



The Legislative Wrap-Up

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OPENING DAY

As required by the Maryland Constitution, the General Assembly of Maryland convened its annual 90 calendar day session on the second Wednesday in January (January 9, 2013). This session marks the official beginning of the third year of the four-year term that began in January 2011 and will end when a newly elected Senate and House takes office in January 2015. Lawmakers are scheduled to adjourn *sine die* on Monday, April 8. However, under the constitution, a 90 day session may be extended for an additional 30 days by resolution, if three-fifths of the memberships of each chamber concur. Also, if the budget bill is not passed by midnight on the 90th day, the session is automatically extended, but the General Assembly may only deal with the budget bill and the costs of the extended session. The last extended session occurred in 1992.

Opening day of the 433rd session of Maryland's legislature was filled with ceremony and symbolism. Members were surrounded by friends and family, as well as by numerous dignitaries, including Maryland's congressional delegation headed by Senator Barbara Mikulski, the newly named chair of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee, and Congressman Steny Hoyer, the Minority Whip of the U.S. House of Representatives. Governor Martin O'Malley and Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown offered their congratulations, along with other State officials.

SENATE LEADERSHIP

On opening day Senator Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. (D-District 27) was elected to serve his 27th year as President of the Senate of Maryland. President Miller is the longest-serving Senate President in the history of the State and the longest-serving presiding officer of any Senate chamber in the United States. The Senate President Pro Tem, Nathaniel J. McFadden (D-District 45) is beginning his seventh year of service in this position. Other Senate floor leaders include Majority Leader Rob Garagiola (D-District 15) and Deputy Majority Leader Catherine E. Pugh (D-District 40). Senator E.J. Pipkin (R-District 36) is the Senate

Minority Leader and Senator Edward R. Reilly (R-District 33) serves as Minority Whip.

HOUSE LEADERSHIP

At the beginning of its first floor session, the Maryland House of Delegates elected Delegate Michael E. Busch (D-District 30) for an eleventh year as House Speaker. Speaker Busch is the longest-serving Speaker in the history of the House. Speaker Pro Tem Adrienne A. Jones (D-District 10) will also be serving for an eleventh year and is the longest-serving Speaker Pro Tem in the history of the House. She is joined by Majority Leader Kumar P. Barve (D-District 17) and Majority Whip Talmadge Branch (D-District 45), two other members of the majority leadership team. Delegate Anthony J. O'Donnell (R-District 29C) is Minority Leader and Delegate Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio (R-District 37B) serves as Minority Whip.

MAJOR ISSUES

To date, out of the approximately 2,600 measures that the General Assembly expects to consider before *sine die* on April 8, 180 bills and resolutions have been introduced and assigned to standing committees.

Among the many issues to be considered are firearms regulation, death penalty repeal, offshore wind energy, hydraulic fracturing (fracking), sustainable growth, and septic system management. Other issues involve the elimination of the State's remaining budgetary structural deficit and funding for transportation improvements and infrastructure. Legislation will also be introduced related to campaign finance and ethics reform, extension of early voting periods, and examination of Maryland's referendum process.

NEXT WEEK AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Bill introductions, floor sessions, and committee briefings and hearings will continue in Annapolis as the 2013 General Assembly session gets underway. The Governor's budget bill is set to be introduced next week.