



The Legislative Wrap-Up

Library and Information Services, Department of Legislative Services

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OPENING DAY

The 427th session of the General Assembly of Maryland convened at noon on Wednesday, January 13, marking the official beginning of the 2010 regular session, the final one of the four-year term. All legislators, along with the Governor, Attorney General, and State Comptroller must run in their party primaries in September 2010 and in the general election in November 2010 for the four-year terms that will begin in January 2011.

In opening day activities, Senator Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. (D-27) was re-elected President of the Senate of Maryland for his 24th year of service. Senator Miller is the longest-serving Senate President in the history of the Maryland Senate and is the longest-serving Senate President in the United States. Delegate Michael E. Busch (D-30) was re-elected Speaker of the House of Delegates to begin an eighth year of service in that office. Senator Nathaniel J. McFadden was confirmed as President Pro Tem for a fourth year. Delegate Adrienne A. Jones was re-elected for an eighth year as Speaker Pro Tem.

NEW LEGISLATORS

On January 13, two members of the General Assembly attended their first session. Senator Edward R. Reilly (R) was appointed this past June to represent District 33 after former Senator Janet Greenip's resignation in May. Senator Reilly was a former member of and chair of the Anne Arundel County Council. Delegate Charles A. Jenkins (R), a new member of the House in District 3B, Frederick and Washington Counties, was sworn in by the Speaker in a morning ceremony preceding the opening of session. Delegate Jenkins, a former Frederick County Commissioner, succeeds former Delegate Richard B. Weldon, Jr., who resigned in December 2009.

MAJOR ISSUES

To date, out of the approximately 2,500 measures that the General Assembly expects to consider before *sine die* on April 12, 238 bills and resolutions have been introduced and assigned to principal standing committees with many committee hearings to follow in order to solicit public testimony. Senators may introduce legislation until February 5, after which Senate bills are referred to the Senate Rules Committee. Delegates may introduce bills through February 11, after which the bills are assigned to the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee. Bills must then be voted out of the respective rules committees before the legislation may be given further consideration.

Among the many issues to be considered are:

- balancing the State Budget equitably in a tough recessionary period with a projected deficit of \$2 billion. (The State's operating budget will be submitted by Governor O'Malley on January 20);
- creating jobs and promoting employment with tax credits and incentives for businesses;
- strengthening laws related to sex offenders, drunk drivers, and gang-related criminal activities;
- examining ways to capture additional federal education money including the Race to the Top program;
- reducing costs related to health care including Medicaid reimbursement rates; and
- working through the problems associated with the State's distribution of aid to local jurisdictions and with granting waivers for the maintenance of effort law that requires local jurisdictions to provide at least the same level of education funding as the previous year.