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Cecil and Harford Counties

DEPUTY MINORITY WHIP

Ways and Means Committee

Subcommittees  
Election Law  
Revenues

Vice Chair  
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Dear Constituent of 35 B:

Even though the Governor's Agenda did not include any new taxes, tax bills were still introduced in the General Assembly. **The following taxes were stopped from becoming law:**

**HB 886-Chicken Tax-a \$15 million annual tax on poultry farmers**  
**HB 730-elimination of the Death Tax repeal**  
**HB 982-Bottle Tax-5 cent tax on every bottle**  
**HB 551-Bag Tax-puts a 10 cent tax on paper bags and bans plastic bags**  
**HB 108-Tobacco Tax- a \$90 million annual tax on tobacco products**  
**HB 377-Utility Bill Tax -\$566 million annual tax on solar and wind bills**

**Veterans' Tax Relief**

Part of the Administration's proposed plan for tax relief was realized in the form of **SB 592/HB 482** by expanding to \$10,000 the amount of retirement income veterans over age 65 may exclude from Maryland adjusted gross income.

**Rain Tax**

The 'rain tax' was one of the forty tax and fee increases under the last administration. I voted for SB 863 which repeals the *requirement* to collect a stormwater remediation fee, and instead *authorizes* such jurisdictions to do so. Among other things, the bill also (1) requires local fund revenues to be used for additional activities; (2) authorizes jurisdictions to charge a fee to the State under specified conditions; (3) establishes provisions that provide relief from the fee for specified organizations under certain conditions; (4) requires jurisdictions to file an annual financial assurance plan, which is subject to a hearing and review process; and (5) specifies that if such a plan is insufficient, the jurisdiction may not receive specified State funding.

**Budget/BRFA**

Over the last eight years, the former governor put a tremendous economic strain on our state. Even after multiple tax increases, Governor Hogan still inherited an \$800 million deficit. Maryland's long-term fiscal problems need to be dealt with. If not, in just two years our State will be spending two times more on debt interest payments than we spend on school construction.

Even with the immense pressure from the deficit, the Governor's education budget managed to set a record high of \$6.1 billion in K-12 public education. If you put the new education funds under a microscope, you will see that the State's per pupil funding increased in many counties, while staying the same in others. **Only in government accounting, can an increase be called a "cut" if it's a reduction in the hoped for increase in spending.**

Maryland cannot continue on a path of fiscal recklessness and maintain a strong education system. Governor Hogan's Budget made historic investments in K-12 education while keeping spending in line with revenues. It was a plan that would have ensured Maryland's excellent national ranking for public education, while also being fiscally responsible and eliminating the structural deficit.

The Conference Committee ignored the Governor's Second Supplemental Budget which included funding for several items relating to the State Police and Public Safety. In addition, there was a third supplemental budget to restore funding to the pension system. Those items were never fully considered by the General Assembly or the Conference Committee.

**Instead, the budget that was passed inflated the structural deficit by hundreds of millions of dollars (\$463 million to be exact). The Conference Committee also ignored the Governor's concerns about an unfunded pension and added irresponsible spending. I do not think that Marylanders want a budget that spends \$1.7 billion over the next four years...money that we don't have.**

**Because of all the amendments to the Governor's Budget, I voted NO on the Budget and the BRFA.**

However, as disappointing as the budget negotiations were, the State is still in much better shape due to Governor Hogan's leadership. **This budget is the second-lowest rate of growth since at least 1968.** It is second only to a 0.4% rate of growth in the FY 2004. **Last year's budget grew by 8%, this budget grows 1.5%, keeping pace with revenue.**

**There will be no new taxes in the 2016 Budget for the citizens of Maryland this year.**

**Change has come to Maryland.... though not everyone in Annapolis seems to have received the memo.**

### **Capital Budget**

I voted for the Capital Budget to ensure that the **Cecil County Farm Museum** will receive a grant for the acquisition, planning, design, construction, repair, renovation, reconstruction, and capital equipping, including site improvements to the museum grounds. A grant will also be provided to **Ladew Topiary Gardens, Inc.** for the construction, repair, renovation, reconstruction, and capital equipping including construction of a maintenance hub, site improvement of the parking lot, and the construction of a series of access roads. The Mayor and City Council of the **City of Havre de Grace** and the Board of Directors of the **Susquehanna Hose Company, Inc.** will receive a grant for the Lower Susquehanna River and Upper Chesapeake Bay and their tributaries, including site improvements to and construction, repair, and renovation of a boat dock and boat launch, located in Harford County and Cecil County.

### **Felons**

While they were irresponsibly tinkering with the Governor's Budget, the Legislature found time to pass **SB 340-Election Law - Voting Rights - Ex-Felons** which allows felons to vote upon their release from prison without first serving their probation/parole. They also passed the **Second Chance Act, HB 244**, which allows a person to petition a court to shield the person's court records and police records relating to one or more "shieldable convictions" of the person. **I voted no on both these bills.**

### **Phosphorus Management Tool**

The Hogan Administration worked closely with the agricultural and environmental communities to design a balanced plan for limiting phosphorus run-off from Maryland farms. This solution, a plan that is agreeable to all parties and relies on the best-available science, represents an important step forward in environmental policy. The Delmarva Poultry Industry and the Maryland Farm Bureau were among those who were involved in achieving the compromise.

Restoration of the Bay is key to the future of our state, and it is the responsibility of every Marylander – not just the agricultural community. I am proud of Governor Hogan's work to bring everyone together to find a solution that is agreeable to everyone, while still improving the health of our Chesapeake Bay.

### **Guns**

I will continue to strongly support the Second Amendment in the State of Maryland. Among the 48 gun related bills introduced this year, I sponsored **HB 767- Public Safety – Permit to Carry, Wear, or Transport a Handgun – Qualifications.** The purpose of the bill was to qualify self-defense as a reason to issue a handgun permit. Unfortunately, the bill did not make it out of committee, so it never received a vote from the full legislative body. However, I am still committed to legislation that will expand handgun permit qualifications to include self-defense, and will file the bill again in the 2016 Session.

In a rare victory for Second Amendment Advocates, legislation passed repealing the ballistic fingerprinting requirement for firearms purchases.

Fortunately, the good news is **anti-gun legislation did not move through the Legislature.**

### **Judiciary**

**HB 111 Judgeships – Circuit Court and District Court** was a bill requested by the Maryland Judiciary, which increases the number of resident judges in circuit courts and in district courts. I submitted an amendment to increase the Harford County Circuit Court by two. While my amendment did not pass, the bill itself passed in the House of Delegates. While Harford County will not experience an increase in the number of judgeships this year, I did work with the county government to determine how to expand the amount of court space, which would then allow for additional judges. I will continue to work diligently on getting additional judgeships for our circuit courts.

### **Human Trafficking**

Human Trafficking has become a great problem in our State. I supported **HB 456-Workgroup to Study Safe Harbor Policy for Youth Victims of Human Trafficking** and it is on the Governor's desk awaiting his signature. This group will prepare a report for the Governor and the General Assembly after studying the current legal protections and service provisions currently available to victims in Maryland. Recommendations for improving our policies will also be a part of the report.

### **Heroin**

Governor Larry Hogan joined with Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford in the establishment of both the Heroin and Opioid Emergency Task Force and a separate Inter-Agency Coordinating Council. Both groups are working and supporting efforts to address Maryland's growing heroin and opioid crisis.

I have enjoyed hearing from you throughout this session, and I've used what you've said to help make my voting decisions. While we might not agree on everything, I've done my best to be honest with you about my votes. I will always do what I think is best for the citizens of Cecil and Harford Counties.

During the Interim, the Annapolis Office will be open on Tuesday and Wednesday from 9-5 and I will still be receiving your emails every day. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns and/or questions.

Sincerely,

Teresa Reilly  
Delegate