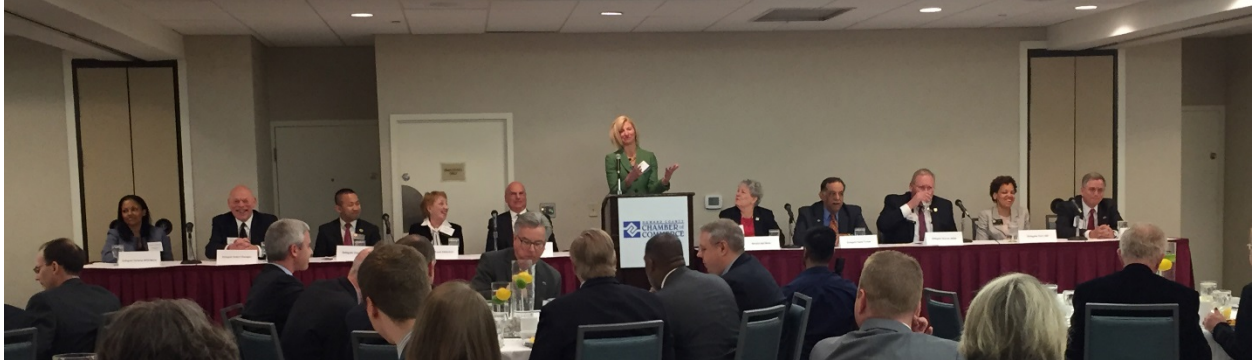


Legislative Wrap-up, April 30, 2015



Howard County Delegation Members Gather to Discuss Recent Session

Centered in front of more than a hundred business and civic leaders, members of the Howard County Legislative Delegation discussed the recent general assembly. Moderated by Maryland Association of Counties Legislative Director Andrea Mansfield, the event was attended by Delegates Atterbeary, Ebersole, Flanagan, Hill, Kittleman, Lam, Miller and Turner; as well as Senators Bates and Kasemeyer. Topics touched on everything from economic development, education, budget, stormwater fees, and sick/safe leave. This was an unusual legislative session as 60 of the 141 delegates were new to the General Assembly. When asked about what they learned, the newer members mentioned needing to form relationships, and how despite the differences, they value the bipartisanship negotiations in Annapolis that are missing in Washington. Senator Kasemeyer mentioned that with so many new people being “put together,” you need to figure out “how to deal with and trust each other, which is fundamental to progress.”

Diplomatic in much of the debate, the panelists did get testy at the mention of the supplemental budget and education funding and its impact on Marylanders. Delegate Lam and Sen. Bates were pleased with the passing of the Stormwater Fee legislation. “It gives the counties the flexibility on how they obtain the needed funds, and there is greater enforcement of the law,” according to Lam. Bates agreed, since “...it gives the power back to the counties. I’m glad it passed.”

Weaving in and out of the discussion was commentary on bi-partisanship and expectations of the Augustine Commission (five bills designed to improve the state’s business climate), although no details were discussed. As far as what’s to come next year, both delegates Miller and Hill agree that the mandatory sick leave bill will be back next session. “There are more than 100 groups involved in the bill. It will be back next year,” predicted Miller.

All of the delegates encouraged visits (with appointment) and involvement from the business community. Delegate Hill stressed the need to hear from all constituents, but be prepared to present both sides. What will the opposition be saying? Delegate Kittleman stated that “In so many ways, Howard County works better than other counties [in Maryland.] I love how this county attacks problems head on. And it works.” And delegate Hill wrapped things up succinctly when she stated that despite the ups and downs, it is important to “hold on to those things that make Maryland great.”