

# Legislative Newsletter



“Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom.” --Thomas Jefferson

February 26, 2019

## Legislative Update

Greetings! The week seven was a busy one in Annapolis, Maryland with hearings being held for two of the pieces of legislation I have introduced this session. The first hearing was held on February 21 for [HB1047](#), which would create a task force to study admission practices at public senior higher education institutions. The purpose of this task force is to study how the system ultimately decides between in-state and out-of-state applicants. To be clear, I am not suggesting that there is anything devious currently taking place – this is just an issue many constituents have asked about and I feel it is worthwhile to get an answer. Either way, transparency is needed here. There was no pushback from the Appropriations Committee on this bill, and I am hopeful that they will vote to pass it and move it onto the floor.



The second bill, [HB1137](#), would create a task force to study the Home and Hospital Teaching Program for Students. Testimony for this bill was held on February 22 in the Ways and Means Committee, with testimony provided by the Maryland Psychological Association, the Maryland Parent Teacher Association, and constituents who have lived through the issue of trying to get their children back in the classroom. When students are experiencing physical

or emotional conditions that make it impossible for them to attend school, this program lets them continue. The Home and Hospital Program is vital – for the individual student and for the classroom as a whole – but it must be improved. A one-size-fits-all approach to this issue does not always work, and we need to rectify these re-entry problems. This bill has bipartisan support and seemed to be warmly received, and I am very confident that this bill will make it out of committee.



## HB118

This past week saw some controversy over HB118, a bill which would make an applicant eligible for legislative scholarships if they are also eligible for in-state tuition. During the long discussion on the floor, I was pulled away by the Speaker, along with several other freshman delegates, for a meeting. It was during this time that Delegate Morgan submitted an amendment that was considered unwelcome by the bill sponsor, as it directly contradicted the spirit of the bill. It was overwhelmingly defeated 40-89. As is standard operating procedure for amendments, the delegates in meetings were not called back since their numbers would not have changed the vote outcome. It was not the only amendment vote that our meeting missed. For the record, I ultimately ended up voting “no” on the bill.

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## County Delegation

On Friday morning in the Baltimore County House Delegation, we heard from representatives from the Maryland State Fair, the executive director of the Valleys Planning Council, and Guinness. The Maryland State Fair has a long history in Baltimore County, with the campus drawing two million visitors per year. They also have a history of taking care of local farmers and businesses, youth groups, emergency services, our schools, and more. They are requesting some financial aide to help improve some infrastructure, and I hope we can find a way to help them.

Teresa Moore gave the delegation an update on solar power in the county and state. While the use of solar has proved to be a good thing in the county, there has been some controversy, particularly regarding the targeting of prime farmland without much, if any, Best,

transparency. The Planning Board reviewed the issue at the one-year mark and recommended amending the regulations to prohibit the use of solar on prime soils, and to avoid impacts to scenic roads and vistas. Commercial solar facilities also must be directed to industrial and manufacturing zones and brownfields.

Finally, a Guinness representative provided an update on their first year in operation. The brewery has been a bigger success than first imagined, which is good for the whole county. So far the brewery has attracted over 200,000 visitors since opening, and they expect to hit 300,000 by the time year one officially wraps up. They are on pace to exceed the 3,000 barrel limit, and they are advocating for raising the cap to 5,000. This is something that will likely end up passing, and hopefully someday some of our local brewers can get to that number!



## Scholarship

Students looking to continue their education after high school should apply for the Maryland Legislative District 8 Scholarship. This year, Delegates Bromwell, Boteler and I will be awarding our scholarship as a team, so you only need to apply once. Applications must be submitted by April 28, and applicants must reside in District 8 to qualify. The application for the scholarship can be found [here](#).

Best,

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