



The Legislative Wrap-Up

Library and Information Services, Department of Legislative Services

Issue 05-1

January 12-14, 2005

The 420th session of the General Assembly of Maryland convened at noon on Wednesday, January 12th, marking the official beginning of the 2005 regular session, the third one of the four-year term. The 2005 regular session is scheduled to conclude in 90 calendar days on April 11.

Opening Day

According to rule and tradition, opening day commenced with the organization of each chamber. Senator Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. and Speaker Michael E. Busch were reelected President of the Maryland Senate and Speaker of the House of Delegates, respectively. President Miller is beginning his 19th year as Senate President. Senator Ida G. Ruben was reelected Senate President Pro Tem, beginning her sixth year in that position. Speaker Busch is beginning his third year of service. Delegate Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker Pro-Tem, was also elected in 2003. One legislator, Delegate Anthony G. Brown, D-District 25, Prince George's County, was unable to attend the 2005 session because of military service in Iraq. Lt. Colonel Brown, who was called in July as a U.S. Army Reservist for deployment to Iraq in September, is the public administration consultant to the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration that provides and coordinates services for 1.4 million internally displaced persons and refugees in the country.

New Legislators

Members of the legislature attending their first regular session included Senator Allan H. Kittleman (R-District 9) who replaced his father, Robert H. Kittleman. House members who attended their first regular session on Wednesday included Delegate Tanya T. Shewell (R-District 5A) who replaced Carmen Amedori, Delegate Murray D. Levy (D-District 28) who replaced Van T. Mitchell, and Delegate Sue Kullen (D-27B) who replaced George W. Owings III.

Issues

The following topics are among the many issues that will be considered this session:

- *School construction* – additional money will be needed for new construction and for renovation of existing structures;
- *Young drivers* – recent fatalities caused by young inexperienced drivers, as well as continuing problems with young drivers who drink and drive, use cell phones while driving, and transport non-family members will all be in new legislation. New restrictions for provisional licenses will also be evaluated;
- *Increase in the minimum wage* – concern for those workers whose pay needs augmentation to keep up with the increasing cost-of-living will be considered;
- *Legislative role in public land sales* – ensuring a role for the Maryland General Assembly when public land is sold by the State will be in legislation; and
- *Penalties for assault on law enforcement officers* – increasing protection for these professionals is already in proposed legislation.

Upcoming

Bill introductions and committee hearings will begin in earnest next week. Next Wednesday, January 19, is the last day for the Governor to introduce the budget bill.

