



**REPORT FROM STATE CIRCLE**  
 Published by the League of Women Voters of Maryland, Inc.  
 111 Cathedral Street, Suite 201, Annapolis MD 21401  
 410-269-0232



[lwmvmd.org](http://lwmvmd.org)    [lwmvmd@verizon.net](mailto:lwmvmd@verizon.net)    [facebook.com/LWVMD](https://www.facebook.com/LWVMD)    [@lwmvmd](https://twitter.com/lwmvmd)

Co-Presidents: Barbara Schnackenberg & Nancy Soreng  
 March 31, 2016

Editor: Judith Heimann  
 Issue No. 5

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

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Administration of Justice	8	Environment: Hydraulic Fracturing	7
Budget	11	Gun Control	7
Campaign Finance	5	Health	10
Children and Families	9	Land Use	11
Education	3	Meeting Basic Human Needs	9
Elections	1	Taxes	11
Environment: Renewable Energy	5	Transparency in Government	2
Environment: Storm Water, Pollution & the Bay	5	Transportation	7

2,832 Bills were introduced during this session which began on January 13 and will end on April on April 11. As of March 25, only 18 bills have passed 3rd Reading in both chambers.

**ELECTIONS**

**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 he is affiliated with a political party that holds a primary election. This bill passed the Senate 47-0 (with a very minor, technical amendment) and was forwarded to the House. The cross-filed House bill (with the same minor, technical amendment) passed out of the House 130-0.

**SB 169 - Voting by Mail – Canvass of Votes**, sponsored by Sen Kagan, authorizes local election boards to commence the canvass of vote-by-mail ballots cast in a special election conducted by mail at 2:00 PM on the date of the special election. The bill passed the Senate 47-0 and was heard in the House Ways & Means Committee on March 23, at which time there were no questions asked of the sponsor. The identical, but not cross-filed, **HB 828** passed the House 91-48

**HB 288 - Attorney General and Comptroller - Special Elections to Fill a Vacancy** proposes a Constitutional Amendment requiring the Governor to appoint an individual to fill a vacancy on a temporary basis in the office of United States Senator, Attorney General or Comptroller from a list of three provided by the State Central Committee of the political party with which the vacating office hold had been affiliated. The bill specifies that if the vacancy after 21 days before the filing deadline for the next election, the appointed person will serve the remained of the term, but if the vacancy occurs 21 days after the filing deadline for the next election, the Governor shall issue a proclamation declaring a special election and general election to fill the vacancy. HB 288 received an unfavorable

report from the Ways & Means Committee. Interestingly, the cross-filed **SB 555 – United State Senator, Attorney General, and Comptroller – Temporary Appointments and Special Elections to fill a Vacancy** was amended by the Senate EHEA Committee to add United States Senator as one of the offices which would be treated in this way. That bill passed the Senate 30-14 and the amended bill will be heard by the House Ways and Means Committee on March 30.

**HB 1009 - Task Force to Study Increased Voter Participation** was amended to increase from two to three the number of Senators appointed to the Task Force by the President of the Senate and the number of Delegates appointed by the Speaker of the House, but specifies that at least one of the Senators and Delegates appointed must be from the minority party. HB 1009 passed the House 104-31, and will be heard in the Senate EHEA Committee on March 31.

The most comprehensive, and most amended, piece of election legislation in the 2016 session is **HB 1007 – Freedom to Vote Act**, sponsored by Del. Luedtke passed the House with bi-partisan support. It will be heard in EHEA on March 31. The original bill has been modified substantially through amendments. The bill now requires that persons who have interacted with the MVA or the Health Care Benefit Exchange within the past five years will be automatically registered to vote. Those voters will be sent two notices by mail allowing them to opt out of registration, and those inadvertently put on the rolls who are not eligible to register to vote will have 90 days to have their registration removed from the rolls. (Advocates are asking for the removal of the 90-day deadline.) HB 1007 also authorizes the State Board of Elections to automatically update voter registration for Maryland voters already on the voter rolls if they receive updated information from the MVA or the Health Benefits Exchange. It has also been amended to say that at the point of service at a voter registration agency, qualified voters will be given the option to “opt in” rather than “opt out” of registration. The bill also expands the number of state agencies that offer voter registration opportunities to clients, including requiring that the Department of Natural Resources develop a process that allows those applying online for a hunting or fishing license be linked to a voter registration website and requiring that the Comptroller and the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation offer a link from their websites to a voter registration website.

*Lu Pierson*

## TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT

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

**HB 217 – Open Meetings Act – Requirements for Providing Agendas** Some amendments were adopted in HGO which would allow a public body to change an agenda after it has been announced if in response to an emergency (but no qualification for what constitutes an emergency), including after the emergency meeting of the public body has been held. Until now a public body has been required to announce the reason for closing a meeting and record the votes of each member of the body on whether to close the meeting. Whether intentional or not, this bill would seem to relax this requirement to the detriment of accountability on the part of members of the public body. In addition, the means for announcing a change in a meeting schedule is not required to be the same as the means for announcing it in the first place. These amendments are steps backward. For these reasons, the League now **opposes** this bill. Passed the House on 3/21/2016 133-4. In EHEA.

### **HB 984/SB 17 – Open Meetings Act – Retention of Minutes and Recordings – Revision**

Generally this legislation provides for retaining minutes of the meetings of public bodies in a format other than written or on tape, i.e. provides for recordings of meetings which must then be held for a minimum of 5 years. In addition it provides for unsealing the record of a closed meeting under certain conditions related to the passage of time when the actions decided in the closed meeting have been taken. Also provides for posting records of public body meetings online. This bill has

passed both the House and the Senate.

#### Update on Bills Reported in RSC 2

**HB 413 – Maryland General Assembly – Pilot Program for Closed Captioning on Video Streaming** (formerly Open Meetings Act-Minutes-Video and Audio Streaming ) This proposed legislation was originally a recognition of technological advancement which would allow audio and video streaming of open sessions under the Open Meetings Act rather than requiring written minutes. By amendments, it now provides for a pilot program for closed captioning of video streaming of meetings. Passed the House on 3/21/2016. 138-0. Hrg. EHEA 3/31.

**SB 370/HB 368 Board of Public Works Budget Transparency Act of 2016** This legislation originally required 10 days advance notice of reductions in an appropriation to be made by the Board of Public Works. The legislation which has now passed both Houses of the legislature provides for 3 days notice which must be provided to the Legislative Policy Committee, the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee. This legislation has now passed both Houses of the Legislature.

**HB 671 Public Information Act-Personnel and Investigatory Records-Formal Complaints Against Public Employees.** Unfavorable report in EHEA; withdrawn.

#### Update on Bills Reported in RSC 3

**HB 823-General Provisions-Open Meetings Act-Enforcement and Training** This bill has been amended to require certain reporting by the Open Meetings Compliance Board in addition to that previously required. This new reporting has to do with violations of the Open Meetings Act, posting this information on the Attorney General's website, including the number of violations of the Act and the public bodies committing them. In addition, providing improved training on the Act is required and those with the stricter training requirements must be present at all meetings held under the Act or the compliance check list on the Attorney General's website must be completed and held with the minutes of the public body. The Open Meetings Compliance Board must develop a means of recording the names of those required to take training on the Open Meetings Act and report to the General Assembly the information gained from these requirements. Generally these provisions are aimed at improved administration of the Open Meetings Act. In the House, passed third reading, 134-0. In EHEA.

#### Update on Bills Reported in RSC 4

**HB 1363-Property Tax-Appeals-Provision of Information to Taxpayers** passed the House 133-0. Hrg. B&T 3/31.

*Barbara Schnackenberg*

## EDUCATION

**HB 1402/SB 1125 Education - Public School Opportunities Enhancement Act** (McIntosh plus 25/Ferguson) provides for grants to local school systems, community schools, and nonprofit organizations to assist in expanding or creating extended day and summer enhancement programs and to expand and support educational programs during the school day. Existing community schools must use a strategy recognized by the Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST) and provide programs in a county in which at least 50 percent of public school students qualify for free lunches. Requires the governor to appropriate \$7.5 million annually for FY 2018 through 2021. Counties must provide matching funds. **HB 1402** passed House with amendments. Favorable report by B&T. **SB 1125** Favorable report with amendments by B&T.

**Update on Bills Reported Previously**

**State Aid to Nonpublic Schools.** The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Aid to Education budget which included the \$5 million for **Student Assistance Organization Business Entity Grants (RSC 1)** was first amended to be contingent upon passing of legislation such as **SB 706 Maryland Education Credit (RSC 3)**. The Conference Committee then amended the budget bill renaming the program **Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST)**. The program provides scholarships for students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches to attend eligible nonpublic schools. MSDE will administer the grant program. Eligible schools must participate in the Non-Public Schools Program for Textbooks and Computer Hardware and Software, provide more than pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs, employ certified teachers in all core subject areas, administer assessments for all students and not discriminate in student admissions on the basis of race, color, national origin or sexual orientation. MSDE would compile a list of eligible applicants based on family income as a percent of federal poverty level. A BOOST Advisory Board would review the list and determine scholarship award amounts. The scholarship award may not exceed the lesser of the statewide average per pupil expenditure or the tuition of the nonpublic school. MSDE may use \$150,000 of the appropriation for administrative costs. LWVMD opposes state aid to nonpublic schools.

The **Non-public Schools Program for Textbooks and Computer Hardware and Software Program** was amended to provide the following maximums: \$65 per eligible student, \$95 per student if 20 to 40 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunches, \$155 per student if more than 40 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunches.

**HB 285 State Education Aid - Real Property Valuation - Tax Increment Financing. (RSC 2).** Passed House with amendments. Hrg. 3/22, B&T

**HB 668/SB 584 Preschool Development Grants - Expansion Grants - Required State Funding. HB 668** Passed House. Hrg. 3/29, 1 pm B&T; **SB 584** Passed Senate, HRU.

**HB 999/SB 905 Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (RSC 3).** **HB 999** passed House with amendments. Hrg. 3/31, 1 pm B&T; **SB 905** passed Senate. Hrg. 3/31, 1 pm W&M. LWVMD testified in support of this bill.

**HB 1466 Task Force to Study Restorative Justice Discipline Practices in Maryland Public Schools (RSC 4).** Passed House with amendments to substitute representatives of the Maryland PTA, Advocates for Children and Youth and a teacher in a school using restorative discipline practices for others originally listed. Hrg. 3/30, 1 pm EHEA.

**SB 493 Teacher Induction, Retention, and Advancement Act of 2016. (RSC 2, 4)** Passed Senate with amendments. Hrg. 3/24 W&M.

**SB 706 Maryland Education Credit (RSC 3).** Passed Senate. Hrg. 3/31, 1 pm W&M. LWVMD testified against this bill and signed onto a letter from the Coalition for Public Schools opposing this bill and other aid to nonpublic schools.

**SB 910 Maryland Education Development Collaborative – Established (RSC 3).** Passed Senate with amendments. HRU.

*Lois Hybl*

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE**

There has been no more movement of any of the campaign finance bills that were reported in [RSC 1](#), [2](#) and [3](#). Hopefully, there will be some positive developments to report in RSC 6.

*Nancy Soreng*

**ENVIRONMENT: RENEWABLE ENERGY****UPDATES [RSC 2 & 3](#)**

**SB 323/HB 610 - Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act – Reauthorization ([RSC 2](#))** Passed the Senate, 38-8, Passed the House 102-37, LWVMD priority.

**SB 921/ HB 1106 Clean Energy Jobs – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard Revisions ([RSC 3](#))** Passed the House 92-43, The word “Jobs” was deleted from the title, reflecting deletion of workforce development and funding, which may move forward in another bill for job training programs. Hrg, 4/03, 1 pm FIN. LWVMD priority.

**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](#))** Unfavorable by EHEA.

**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

**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](#))** Unfavorable by ECM; Withdrawn.

**HB 1354 Gas and Electricity – Smart Meters – Customer Rights and Required Reports ([RSC 3](#))**  
Unfavorable by ECM

**HB 1412 Real Property – New Residential Property – Information on Renewable Energy Alternatives ([RSC 3](#))** Referred to interim study by E&T.

*Betsy Singer*

**ENVIRONMENT: STORM WATER, POLLUTION & THE BAY****ENVIRONMENT: STORMWATER, BAY, PHOSPHORUS, PESTICIDES, RECYCLING, TREES, & OTHER: UPDATES**

For HB0122, see SB0132; for HB0211, see SB0198; for HB1409, see SB0263; for SB0057, see HB0031; for SB0748, see HB1428;

**HB0031 Community Cleanup and Greening Act of 2016** (the “Bag Bill”) (Lierman) Unfavorable report, E&T on 3/18 (just 6 or 7 yes votes). Also see SB0057

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

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

**HB0132 State Government - Pollinator Habitat Plans** (Lafferty). E&T favorable report with amendments; passed House; EHEA favorable report

**HB0178 Natural Resources - Roadside Trees - Preservation and Protection** (Lafferty). Unfavorable report, E&T.

**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.

**HB1428 Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act – Application** (Rose) Both EHEA in the Senate and E&T in the House gave unfavorable reports on this proposal to extend the time period for “grandfathering” under the septic act. See also **SB0748** (Ready).

**SB0105 Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority - Name and Authority** (chair, EHEA). Passed Senate with amendments. Hrg 3/23 E&T

**SB0113 Department of Agriculture - Bees, Bee Colonies, and Used Bee Equipment - Transportation and Shipment** (chair, EHEA). Passed Senate. E&T favorable report.

**SB0132 Critical Area Commission for the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays - Membership From Ocean City** (Mathias) Passed Senate. E&T, favorable report with amendments. Also **HB0122**

**SB0198 Neonicotinoid Pesticides - Labeling, Signage, and Restrictions on Sales and Use (Pollinator Protection Act of 2016)** (Nathan-Pulliam). Passed Senate with amendments. Hrg 3/30, E&T. **HB0211** (Healey). Passed House. First reading EHEA. LWVMD testimony supports this bill, preferably the original House version.

**SB0263 Payment in Lieu of Taxes - State Forests, State Parks, and Wildlife Management Areas** (Edwards). Passed Senate. Hrg 3/30 E&T Also **HB1409**

### **Update on 3 key agricultural bills**

News reports on 3 agricultural bills favored by environmentalists suggest only a very slim hope of passages. The House and Senate versions of the Poultry Litter Management Act (**HB0599/SB0496**) have not passed out of either EHEA or E&T. The idea is for the industry rather than each contract farmer to take responsibility for the 228,000 tons of manure produced annually. Environmentalists also want to strip poultry litter from the list of renewable energy sources eligible for top-tier energy credits, but that effort (**HB1287/SB0867**), received unfavorable reports in the Senate Finance and House Economic Matters committees. The Farmers' Rights Act (**SB0761**), which was designed to give growers more leverage in their contracts with big poultry companies, also failed to make it out

of its House and Senate committees. The bill promised, among other things, a requirement of 90 days' written notice of a contract cancellation, whistleblower protection, ending the tournament system, and barring companies from retaliating against growers for exercising their newfound rights. No Maryland farmers testified in favor of the bill in Annapolis.

*Linda Silversmith*

## ENVIRONMENT: HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

### **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. Unanimous unfavorable report from E&T 3/18.

**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. Senate passed 3/17. First reading in House E&T.

*Ruth Alice White*

## TRANSPORTATION

### Updates on Bills Previously Reported

**HB 08 – Task Force to Study Issues Related to the Use of Self-Driving Vehicles** Unfavorable report by E T ([RSC 1](#))

**HB 1010 – Maryland Transit Administration Oversight and Planning Board**, 3<sup>rd</sup> reading passed 84-15 E T after being heavily amended including composition of Board – 4 Baltimore City, 3 Baltimore County, 2 Anne Arundel, 1 Howard, 1 Harford, 1 Citizens Advocacy Council for MTA, 1 MARC riders, 1 Accessibility transportation advocates, 2 General Assembly, (non-voting) 2 Secretary of Transportation. Hrg. FIN 4/05 ([RSC 3](#))

**HB 1013 / SB 908 – Maryland Open Transportation Investment Decision Act of 2016**, 3<sup>rd</sup> reading passed 84-51 with amendments APP. Hrg. 3/29 B&T ([RSC 3](#))

**SB056 – Transportation – Chesapeake Bay Bridge Crossing – Environmental Impact Study – Cost Estimate and Payment**, 3<sup>rd</sup> reading passed 41-3 with amendments FIN. Hrg. 3/31 ET ([RSC 1](#))

**SB 585 / HB723 - Transportation – Highway User Revenues – Distribution to Municipalities**, 3<sup>rd</sup> reading passed with amendments 46-0 B&T. Hrg 3/31 E T ([RSC 3](#))

**SB 907 / HB672 – Transportation - Harry W. Nice Memorial Potomac River Bridge Replacement**, 3<sup>rd</sup> reading passed with amendments 30-14 FIN. Hrg. 4/1 E T ([RSC 3](#))

*Barbara Ditzler*

## GUN CONTROL

**SB 944 (HB1340) Firearms - Applications - Notification and Reporting** ([RSC 3](#))  
Hrg 3/9 JPR Report: Unfavorable; Hrg 3/15 JUD Report: Unfavorable

**HB 184 Public Safety - Firearm Application** ([RSC 1](#)) Hrg 3/30 JUD; Hrg 3/30 JPR

**HB 879 (SB 742) Public Safety - Imitation Firearms - Prohibition** ([RSC 3](#)) Unfavorable Report by JUD: Withdrawn

**HB1002 (SB 906) Weapon-Free Higher Education Zones ([RSC 3](#))** Third Reading Passed (81-54)

**HB1263 Possession of Loaded Handgun or Regulated Firearm - Enhanced Penalties ([RSC 3](#))**  
3/15 JUD Report: Unfavorable

*Doreen Rosenthal*

## **ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**

### **Update on bills reported in [RSC 1](#)**

**HB 221 Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Whistleblower Protection** Unfavorable report JUD (incorporated into **SB 1006/HB 1026 Justice Reinvestment Act**)

All bills concerning uncontested elections for circuit court judges received unfavorable reports, including:

**HB 223 Circuit Court Judges - Election**

**HB 224 Circuit Court Judges - Election**

**SB 179/HB 448 Circuit Court Judges - Selection, Qualifications and Term of Office**

### **Update on bills reported in [RSC 2](#)**

**HB 475 Courts - Grand Juries - Prohibited Action** Unfavorable report JUD

**SB 502/ HB 481 Judges - Mandatory Retirement Age** Favorable report with amendments JPR

### **Update on bills reported in [RSC 3](#)**

**HB 341/ SB 800 Commission to Study the Disproportionate Impact on Minorities**  
Unfavorable report JUD/ Unfavorable report JPR, withdrawn

**HB 1180/ SB 946 Correctional Services - Restrictive Housing - Report** Senate: passed with amendments (46-0) Hrg. 3/20 JPR, House: passed with amendments (90-45) Hrg. 3/20 JUD. Amendments include a definition of "restrictive housing: "a form of physical separation in which the inmate is placed in a locked room for approximately 22 hours or more out of a 24 hour period." Also, "gender" is included as a category that must be reported, and "ethnicity" is removed.

**HB 1173 Criminal Law - Sentencing - Subsequent Offenders** Unfavorable report JUD

**HB 857 Law Enforcement Officers - Alcohol and Drug Testing - Required** Unfavorable report JUD

### **Update on bills reported in [RSC 4](#)**

**HB 1016/ SB 1026 Public Safety and Policing Workgroup** House: passed with amendments (92-44): Amendments include establishing the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission under the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, rather than as an independent entity in the executive branch; including sheriffs acting as law enforcement officers and changing the whistleblowing protection by removing "threats" while retaining "actions".

**SB 1005/ HB 1312 Justice Reinvestment Act** Senate: bill passed with amendments. Sent to House. Amendments include limiting judge's discretion in determining sentences for parole violation



to cases where the violator is considered a public safety risk. Rather than all nonviolent offenders being eligible for parole after serving 25 % of their sentences, only low risk offenders would be eligible. Analyst's project that the changes would add to the current prison population and cut down on projected savings. The bill now goes to the House, where changes can be made.

*Marlene Cohn*

## CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Update on bills Reported in [RSC 1, 2, 3](#) and [4](#)

**HB 007/SB 031 Family Law – Child Abuse and Neglect – Expungement of Reports and Records – Time Period ([RSC 1](#))** HB 007 JUD unfav, withdrawn; SB 031 passed Senate with amendments, Hrg 3/22 JUD

**SB 077 Human Resources – Transition Planning for Foster Youth ([RSC 1](#))** passed Senate, Hrg 3/22 JUD

**HB 245/SB 310 Child Abuse and Neglect – Failure to Report ([RSC 3](#))** HB 245 passed House, in Senate first reading. SB 310 passed Senate, Hrg 3/31 JUD

**HB 772/SB 262 Family Law – Protecting the Resources of Children in State Custody ([RSC 2](#))** HB 772 unfav report JUD, withdrawn. SB 262 favorable with amendments JPR

**HB 825/SB 577 Child Protection – Reporting – Threat of Harm ([RSC 3](#))** unfavorable reports JUD & JPR

*Judy Morenoff*

## MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

Two of the bills on human trafficking that were reported on in [RSC 2](#) received unfavorable reports **HB219** received an unfavorable report from Judiciary.

**SB527** received an unfavorable report from Judicial Proceedings. Several bills on the Earned Income Tax Credit have been reported on.

Both **HB1047 ([RSC 3](#))** and **HB 452 ([RSC 2](#))** passed in the House and will be heard in Budget and Taxation on 3/29.

**SB840**, which started out as a bill on EITC, got rewritten to also provide tax reductions for wealthy Marylanders, it passed the Senate and is awaiting a hearing in House Ways and Means. Several bills on wages and pay have been reported on.

**HB1003 ([RSC 3](#))** passed in the House and will be heard in Finance on 3/31. The companion bill, **SB481** passed the Senate, meaning they should also approve hb1003. Others received unfavorable reports.

**HB1175** and **HB1372** (both [RSC 3](#)) received unfavorable reports from Economic Matters.

**SB664** received an unfavorable report from Finance.

**SB223** that dealt with discrimination by a place of public accommodation received an unfavorable report from Judicial Proceedings. The companion bill **HB1269** received an unfavorable report from

Health and government Operations.

**SB758 (RSC 3)** that increases the minimum benefit in the food stamp program passed in the Senate and will be heard by Appropriations on 3/29. The companion bill HB445 will be heard in Finance on 3/31

*Ruth Crystal*

## HEALTH

**HB 404/SB 418, Richard E. Israel and Roger (Pip) Moyer End of Life Option Act (RSC 2, 4)** died in Senate Judicial Proceedings (JP) and appears dead in House Health and Government Affairs (HGO).

The Governor's drug bills, **HB 456/SB382 – Prescription Drug Monitoring Program – Revisions, (RSC 3, 4)** and **HB 461/SB 97 – Crime – Criminal Gangs – Prohibition and Funding, (RSC 3, 4)** appear to be stalled in committee in both houses. They did not cross by the cross-over date.

Del Morhaim's drug bills **HB 1119 – Criminal Law – Use or Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance – De Minimis Quantity (RSC 2, 3, 4)**, **HB1212 – Public Health – Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Safer Drug Use Facility Program (RSC 2, 3, 4)** and **HB 1267 – Poly-Morphone - Assisted Treatment Pilot Program (RSC 2, 3, 4)** all received an unfavorable report.

The Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform is strongly supporting **HB1318/SB929 Health Benefit Plans – Network Access Standards and Provider Network Directories**. Both bills have passed their respective houses with amendments and crossed over. They will need to be amended to agree or they will go to conference. They are similar to but more extensive than Sen. Kelley's **SB 334 – Health Insurance – Access to Accurate Provider Directories (RSC 2)**, which is still in Fin and may have been subsumed into the other bills.

**SB 806, State Board of Physicians – Naturopathic doctors – Establishment of Naturopathic Doctors Formulary Council and Naturopathic Formulary, (RSC 3, 4)** will be heard in HGO 3/29.

**HB 715/SB 644, Early Identification of Autism Act, (RSC 3, 4)** No action in either house committee.

**HB 814/SB 849, Task Force to Study the Establishment of Health Courts, (RSC 3, 4)** withdrawn in both houses.

**HB 104, Medical Cannabis – Written Certification – Certifying Providers, (Del. D. Morhaim) (RSC 1, 3, 4)** no action in Senate JP or Fin.

**SB 91 – State Identified HIV Priorities, (Finance Com for DHMH), (RSC 2)** no action in the HGO.

**SB 258/HB 710 – Workers Compensation – Payment for Medical Services and Treatment, (RSC 2)** received an unfavorable report in Economic Matters.

**HB394 – Public Health – Hydraulic Fracturing Chemicals – Information and Fund, (Del. D. Morhaim) (HB 952 in 2015) (RSC 2)** is still in Environment and Transportation.

*Neilson Andrews*

## LAND USE

**SB 137/HB276 Income Tax Credit - Preservation and Conservation Easements (RSC 2)** House W&M passed with amendments limiting total aggregate amount of credits claimed by pass-through entities to not exceed \$200,000 and Board of Public Works to approve tax credits on first come, first serve basis. HRG 3/29, 1 p.m. Senate B&T

**SB559/HB686 Establishing the Strategic Demolition and Smart Growth Impact Fund (RSC 2)** Passed House Appropriations 2/23/2016 with amendment on grant matching requirements of \$1 of local resources for every \$4 of State and Federal funds. HRG 2/23, 1 p.m. Senate B&T

**SB 166/HB 243 Land Use Actions - Legislative Bodies - Judicial Review (RSC 2)** Unfavorable report by House E&T; withdrawn by sponsor 3/16/2016

*Susan Knisely*

## BUDGET

On March 10, 2016, the Governor submitted Supplemental Budget Number 3 totaling \$128 million. The largest proposed expenditure was for \$31.7 million for a Biomedical Sciences and Engineering

Facility at the Universities of Shady Grove. Other significant proposed expenditures include \$13 million in declining enrollment grants for schools with declining enrollments in addition to those included in the original budget submission; \$13.7 million to provide funds for the Department of

Human Services Shared Human Services Platform project (an IT project); \$13.8 million to cover a shortfall in the CHIP program; and \$12.1 million to implement a collective bargaining agreement with the State Law Enforcement Officers Labor Alliance. Much of the funding for these projects would come from \$58 million not needed by the Medicaid program due to declining enrollments.

Both the Senate and House have now passed the Governor's \$42 billion budget with near unanimity. The changes made to the budget were relatively minor. There are a number of differences in the bills (reportedly small) which must be resolved by Conference Committee.

Under **HB449 Relief from Budget Mandates** Speaker for the Administration plus others and **SB 375** President for the Administration plus others, beginning in fiscal 2019, the Governor would not be required to include an appropriation in an amount to exceed the FY 2018 appropriation regardless of prior legislation mandating amounts that exceed the FY 2018 appropriation. There are certain exceptions such as public education, contributions to the pension plan, principal and interest on the state debt, etc. It may not be implemented if the revenue estimate exceeds 2% of the previous year. In any case, the General Assembly cannot enact an increase in spending for a program unless it reduces or repeals spending for the same fiscal year. **B&T 2/24, App 3/8.**

## TAXES

**HB0227** Passed by the House.

All other bills reported on are still in committee.

*Barbara Hankins*