DELEGATE ERIC EBERSOLE

DISTRICT 12

THE CONNECTION: LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER - START OF SESSION - 2018

PERIODIC NEWSLETTER TO KEEP YOU INFORMED AND UP TO DATE WITH POLITICAL HAPPENINGS IN ANNAPOLIS AND IN HOWARD AND BALTIMORE COUNTIES

VETO OVERRIDES:
- EARNED SICK LEAVE
- BAN THE BOX
- PROTECT OUR SCHOOLS

INITIATIVES TO PROTECT MD
- ENVIRONMENT
-HEALTH CARE
-TAXES

MY OWN LEGISLATION THIS SESSION

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START OF SESSION: FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS, VETO OVERRIDES

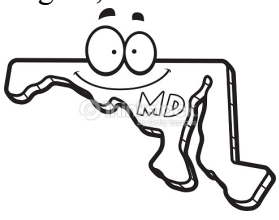
EARNED SICK LEAVE – After years of consideration and compromise, we successfully crafted a bill that will enable workers in Maryland who work at businesses with 15 or more employees to begin to earn sick leave as they accumulate hours of employment. This is a vital social justice issue that will help individuals, families, and strengthen the middle class. The legislation allows Marylanders access to earned time off of work-time to recover from illness, heal from injury, or care for loved ones-without risking their jobs or their ability to pay the bills. This bill will not only help workers, it will help reduce disease for everyone by allowing sick food service and hospital workers to take time away from work when they get sick. The response of Governor Hogan was unfortunately, a veto of this legislation. Despite the legislature's many years of work on this issue, the Governor, after his veto, formed a commission to study alternatives and he plans to offer alternative legislation in 2018. The legislation that we have carefully crafted over the last five years is, in my opinion, better designed and more effective, and I am glad to report that the House and the Senate have successfully overridden the veto.

BAN THE BOX – COLLEGE APPLICATIONS We passed HB 694 prohibiting higher education from using information about the criminal history of applicants on admissions applications and prohibiting colleges from automatically or unreasonably restricting a student's admission based on that student's criminal history. This is a critical piece of legislation that will help with an important paradigm I believe in, the need to help pave the way for success for former offenders. Providing access to education and opportunities will help reduce the recidivism rate in our communities, and we must encourage former offenders who wish to change their lives for the better. This college-application bill passed both chambers of the Democratic-majority legislature with veto-proof majorities and bipartisan support. This is part of the overall criminal-justice reform that has had bipartisan support and that we need to continue to support. Governor Hogan vetoed it. Again, I am glad that we overrode this veto.

THE PROTECT OUR SCHOOLS ACT – This is not really new news, but it was an important veto override last session. The General Assembly was able to override the governor's veto of Protect Our Schools Act in 2017. The legislation, among other things, protects struggling schools from forced privatization. Betsy DeVos is a strong proponent of school privatization, and I believe her agenda is the wrong path for our schools and students. I am proud of the school protections we created in this bill. The bill also reduced the emphasis on testing measures in school evaluations. Added to the single data point of test scores will be school quality indicators like access to highly qualified teachers, availability of technology equipment and programs, provision of special services, and/or school climate evaluations from students, staff, and families. We passed this bill early enough in the 2017 session that the Governor was required to act on it before the end of session. He vetoed this common sense legislation and we promptly overrode this veto.

PROTECTING MARYLAND – JUST BE GLAD YOU LIVE HERE

We have a number of concerns about what is going on with the administration in Washington, DC and the adverse effects on Marylanders.



The **Environment** is under attack from the federal government through deregulation and the reduction of crucial funding. Through some dogged work, the legislature has worked to restore some of the money the federal government provides for Chesapeake Bay restoration, recently threatened by the EPA. We also resisted the Governor's attempt to reduce the number of oyster beds, critical to the health of the bay. I will be in support of upcoming legislation for Maryland to join the Paris Climate Accord in the face of the President's decision to withdraw. Maryland will respond by joining this common sense coalition on our own.

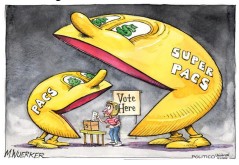
Health Care is still under siege. Our first priority will have to find a way to fund the Children's Health Care Program. Recent cuts by the President and Congress will deny health care to 122,000 children in Maryland. Governor Hogan has been quiet on this, but it needs to be in the budget. Rest assured that the legislature will find a way to insure Maryland's children.

The new **Tax Law** is very problematic for Maryland. In particular, the State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction has been cut. This means that the tax dollars we each pay in Maryland to build our schools will be still charged to us as income and will we pay tax on it again. Additionally, the health care mandate was taken away in this legislation. This will cause rates to increase as relatively healthy people may not buy in. Those who cannot afford coverage or choose not to be covered will still require and receive care at hospitals without paying, something we all pay for. The legislature is working hard to ensure that Marylanders will be able to obtain health insurance at reasonable rates and prevent a raise in their tax bill.

MY LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

I am introducing a number of bills this year on a variety of topics.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING – I will introduce a bill to require that professional drivers who are training to receive a commercial driver's license (CDL) will receive, as part of that training, human trafficking awareness. Truckers are often a huge assist to local law enforcement, and several states have passes similar legislation that trains truck drivers on how to identify the signs of human trafficking and how to report it. We are working with the nationwide group Truckers Against Trafficking to create a no-cost training program with the support of Maryland's truckers.



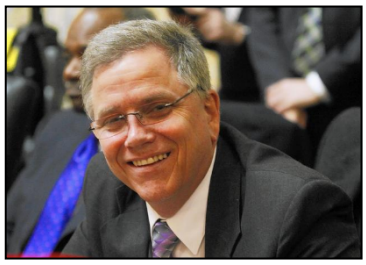
CAMPAIGN FINANCE – In an effort to protect contributors to campaigns and causes, I will sponsor legislation that will regulate "scam PACs." There are unregulated issue and candidate PACs that collect money with aggressive fundraising and then spend up to 90% of the funds on their own administrative salaries and costs, creating a financial benefit for the PAC's creators, but not for the stated purpose of the PAC. The legislation will require public and visible reporting of fund use for these PACs in their fundraising campaigns. It is simply truth in advertising to keep people who are contributing their hard earned money from being fooled.

REDUCING TESTING IMPACT – I will introduce two bills to reduce the impact of testing on instruction. First, we currently require only certified teachers to proctor the test. This causes serious disruption to instruction as teachers are taken out of class to proctor, leaving their classes to substitutes and busy work. This legislation will simply allow other school personnel, who the school principal deems skilled, to proctor the test. The flexibility inherent here will free up time for instruction. Second, the high stakes tests (like PARCC) are given in 2-3 hour blocks, forcing students and teachers to leave other classes as well as introducing testing fatigue. My legislation would require the segments of the tests to fit into a single class period. In this way, the tests would be contained to interrupting only the subject class they address, given over several days. This would also be pedagogically sound and more accurately measure student ability as testing fatigue would be significantly reduced.

STATE SCHOOL BOARD COMPOSITON – I will introduce legislation to add representation of teachers, students, and families to the State Board of Education. These three additional members will provide an important and informed voice to the board. The experience of these people from the building level perspective will round out the decision making ability with important point of delivery insights.

Well, here we go. I am excited for this session and the work we have to do. Thanks again for all your support and participation As always, I hope that you will share your concerns and ideas with me. Please, stay in touch.

Eric D. Ebersole



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