



The Legislative Wrap-Up

Library and Information Services, Department of Legislative Services

Issue 08-1

January 9-11, 2008

The General Assembly of Maryland convened at noon on Wednesday, January 9, 2008, marking the official beginning of the 425th session of the State legislature. The 2008 session is scheduled to conclude in 90 calendar days on April 7 and is the second regular session of the four-year term.

OPENING DAY

According to rule and tradition, opening day commenced with the organization of each chamber. Surrounded by family and friends, all 188 legislators heard their names called from the rostrum of their respective chambers as they were officially sworn-in to begin the session. Dignitaries who spoke to both the Senate and the House included United States Senator Barbara Mikulski, Governor Martin O'Malley, and Lieutenant Governor Anthony G. Brown.

Senator Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. was reelected for a 22nd year of service as President of the Maryland Senate. President Miller is the longest serving Senate President in the history of the body and the longest serving presiding officer of any Senate chamber in the United States. Senator Nathaniel J. McFadden, in previous years the Senate Majority Leader, began his second year as President Pro Tem. Speaker Michael E. Busch will continue to lead the House of Delegates for a sixth year. Delegate Adrienne A. Jones was also reelected for a sixth year as Speaker Pro-Tem.

NEW LEGISLATORS

Four recently appointed House members attending their first regular session included Delegate C. William Frick (District 16, Montgomery County), Delegate Krill Reznick (District 39, Montgomery County), Delegate Alfred C. Carr, Jr. (District 18, Montgomery County), and Delegate H. Wayne Norman, Jr. (District 35A, Harford County). Senator Nancy J. King (District 39, Montgomery County) and Senator Barry Glassman (District 35, Harford County) are attending their first regular session as Senators, having served previously in the House.

IN MEMORIAM

On opening day the House of Delegates paid tribute to the life and public service of Delegate Jane E. Lawton (District 18, Montgomery County), who began her tenure in the House in November 2005, and died suddenly on November 29, 2007. Delegate Lawton was a member of the House Environmental Matters Committee and the Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area. In honor of her interest and accomplishments related to environmental issues, through the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, trees are to be planted this spring in Annapolis and in her home district in Montgomery County.

Delegate Lawton had also been active for many years in Montgomery County community activities and local government, where she was Mayor of Chevy Chase and also treasurer and a council member. From 1994 to her death, she was Cable Communications Chief, Division of Cable and Communications Services, Montgomery County. Delegate Lawton was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Oklahoma with a B.A., *summa cum laude* in government, history, and economics. She is survived by her husband and two daughters.

MAJOR ISSUES

To date, 142 bills have been introduced and assigned to committees with an estimated 2,600 or more measures slated to be “dropped in the hoppers” during the session. Major legislation is expected to deal with:

- fiscal matters, as legislators address balancing the FY2009 State budget, coping with declining revenues, continuing the freeze on tuition at colleges and universities, and adjusting the new sales tax on computer services passed during the 2007 Special Session;
- energy and environmental initiatives including electricity generation, conservation, regulation, and re-regulation and the use of the new Chesapeake Bay 2010 Trust Fund established by legislation from the 2007 Special Session;

- social and economic issues related to same-sex marriages, provision of college tuition and drivers' licenses for undocumented immigrants, and Maryland's foreclosure and lending practices; and
- legal matters such as the use of the death penalty, increased penalties for sex offenders, and prevention of identity theft, with an emphasis on the forthcoming recommendations of a special task force.

UPCOMING

Bill introductions and committee hearings and meetings will continue in Annapolis as the 2008 session gets underway. The State budget bill will be introduced on Wednesday, January 16, and Governor Martin O'Malley is scheduled to deliver the State of the State address at noon on Wednesday, January 23, to the legislature assembled in the chamber of the House of Delegates.

