation of all law enforcement officers;
- *a required annual report on the number of serious officer involved incidents and the type of discipline applied;
- *development of best practices for community policing programs in each jurisdiction.
- *a unified, state wide public complaint process;
- *changes in the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights, making it easier for individuals to file a complaint against an officer, and extension of the deadline for filing a complaint from 90 days to 366 days;
- *each officer involved in a use-of-force incident must file a report by the end of the shift.
- *establishes a Community Law Enforcement Program Fund to assist local law enforcement agencies in creating community law enforcement programs;
- *whistleblower protection for law enforcement officers, prohibiting an agency from threatening or taking retaliatory action against an officer who discloses information or seeks remedy under the bill's provisions. Hrg. 2/23 JUD/ Hrg. 3/1 JPR also referred to B&T

The Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council (JRCC), established by the legislature in 2015, was tasked to develop sentencing and corrections policies to reduce the state's prison population, reduce spending on corrections and reinvest in strategies to increase public safety and reduce recidivism.

SB 1006/ HB 1026 Justice Reinvestment Act (President, Speaker) implements the recommendations of the JRCC by changing criminal penalties, sentencing provisions, parole and supervision of offenders. Specifically, the bill:

- *reduces the maximum criminal penalties for drug possession or use;
- *requires a risk and needs assessment for each inmate or person on parole, probation or mandatory supervision resulting in a case plan that includes programming and treatment recommendation;
- *requires drug abuse treatment within thirty days after a court order committing a defendant to treatment as an alternative to incarceration;
- *eliminates the disparity between crack and powder cocaine penalties.
- *reduces the penalties for misdemeanor theft;
- *expands in-prison good behavior and program incentive credits that lead to sentences;
- *strengthens probation and parole supervision; parole hearings should focus on serious, violent or noncompliant nonviolent offenders;
- *allows offenders who are least 60 years old and have served for 10 years to apply for probation;
- *eliminates jail as a penalty for first-time driving offenses such as driving with a suspended license or no license;

The bill establishes a Performance Incentive County Grant Fund to use savings from the bill's provisions for use as grants to the counties for programs such as recidivism reduction, reentry programs and protection of the rights of crime victims. Hrg. 3/2 JPR/ Hrg. 3/4 JUD. Also referred to HGO.

SB1006 /HB 1313 Justice Reinvestment Act - Criminal Penalties (President, Speaker) Increases the maximum penalty for second degree murder from 30 years to 40 years. Eliminates mandatory minimum sentences and reduces maximum penalties for most drug offenses. Hrg. 3/2 JPR/ Hrg. 3/4 JUD , also referred to HGO.

Update on Bills Previously Reported in [RSC 1](#)

HB 153 Law Enforcement Officials' Bill of Rights - Time Period for Filing Administrative Charges - Reduction Unfavorable report - withdrawn

HB 74/ SB 117 Judgeships - Circuit Court and District Courts Favorable report,

SB 194/ HB 496 Ethics Commission, Commission on Judicial Disabilities, Judicial Ethics Committee and Joint Ethics Committee - Duties Favorable report, passed third reading/ favorable report, passed third reading

Update on Bills Previously Reported in [RSC 2](#)

HB 882 Inmates - Life Imprisonment - Parole Reform Favorable report, passed, second hearing
HB 629 Criminal Law - Law Enforcement Officers - Misconduct Unfavorable report, withdrawn

Marlene Cohn

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Update on bills Reported in [RSC 1, 2, and 3](#)

HB 007/SB 031 Family Law – Child Abuse and Neglect – Expungement of Reports and Records – Time Period HB 007 JUD unfav, withdrawn; SB 031 fav with amendments, in House, first reading

SB 077 Human Resources – Transition Planning for Foster Youth in House, first reading

HB 245/SB 310 Child Abuse and Neglect – Failure to Report SB 310 passed 2nd reading

HB 261 Juvenile Causes – Disposition on Delinquency Petition – Required Considerations
JUD unfav

HB304/SB 243 Juvenile Court – Jurisdiction unfavorable in JUD and JPR

Judy Morenoff

MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

No new bills have been introduced in the past 2 weeks, and no decisions have been made on bills already reported. LWVMD testimony has been submitted on 9 bills previously reported on.

Ruth Crystal

HEALTH

Updates from RSC 1, 2 and 3

HB 404/SB 418, Richard E. Israel and Roger (Pip) Moyer End of Life Option Act ([RSC 2](#)) died in Senate Judicial Proceedings (JP).

HB 416, Health Care Decisions Act – End of Life Decisions-Making Informational Booklet, (Del. Hill, et.al) also died in JP.

The Governor's drug bills, **HB 456/SB382 – Prescription Drug Monitoring Program – Revisions,** ([RSC 2](#)) have not moved out of Health, Government Operations (HGO) or Senate Finance. His other **HB 461/SB 97 – Crime – Criminal Gangs – Prohibition and Funding,** ([RSC 3](#)) have been heard in House Judiciary 2/16 and in Senate JP on 2/17 but have not moved.

Del Morhaim's drug bill **HB 1119 – Criminal Law – Use or Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance – De Minimis Quantity** ([RSC 2, 3](#)) was heard in J. on 3/1 and has not had a vote.

His other bills **HB1212 – Public Health – Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Safer Drug Use Facility Program** ([RSC 2, 3](#)) and **HB 1267 – PolyMorphine - Assisted Treatment Pilot Program** ([RSC 2, 3](#)) will be heard together on 3/8 in J.

SB 806, State Board of Physicians – Naturopathic doctors – Establishment of Naturopathic Doctors Formulary Council and Naturopathic Formulary, ([RSC 3](#)) received a favorable report in EEA and has passed the Senate and crossed over to the House.

HB 715/SB 644, Early Identification of Autism Act, ([RSC 3](#)) was heard in HGO on 3/1, and will be heard in F 3/9.

HB 814/SB 849, Task Force to Study the Establishment of Health Courts, ([RSC 3](#)) have not had a vote in House J. and Senate JP.

HB 104, Medical Cannabis – Written Certification – Certifying Providers, (Del. D. Morhaim) ([RSC 1, 3](#)) Passed the House and crossed to Senate F. and then was reassigned to F. and JP.

HB 559 - Vehicle Laws – Protective Headgear Requirement for Motorcycle Riders – Exemption (RSC 2) received an unfavorable report in Environment and Transportation.

SB 91 – State Identified HIV Priorities, (Finance Com for DHMH), (RSC 2) has passed the Senate and moved to House HGO.

Neilson Andrews

LAND USE

SB 927/ HB 1464 Program Open Space Trust Fund Act of 2016 (RSC 3) There was broad support for the bill in the House Appropriations hearing from environmental, park, and local government groups. The Department of Budget and Management testimony requested the bill be amended to provide flexibility to the Administration on the repayment schedule of funds transferred from the POS program in the past. HRG 3/09, 1 p.m. Senate B&T

HB1413 State Government - Legislation Impacting Local Government Land Use Decisions - Economic Impact Analysis (RSC 3) MACO, National Mining Association, and the Director of Planning and Land Use from Carroll County testified in support of the bill.

SB 137/HB276 Income Tax Credit - Preservation and Conservation Easements (RSC 2) passed third reading in Senate B&T (47-0) HRG 2/16, 1 p.m. House W&M

SB181/HB 531 Maryland Strong Manufacturing Development (RSC 2) In the hearings in the House and Senate, the committee discussed broadening the definition of manufacturing to include more types of manufacturing companies rather than only heavy manufacturing companies.

SB559/HB686 Establishing the Strategic Demolition and Smart Growth Impact Fund (RSC 2) In the House Appropriations Committee hearing, noted the Governor included \$21.5 m in the budget supplemental to fund this bill. The House Committee also discussed including a sunset provision in the bill for the legislature to reassess the effectiveness and need for ongoing the funding in the future.

SB 166/HB 243 Land Use Actions - Legislative Bodies - Judicial Review (RSC 2) Environmental and community groups testified in support of the bill to restore property owners rights to challenge comprehensive rezoning decisions in court. A recent court case limited who had standing to challenge these zoning decisions to taxpayers.

Susan Knisely