



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



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

Co-Presidents: Barbara Schnackenberg & Nancy Soreng
 April 21, 2016

Editor: Judith Heimann
 Issue No. 6

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Administration of Justice	10	Environment: Storm Water, Pollution & the Bay	8
Budget & Taxation	1	Gun Control	10
Campaign Finance	5	Health	12
Children and Families	11	Land Use	13
Education	4	Meeting Basic Human Needs	11
Elections	2	Redistricting Reform	7
Environment: Hydraulic Fracturing	9	Transparency in Government	3
Environment: Renewable Energy	7	Transportation	9

As reported in [RSC 5](#) 2817 bills were filed, the final count that passed was 834.

BUDGET & TAXATION

Operating Budget

The Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Bill (**SB190**) provides \$42.2 billion in appropriations for fiscal 2017, an increase of \$2.0 billion (4.9%) above fiscal 2016. General funds increased by \$965.7 or 5.9% over the fiscal 2016 appropriation. All mandates were fully funded. The budget as passed is slightly below the recommendations of the Spending Affordability Committee. The largest increase for the general fund is for Medicaid – partly due to less use of special funds and the first year of State support for Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act. Aid to education increased \$123.2 million because of full funding of the Geographic Cost of Education Index and increases for retirement and other statutory funding requirements. While there is no provision for a general salary increase for state employees, merit raises are funded. The workforce is scheduled to decrease by 543 positions to 80,331. Most of the positions are unidentified and the governor is required to identify those positions to be eliminated by July 1. Enhanced payment of \$150 million in excess of actuarial requirements for the employee retirement fund will allow the fund to approach full funding more quickly.

Special funds will increase to \$8.8 billion, an increase of 4.7%. About one third of these funds will be used for transportation and environmental capital projects. Federal funding increases by \$541.7 million or 4.7%. Additional spending for transportation projects such as the Purple Line and new buses account for nearly 60% of the increase. The next largest increase is for the Medicaid program because of increases in provider rates. Funding for higher education will increase by 2.1%.

This includes funds to hold in-state undergraduate tuition growth to 2%. State aid to local government will be \$7.4 billion, a 3.7% increase from this past year. By far, the largest portion will be for local education - \$5.5 billion. Retirement payments will be \$834 million, the next largest amount.

Capital Budget

The Capital Budget passed by the General Assembly totals \$4.369 billion of which \$2.807 billion is for transportation programs. \$538 million will be funded on a pay-as-you go basis in the operating budget. The balance will be paid for with \$1.1 billion in general obligation bonds and the balance with various other specified types of bonds.

HB 0468 Public Works Transparency Act requiring the Board of Public Works to give three days notice before reducing budget appropriations PASSED.

No other significant tax bills were passed by the General Assembly.

Barbara Hankins

ELECTIONS

The most interested election-related legislation of the Session was the subject of many amendments, hearings and conferences. **SB 350 and HB 1007** began as very ambitious and comprehensive legislation to greatly expand voter registration in Maryland. The bills envisioned adding Maryland to a list of just a few states that provide Automatic Voter Registration – allowing the State Board of Elections to use data from the MVA to “automatically” register eligible citizens to vote, forwarding a notice to the newly registered, and allowing the registrant to opt-out of registration or select a political party with which to affiliate by returning a notice to the election board. Although heavily amended, thanks to the dedicated work of the League and other election reform advocates, a version of **HB 1007** passed both houses on the last day of the legislative session. The bill requires the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, Dept. of Human Resources and Mobility Certification Office in the Dept. of Transportation to implement electronic voter registration systems (forwarding registration information directly to SBE) by December 2017 and local social services agencies to do so by December 2019. **HB 1007** also expands automatic registration for transactions at MVA, and expands voter registration opportunities by requiring public institutions of higher education, the Dept. of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, the Dept. of Natural Resources and De Dept. of Veterans Affairs to provide a link from the online portals of these agencies to the state’s online voter registration system. The legislation designates all thirty-two one-stop career centers within DLLR as voter registration agencies, where customers must be offered the opportunity to register to vote using a paper form. Finally, the bill requires SBE and the Dept. of Information Technology to conduct a study to identify additional agencies where voter registration opportunities could be expanded.

Very early in the session, both houses overrode a gubernatorial veto of last year’s passed legislation in increase voting opportunities for ex-felons. **HB 980 of the 2015 session** is now Maryland law and allows persons convicted of a felony to register to vote after they have served their sentence of incarceration. They no longer have to wait until they have completed any sentence of parole or probation.

SB 170/HB 344 passed and will require that the Maryland voter registration application include a notification that the applicant must affiliate with a political party if she wishes to vote in the party’s primary, caucus or convention. The substantial increase in the number of voters registering as “unaffiliated” with a party makes this addition to the application an important education tool, alerting potential voters to the limitations of not affiliating with a party.

The number of early voting centers in the State's most populous counties will increase based on the passage of **HB 1008**. A county with 125,000 – 200,000 voters must have 3 early voting centers, a county with 200,000 – 300,000 voters must establish 4 early voting centers, a county with 300,000 – 450,000 must have 7 early voting centers and jurisdictions with over 450,000 voters will have 11 centers. Counties with fewer than 200,000 votes are given the option to establish 1 additional early voting center.

As a result of the passage of **HB 260**, we should see on this fall's General Election ballot a constitutional amendment that changes the way vacancies in the office of Attorney General and Comptroller are filled. Currently, if a vacancy occurs in either of these offices, the Governor appoints a replacement, with consent of the Senate in the case of the Comptroller. This bill proposes to amend the Constitution to require the Governor to make appointments to fill a vacancy for Attorney General or Comptroller from a list of three individuals submitted by the State Central Committee of the party with which the previous official was affiliated. The appointed individual serves for the remainder of the term, unless the vacancy occurred 21 days before the filing deadline for a regular statewide election, in which case a special election is held at the same time as that election. Current law allows the Governor to appoint a person to fill a vacancy in the office of U.S. Senator, but this Constitutional amendment, if passed, would also require the appointee be from a list of three names submitted by the State Central Committee of the party with which the previous office hold was affiliated.

Between 2012 and 2014, the General Assembly passed several pieces of legislation authorizing the use of vote-by-mail special elections to fill vacancies in the office of U.S. Representative and various local offices. Under current law, the ballots may not be counted until the morning after the special election, but **SB 169 and HB 828** passed this year, allowing the ballots to be counted beginning at 2:00 pm on the date of the special election. The bill also requires that the public be allowed to observe the canvass and that the election results be kept secret until after 12:00 on the day after the special election.

Lu Pierson

TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT

At the beginning of the 2016 session, we hoped for bills that would provide better enforcement of the provisions of the Open Meetings Act along with better penalty provisions for failure to follow the Act. None of the transparency bills that passed dealt with these issues.

Bills Awaiting the Governor's Action

HB 217 – Open Meetings Act – Requirements for Providing Agendas

HB 368/SB 370 Board of Public Works Budget Transparency Act of 2016

HB 413 – Maryland General Assembly – Pilot Program for Closed Captioning on Video Streaming (originally introduced as Open Meetings Act-Minutes-Video and Audio Streaming).

HB 984/SB 17 -- Open Meetings Act—Retention of Minutes and Recordings –Revision

HB 1363-Property Tax—Appeals-Provision of Information to Taxpayers

Bills That Did Not Pass Some of these did deal with provisions to reinforce training on provisions of the Open Meetings Act and/or enforcement of the provisions of the Act. None of these made it through both Houses of the legislature.

HB 823-General Provisions-Open Meetings Act-Enforcement and Training Although this bill passed the House by a vote of 134-0 on 3/19/2016, it did not even get a hearing in EHEA.

HB 1088/SB 754 Open Meetings Act-Annual Reporting Requirement, Enforcement and Training These bills were heard in committee but no further action was taken on either bill.

HB 250/SB 528 General Provisions-Open Meetings-Required Training and Certificate of Compliance These bills were heard in committee but no further action taken.

Barbara Schnackenberg

EDUCATION

Funding

HB 285 State Education Aid-Real Property Valuation-Tax Increment Financing ([RSC 2, 4](#)) passed with amendments. It is designed to prevent schools in low-wealth districts from losing state aid due to any Tax Increment Financing (TIF) arrangements that impact the measurement of the districts' wealth in FY2018 and 2019.

HB 999/SB 905 Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education ([RSC 3, 5](#)) passed. A formal body of legislators and other appointees will be tasked with digesting the reports and recommendations from the Study of Adequacy of Funding for Education in the State of Maryland, making any other recommendations on legislation and policy initiatives to enhance both the availability of innovative educational opportunities and the adequacy and equity of State funding for prekindergarten through grade 12 of public education in the State and issue a final report by December 2017.

HB 1426 Education - Maryland Public Education Fund - Income Tax Checkoff ([RSC 3](#)) received no committee action.

Public School Construction

The capital budget includes \$280 million for public school construction. When introduced, the fiscal 2017 capital budget included \$6.1 million in General Obligation (GO) bond funding for the **Agging Schools Program**. This funding was deleted, and then included in the operating budget as pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) funding *if the funds are transferred from the State reserve fund by the Governor*.

Aid to Private Schools

Of the bills designed to give a tax credit to businesses which donate to a private school scholarship fund (**HB 453, HB 1213, HB 1343/SB 706**), only **SB 706** passed the Senate, but none received a vote in the House Ways and Means Committee. However, as detailed in [RSC 5](#), the Budget Conference Committee amended the budget to create a \$5 million scholarship program for students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch to attend private and religious schools that currently receive state funding for computers and textbooks.

The **Nonpublic Textbook Program** receives \$6 million in fiscal 2017 as it did in FY 2016.

The **Nonpublic Agging Schools Program**, which was first established in the fiscal 2014 capital budget, provides \$3.5 million in GO bond funding for school construction projects eligible under the

Aging Schools Program, including school security improvements, to nonpublic schools that are also eligible for the Nonpublic Textbook Program.

Pre-Kindergarten

The importance of pre-kindergarten was highlighted during the session, but the \$85 million fiscal note deterred legislators from acting on **HB 1433/SB 461 Education – Prekindergarten Students – Funding (RSC 3, 2)** in committee. However, **SB 369/HB 1095 Education - Prekindergarten Programs - Notification of Eligibility by Local Departments of Social Services (RSC 2, 3, 4)** did pass as well as **HB 668/SB 584 Preschool Development Grants - Expansion Grants- Required State Funding (RSC 3, 5)** mandating \$11.1 m. in state funding over two years to match \$30 m. in federal grants for current pre-k programs, serving additional children.

Community Schools

HB 1139 The Maryland Community School Strategy for Excellence in Public Education Act (RSC 3) passed as **Education - Community School Strategy - Required Notice and Support** in severely amended form, changing it from a bill requiring funding for community school planning, coordinators, and services to a bill only requiring MSDE to notify and provide school districts with technical support to apply for federal funding for community schools and out-of-school programming.

HB 1402/SB 1125 passed as the **Public School Opportunities Enhancement Act (RSC 5)**. It allocates \$7.5 million a year for FY 2018 through 2021 for out-of-school programs and community school strategies in districts with majority low income student populations. Local districts must provide matching funds.

Accountability and Teaching

SB 493 Teacher Induction, Retention, and Advancement Act of 2016 (RSC 2, 4, 5) passed.

SB 910 Maryland Education Development Collaborative – Established (EDCo) (RSC 3, 5) passed. EDCo, an advisory group to MSDE, will study and disseminate ideas on innovative school design and 21st Century learning that promote socioeconomically and racially diverse schools and partnerships with businesses and other institutions.

While **HB 141/SB 407 Education - Education Accountability Program - Limits on Testing (RSC 1, 2)** limiting testing to 2% of annual instruction time, did not pass, **HB 657/SB 794** did pass. It changes the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment required for all to a sampling of students. Also, **HB 412/SB 533** requires school districts to publicly disclose all mandated tests and how much time they take away from instruction each year.

HB 1466 Task Force to Study Restorative Justice Discipline Practices in Maryland Public Schools (RSC 4, 5) passed the House but received an unfavorable report from EHEA.

Lois Hybl

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

From [RSC 1](#)

SB0002 - Real-Time Transparency Act of 2016 – No action, no vote.

HB0112 – Election Law – Campaign Finance Entities – Activity and Forfeiture of Salary was amended in the House and the name of the bill was changed to “Election Law – Campaign Finance Entities – Activity”. The penalty (that applied only to elected state officials) which would be to forfeit

their salary as long as they were in violation of the new reporting requirements in this bill, was amended out. It was approved as amended in both chambers and is enrolled.

HB0156 - Election Law - Campaign Material - Clarification of Definition received an unfavorable report from the Ways and Means Committee so it did not advance.

HB0174 - Election Law - Campaign Finance Violations - Injunctive Relief received an unfavorable report from the Ways and Means Committee so it did not advance.

HB0200 Election Law - Legislative Newsletters - Distribution by Electronic Mail - No action, no vote.

From [RSC 2](#)

HB 241/SB0408 - Election Law - State Elected Officials - Campaign Fund-Raising During General Assembly Session - Civil Penalty passed both chambers with only two small technical amendments. It is awaiting the Governor's signature.

HB0297- Election Law - Business Entity Campaign Contributions – Prohibition - No action, no vote.

SB0290 - Election Laws - Loans to a Campaign Finance Entity - No action, no vote.

SB0459 - Campaign Finance - Ballot Issue Committees - Prospective Questions passed both chambers with one small technical amendment. It is awaiting the Governor's signature.

SB0501 - Shareholders United Act - No action, no vote

SB0428 - Public Funding and Small Donor Act for General Assembly Elections - No action, no vote.

[RSC 3](#)

HB1164 - Election Law – Contribution to a Candidate for Judicial Office - No action, no vote.

HB1201 – Election Law – Campaign Finance – Coordinated Expenditures - No action, no vote.

HB1230 – Departmental Secretaries – Solicitation of Contributions or Donations – Passed on the floor of the House and was referred to EHEA. There was a hearing but no action, no vote.

SB0973 – Campaign Finance – Public Officials – Solicitation of Contributions or Donations – Passed on the floor of the Senate with Amendments and was sent to Ways and Means in the House. It received a favorable report from W&M, but it was further amended. The bill passed the 2nd Reading on the floor of the House but another amendment was added on the floor. It passed 3rd Reading, as amended by W&M and on the House floor, but never went back to the Senate for concurrence, nor was a conference committee appointed. So, in order to become law, it will have to be brought back next year.

No new Campaign Finance bills were reported on in either [RSC4](#) or [RSC5](#).

Nancy Soreng

REDISTRICTING REFORM

There has been a lot of buzz about the topic of redistricting reform during this legislative session. This was in large part due to the efforts of Governor Hogan in creating a commission to study redistricting in Maryland, and propose changes to the current system which would reflect the desires of Marylanders, and make the process fair and representative of democratic values. The administration filed **SB 380/HB 458 General Assembly and Congressional Legislative Redistricting and Apportionment Commission** (RSC 2) in hopes of putting a constitutional amendment on the ballot in November. As this is written on Sine Die, it is clear that this goal will not be attained this session. In fact, none of the eight redistricting bills introduced this session - **SB 474 Congressional Districting Process**; **SB 762 Potomac Compact for Fair Representation**; **SJ 3/HJ 4 United States Congress – Call to Congress and the President to Act on Redistricting Reform**; **HB 408 Commission to Study Legislative and Congressional Districting**; **HB 467 Legislative and Congressional Districting – Standards and Processes** ([RSC 2](#)) – received a vote in committee. However, redistricting reform has certainly come to the forefront of Maryland's legislative scene once again, garnering attention throughout the state and [even at the national level](#). Governor Hogan has gone so far as to [write to President Obama](#), appealing to him to use his influence with Democrats in Maryland to promote a redistricting process that is reflective of the people's voice, not partisan politics.

Democratic members of the General Assembly have called for a national answer, or at least a compact with another state whose legislature has been gerrymandered in favor of Republicans. Senator Raskin – sponsor of SB 762 – recently [reported to the Washington Post](#) that Governor Hogan was very receptive to compromise which would support a reform compact with Virginia, or another “red state”.

Nevertheless, as Maryland's legislative session draws to a close on the day of this writing, redistricting reform will see no action this term. Hopefully, legislators and the Governor see this as an opportunity to keep the discussion going, get back to the drawing board, and come up with stronger proposals next year.

Ashley Oleson

ENVIRONMENT: RENEWABLE ENERGY

UPDATES [RSC 2 & 3](#)

SB 323/HB 610 - Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act – Reauthorization ([RSC 2](#)) Passed and was signed by the Governor, 4/4/16. This Act passed the Senate 38-8 and the House, 102-37. It requires a new climate plan by Dec. 31, 2018 to meet a new goal of 40 percent reduction in carbon emissions from 2006 levels by 2030. Maryland is now just behind New York and California in climate goals. LWVMD priority.

SB 921/ HB 1106 Clean Energy – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard Revisions ([RSC 3](#)) Passed the House 92-43 and the Senate 31-14. The word “Jobs” was deleted from the title, reflecting deletion of workforce development and its funding. It increases Maryland's current renewable energy goal to 25 percent of the energy portfolio by 2020 and increases the percentage of solar to 2.5 percent by 2020. 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) and passed

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

SB 398/HB 820 Reducing Environmental Degradation for the Underserved Through Community Engagement (The REDUCE Act) ([RSC 2](#)) died in the Senate, unfavorable vote by EHEA.

HB 705/SB 726 Maryland Clean Energy Center - Clean Energy Technology Funding (*Green Bank*) ([RSC 3](#)) died in Senate Finance

HB 405/SB 018 Sales and Use Tax-Exemption - Energy for Homeowners. ([RSC 3](#)) died in W&M and Senate B&T

HB 821 Energy Storage Portfolio Standard (Storage Technology and Electric Power (STEP) Act) ([RSC 3](#)) died in the House, unfavorable by ECM_Withdrawn

HB 1354 Gas and Electricity – Smart Meters – Customer Rights and Required Reports ([RSC 3](#)) died in the House, 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:

Final and Near-Final Updates

HB0031/SB0057 Community Cleanup and Greening Act of 2016 (the “Bag Bill”) – died in committee

HB0065 Tree Expert License - Application and Renewal - Repeal of Sunset Provision. Passed and signed by the Governor

HB0090 On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems - Operation and Maintenance Costs - Low-Income Homeowners. Passed and signed by the Governor

HB0132 State Government - Pollinator Habitat Plans. Passed

HB0443 Agriculture – Industrial Hemp – Agricultural or Academic Research. Passed and signed by the Governor

HB0862 Maryland Redeemable Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Act. Did not pass. About 10 states have returnable bottle laws, only one of which is more recent than the late 1980s.

SB0004 Natural Resources - Maryland Environmental Trust – Trustees. Passed with amendments

SB0061 Natural Resources - Forest Lands and the Chesapeake and Atlantic. Passed and signed by the Governor

SB0105 Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority - Name and Authority. Did not pass the House.

SB0113 Department of Agriculture - Bees, Bee Colonies, and Used Bee Equipment - Transportation and Shipment. Passed and signed by the Governor

SB0132/**HB0122** Critical Area Commission for the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays - Membership From Ocean City. Passed and signed by the Governor

SB0198/**HB0211** Neonicotinoid Pesticides - Labeling, Signage, and Restrictions on Sales and Use (Pollinator Protection Act of 2016). Passed the General Assembly. Ongoing campaign for obtaining Governor's signature and preventing veto.

SB0263/**HB1409** Payment in Lieu of Taxes - State Forests, State Parks, and Wildlife Management Areas. Did not pass.

SJ0001 Patuxent River Watershed - Amendment of Patuxent River Policy Plan. Passed

SB0937/**HB1603** Sustainable Oyster Population and Fishery Act of 2016, requiring various studies and reports. Passed with amendments

Final update on some key agricultural bills

None of the agricultural bills favored by environmentalists passed. Among these were **HB0599/****SB0496** - Poultry Litter Management Act; **SB0761** -- Farmers' Rights Act; and **HB0829** Agriculture – Cattle, Swine, and Poultry – Use of Antimicrobial Drugs

Linda Silversmith

ENVIRONMENT: HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

No new activity on Hydraulic Fracturing bills since [RSC 5](#).

Ruth Alice White

TRANSPORTATION

Updates on Bills Previously Reported

HB 373 – Motor Vehicles – Passenger Seat Belt Requirement – Primary Offense passed House, but failed to come to a vote in the Senate ([RSC 2](#) & [4](#))

HB 1010 – Maryland Transit Administration Oversight and Planning Board, passed enrolled including amendment for 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 ([RSC 3](#) & [5](#))

HB 1013 / SB 908 – Maryland Open Transportation Investment Decision Act of 2016, passed both Senate and House, then bill was vetoed by Governor Hogan, Gubernatorial override – Chapter 36 by Senate and House, law becomes effective July 2016 ([RSC 3](#) & [5](#))

SB056 – Transportation – Chesapeake Bay Bridge Crossing – Environmental Impact Study – Cost Estimate and Payment, failed to come to a vote in the House ([RSC 1](#) & [5](#))

SB 585 / HB723 - Transportation – Highway User Revenues – Distribution to Municipalities, failed to be passed for reconciliation in both Senate and House ([RSC 3](#) & [5](#))

SB 907 / HB672 – Transportation - Harry W. Nice Memorial Potomac River Bridge Replacement, establishing a replacement fund for the bridge. Passed enrolled ([RSC 3](#) & [5](#))

SB 945 / HB 1342 – Drunk Driving Reduction Act of 2016, also known as Noah’s Law, mandates more stringent use of the interlock auto mechanism to help prevent drunk driving. Passed enrolled ([RSC 3](#) & [4](#))

Barbara Ditzler

GUN CONTROL

According to the Maryland General Assembly web page, “Legislation Passed in Both Chambers”, none of the 18 proposed gun control bills described in [RSC 1 - 3](#) passed:

http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmLegislation.aspx?id=2016rs_passed_both_chambers&stab=02&pid=legisnlist&tab=subject3

Doreen Rosenthal

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Bills passed

HB 74/ SB 117 Judgeships - Circuit Court and District Courts ([RSC 1](#)) Increases the number of judges. Passed. Approved by the Governor

SB 194/ HB 496 Ethics Commission, Commission on Judicial Disabilities, Judicial Ethics Committee, and Joint Ethics Committee ([RSC 1](#)) passed, not signed

HB 1180/ SB 946 Correctional Services - Restrictive Housing - Report ([RSC 3](#)) passed with amendments, not signed

HB 1016/ SB 1026 Public Safety and Policing Workgroup - Recommendations ([RSC 4](#) & [5](#)) passed as amended, enrolled. Added provisions include: psychological evaluation as a requirement for police certification; and an administrative hearing board composed of two police officers, an administrative law judge and a specially trained citizen who can participate in proceedings but has no vote.

SB 1005/ HB 1312 Justice Reinvestment Act (RSC 4 & 5) passed as amended. This bill emerged from a conference committee at the last minute. Changes include: a person serving a mandatory minimum sentence for a drug crime imposed before the bill's effective date, may apply for a modification or reduction of the sentence; a court may impose mandatory sentences for drug offences only if the State can prove the sentence would not result in a substantial injustice to the defendant and is necessary for the protection of the public; establishment of graduated sanctions for parole and probation violations, that include due process protection and evidence-based standards; medical parole for inmates so permanently incapacitated that they no longer a danger to the public; reduction in penalties for theft; increased penalties for second degree murder and kidnapping from 30 to 40 years,

Bills not passed, but likely to proposed again

HB 223, HB 224, SB 179 (RSC 1) and **HB 448** all seeking to eliminate contested elections for circuit court judges.

HB 199 Orphans' Court - Change in Name to Probate Court (RSC 1)

SB 502/ HB 481 Judges - Mandatory Retirement Age (RSC 2)

Marlene Cohn

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Update on bills Reported in RSC 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

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 enrolled

SB 077 Human Resources – Transition Planning for Foster Youth (RSC 1) passed enrolled

HB 245/SB 310 Child Abuse and Neglect – Failure to Report (RSC 3) HB 245 returned passed, SB 310 returned passed

HB 772/SB 262 Family Law – Protecting the Resources of Children in State Custody (RSC 2) HB 772 unfav report JUD, withdrawn, SB 262 recommitted to JPR

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

Judy Morenoff

MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

FOOD STAMPS

HB445/SB758 Food stamp program – minimum benefit - state supplement were both passed and enrolled. This bill authorizes the State to provide a supplemental food stamp benefit so that all households receiving federally funded benefits under the food stamp program receive a minimum benefit of \$30 per month. General fund expenditures are expected to increase by at least \$3,747,618 in fiscal 2017 to cover this state supplement.

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

HB1103 Labor and Employment – Equal Pay for Equal Work was passed and enrolled.

This bill expands the Equal Pay for Equal Work law to prohibit wage discrimination based on gender identity. Additionally, an employer may not provide less favorable employment opportunities based on sex or gender identity. Moreover, an employer may not prohibit an employee from inquiring about, discussing, or disclosing the wages of the employee or another employee or requesting that the employer provide a reason for why the employee's wages are a condition of employment.

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

There were several bills introduced to increase the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

SB840 Income Tax – Rates, Personal Exemptions, and Earned Income Tax Credit was introduced by the President, and modified to include income tax deductions for middle and upper income tax payers. The League was part of a coalition that supported increasing the EITC but opposed the deductions for upper income Marylanders. Different versions of the bill were approved in the House and Senate but differences could not be resolved in the House committee in the ending hours of the session.

PAID SICK LEAVE

HB580 Labor and Employment – Maryland Healthy Working Families Act passed the House.

Only 31% of low-wage workers received paid sick leave compared with 84% of high-wage workers in 2015. This bill would require that employees be able to earn up to seven days of paid leave in firms with more than fourteen employees, and seven days' unpaid sick leave in smaller firms. After being introduced for several years, the bill passed out of committee and was passed by the House. There were many amendments introduced and discussed in both the committee and the full house but it passed with almost a veto proof majority. It was scheduled to be heard by the Senate finance committee on the last day of the session and the hearing was canceled 2.5 hours before sine die. It will be introduced again next year.

Ruth Crystal

HEALTH

The Governor's drug bills, **HB 456/SB382 – Prescription Drug Monitoring Program – Revisions**, ([RSC 3, 4, 5](#)), and **HB 461/SB 97 – Crime – Criminal Gangs – Prohibition and Funding**, ([RSC 3, 4, 5](#)) and Del Morhaim's drug bills **HB 1119 – Criminal Law – Use or Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance – De Minimis Quantity** ([RSC 2, 3, 4, 5](#)), **HB1212 – Public Health – Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Safer Drug Use Facility Program** ([RSC 2, 3, 4, 5](#)) and **HB 1267 – Poly-Morphine - Assisted Treatment Pilot Program** ([RSC 2, 3, 4, 5](#)) all received unfavorable reports. However there appears to be the hope for treatment dollars in the money saved by changes in the criminal justice system.

HB1318/SB929 Health Benefit Plans – Network Access Standards and Provider Network Directories ([RSC 5](#)) passed both houses and has been enrolled.

SB 806, State Board of Physicians – Naturopathic Doctors – Establishment of Naturopathic Doctors Formulary Council and Naturopathic Formulary, ([RSC 3, 4, 5](#)) passed and is enrolled.

HB 715/SB 644, Early Identification of Autism Act, ([RSC 3, 4, 5](#)) failed.

HB 104, Medical Cannabis – Written Certification – Certifying Providers, (Del. D. Morhaim) ([RSC 1, 3, 4, 5](#)) passed

SB 91 – State Identified HIV Priorities, (Finance Com for DHMH), ([RSC 2](#), [5](#)) passed and has been signed by the Governor.

HB394 – Public Health – Hydraulic Fracturing Chemicals – Information and Fund, (Del. D. Morhaim) (HB 952 in 2015) ([RSC 2](#), [5](#)) failed.

HB 216/SB289, Public Health – Preventive Medical Care – Consent by Minors, (Del. Sample-Hughes and Sen. Feldman, et.al) ([RSC 2](#), [5](#)) failed in committee.

HB 180, Public Health, HIV Testing During Pregnancy, ([RSC 2](#), [5](#)) passed with amendments.

Neilson Andrews

LAND USE

SB 927/ HB 1464 Program Open Space Trust Fund Act of 2016 ([RSC 3](#)) Amended into **HB462/SB383**. Passed 3/31/2016; signed into law 4/2/2016

HB1413 State Government - Legislation Impacting Local Government Land Use Decisions - Economic Impact Analysis ([RSC 3](#)) No further action after Rules and Executive Nomination hearing 2/15/2016.

SB 137/HB276 Income Tax Credit - Preservation and Conservation Easements ([RSC2](#)) Passed enrolled.

SB181/HB 531 Maryland Strong Manufacturing Development ([RSC 2](#)) No further action after B&T hearings.

SB559/HB686 Establishing the Strategic Demolition and Smart Growth Impact Fund ([RSC 2](#)) Unfavorable report House Appropriations 4/11/2016.

SB 166/HB 243 Land Use Actions - Legislative Bodies - Judicial Review ([RSC 5](#)) Unfavorable report E&T; withdrawn 3/16/2016

Susan Knisely