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ASSISTANT MINORITY WHIP

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Legislative Wrap Up January 29, 2010



Maryland Civil Air Patrol

Delegate Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio was inducted as an honorary member of the Maryland Civil Air Patrol this week. The Civil Air Patrol dates back to World War II when civilian pilots patrolled our nation's shores. Since then, they have continued operating as a voluntary organization with three key missions: emergency services (including search and rescue and disaster relief), aerospace education and offering a cadet youth program. They are also the official civilian auxiliary of the United States Air Force.

Unemployment Insurance Changes

In an effort to capture federal stimulus money, the Governor has proposed legislation that would expand the eligibility and increase benefits for unemployed workers seeking unemployment. The emergency legislation would also implement an alternate base period system. While the stimulus money would provide short term funding to cover these expansions, many question what will happen once the stimulus money is gone. Reducing the rates in this manner could result in a longer period of time necessary to rebuild the trust fund, which would actually cost businesses more in the long run. Many organizations testified in opposition to the bill this week including the Maryland Chamber of Commerce, the Restaurant Association of Maryland, the Maryland Retailers Association, the Maryland Motor Truck Association and the National Federation of Independent Business.

Continuing Education in Real Estate

The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation proposed changes to the education requirements for licensed realtors in Maryland this week. House Bill 83 would require licensees to take a three hour course on the principles of agency and agency disclosure before their two-year license renewal and every four years thereafter. The Maryland Association of Realtors supports the legislation with an amendment that would have the change only apply to renewals after January 1, 2012.

Professional Boards:

Land Surveyors, Bay Pilots, Landscape Architects & Plumbers

Approximately 70 entities and professional boards in Maryland are subject to periodic evaluation under the Maryland Program Evaluation Act. This week, the Department of Labor Licensing and Regulations reported to the Economic Matters Committee on four professional boards: the State Board for Professional Land Surveyors, the State Board of Pilots, the State Board of Examiners of Landscape Architects and the State Board of Plumbing. It was recommended that all four boards be reinstated with new sunset dates over the next 9-14 years.

Sex Abuse in Maryland's Juvenile Facilities

An appalling [survey by the Department of Justice](#) was released regarding children in juvenile facilities that are sexually abused. It indicated that nationwide 12% of children in juvenile prisons are sexually victimized. Unfortunately, Maryland was named as one of the worst states in the survey with over 30% of children held at the Backbone Mountain Youth Center in Maryland reporting to have been sexually abused. Many of the incidents involved staff members. "This is truly astounding and unacceptable," said Delegate Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio. "Maryland can do better and so can our Department of Juvenile Services."