

End Of Session 2012

Parliamentarian, Maryland House of Delegates Chair, Montgomery County House Delegation Member, Economic Matters Committee House Chair, Joint Information Technology and Biotechnology Committee Chair, House Banking, Economic Development, Science and Technology Subcommittee

Dear Friend,

The Maryland General Assembly's 2012 Legislative Session concluded at midnight on April 9th. However, for the first time in twenty years, the House and Senate failed to reach an agreement on legislation relating to balancing the budget. Therefore, by law, a "doomsday" budget of \$ 512 million in automatic cuts will go into effect on July 1st, drastically reducing funding for education, grants to assist counties with police, fire and emergency services, and many other deserving programs. This budget will have a very damaging effect on Maryland families; and as a result, the legislature will likely return for a Special Session prior to July 1st to address these issues.

Nonetheless, during the ninety-day Session, many important non-budget related bills were passed and the following is a summary of several of those bills. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and if you have questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at delegate.feldman@gmail.com.

Significant 2012 Bills

One of Maryland's greatest achievements is its educational system. I am proud of Maryland's designation from *Education Week*, the Nation's leading education newspaper, which ranked Maryland's public schools **first in the Nation for a fourth year in a row**. This distinction is a direct result of the significant investment the State has made in K-12 education over the last decade. During my tenure in the House of Delegates, I have supported efforts to increase the investment in our public schools. In the past, Montgomery County has invested hundreds of millions of dollars above the required funding levels mandated by State law, referred to as Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements. However, during the difficult economic times of

the past few years, several counties, including Montgomery, struggled to maintain the MOE funding requirements and were therefore subject to a State penalty. This Session, I worked with my colleagues to secure a waiver of a \$ 25 million State penalty asserted

against Montgomery County and, more importantly, passed the **Maintenance of Effort** bill which alters the process by which counties can obtain waivers from their MOE funding requirements.

The Civil Marriage Protection Act of 2012 establishes that marriage between same sex couples will be valid in the State beginning January 1, 2013. The bill makes Maryland the eighth State in the Nation to legalize same-sex marriage. While many constituents contacted me in support of this legislation and I co-sponsored the bill, I respect the fact that many other constituents have a different point of view. With the possibility that this legislation will be petitioned to referendum, Maryland voters may have an opportunity to decide in November if the Civil Marriage Protection Act should be enacted into law.

The Maryland Offshore Wind Energy Act of 2012 was assigned to the Economic Matters Committee and I worked with my colleagues on the Committee to shepherd this bill successfully to the full House where it passed, 88 - 47. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass out of the Senate and therefore it will not be signed into law this year, unless it is reintroduced during a Special Session.

I co-sponsored the **Bay Restoration Fund** legislation which will enable Maryland to upgrade sixty-seven of its largest wastewater treatment plants and thereby decrease nitrogen pollution by 3.7 million pounds a year. Similarly, the **Stormwater Management - Watershed Protection and Restoration Program** passed this Session. This legislation will give local governments authority to establish an annual stormwater remediation fee for both public and private properties to fund local watershed protection and restoration measures designed to reduce polluted runoff. The United States Environmental Protection Agency had said funds from both of these bills were absolutely necessary for the State to meet its Bay clean-up promises.

The Health Benefit Exchange Act of 2012 establishes a competitive marketplace for Marylanders to buy private individual health insurance, starting January 1, 2014. Marylanders will have access to greater choice in their health insurance plan as mandated by Federal healthcare reform. The Exchange will allow individuals and small business owners to compare prices for health insurance, buy policies and obtain Federal subsidies.

Feldman Bills

Mindful of budgetary constraints this year, I sponsored bills that were intentionally designed to have no fiscal impact on the Budget. I introduced and gained passage of eleven (11) bills that

update, clarify and modernize our laws in several important areas ranging from commercial banking, business and insurance to laws governing estates.

These updates will allow Maryland businesses to compete more effectively with businesses incorporated in other states.

The **Lend Local Act of 2012** will require the State treasurer to designate a \$ 50 million linked deposit pool that local banks can use to make small business loans, creating jobs and strengthening our local economies. As one of the lead sponsors of this bill and Chair of the House Subcommittee on Banking, I believe that this piece of legislation will have a positive impact on Maryland's economy.

I also introduced and gained passage of **House Bill 228 - Consuming Wine Not Bought on Premises** (known as the **Corkage Bill**) which allows an individual who is dining in a restaurant, club or hotel to bring their own wine into the establishment and consume it, so long as the individual receives the approval of the establishment. This practice is already legal in the District of Columbia and Virginia.

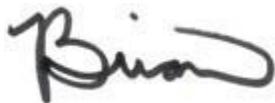
Montgomery County Delegation

As Chair of the Montgomery County House Delegation, I have enjoyed the challenge of leading the State's largest delegation. We secured \$ 57 million in State Capital Funds for Montgomery County projects. These projects will create local jobs and are directed towards our County's community colleges, local schools, parks and recreational facilities, libraries, community centers as well as charitable and cultural organizations. For a complete list of the Montgomery County Capital Projects click here:

<http://www.montgomerycountydelegation.com/documents/2012PressRelease-CapitalProjects.pdf>.

In closing, I want to thank you for contacting me during this Session with your thoughts and comments. It is an honor to represent you in the Maryland General Assembly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Brian J. Feldman