

Week 5 Update

Between crossover and the floor vote on the House budget, this week at the General Assembly was especially busy. Crossover, which took place on Wednesday, is the day when all bills that have passed the House are sent to the Senate for their consideration and vice versa. The days leading up to crossover are typically long days on the floor as we debate and vote on an avalanche of bills ahead of the deadline.

Governor's Transportation Plan Passes the House

On Tuesday, the House of Delegates passed an amended version of the Governor's transportation plan. With a transportation plan failing to pass the State Senate this week, the House's passage of the plan was even more important to reaching a solution to address this pressing issue. There are things I like in this Transportation Bill and things that I do not. But we must do something to address the transportation problem with Virginia's roads and bridges. To do nothing will hurt the economic development of Virginia.

As I mentioned earlier, the bill that passed the House is similar to the Governor's original plan; however, this is not the final version of the bill. We have passed our plan, but we need the Senate to offer their plan by passing out a bill of their own.

House Passes Fiscally Responsible, Structurally Balanced Budget

On Thursday, the House of Delegates voted to pass the House budget with bipartisan support. This budget is a fiscally responsible, structurally balanced budget that includes targeted investments in the core functions of government. The House budget deposits nearly \$100 million into the Rainy Day Fund- over a quarter of the estimated requirement of a \$370 million deposit into the Rainy Day Fund.

To help promote private sector job growth, the House has included funding to create a cyber accelerator in Northern Virginia, a first in the nation program to attract cyber security companies. We have also increased the cap on the angel investor tax credit to \$500,000. Raising this cap will help startup companies attract new investors and the capital needed to help them grow and thrive.

Education

For our K-12 public schools, we have provided funding for the state's share of a 2% pay raise for teachers and support staff and for a grant program that will help localities improve school safety.

In the area of higher education, our budget includes the funding for additional slots at our universities and to increase Tuition Assistance Grants from \$2,800 to \$3,100 per student.

House Republicans are also committed to ensuring the health care safety net for our most vulnerable citizens. Our budget includes funding for an additional 200 Intellectual Disabilities and 50 Developmental Disabilities Medicaid waivers.

As we begin to work with the State Senate on a final budget, we will remain committed to enacting a structurally balanced budget that includes targeted funding in the core areas of government.

Cracking Down on the Sale of Synthetic Drugs

One bill that passed early this week, but has not received much attention, was House Bill 1941 introduced by Delegate Scott Garrett. This bill criminalizes the sale of additional synthetic drugs, also known as “Spice”. Over the past few years, the House has passed several bills that criminalized the sale of these synthetic drugs; however, some have continued to try to find loopholes in the law. A 2012 University of Michigan study found that Spice is one of the most popular illegal drugs among high school students. These are dangerous drugs that can cause hallucinations and even heart attacks. On Tuesday, the House unanimously passed a bill to further restrict the sale of Spice in Virginia. This legislation will likely pass the State Senate as well and be signed into law by Governor McDonnell.

Delegate Morris’ Bills and Resolutions Passed this week

HB1327 - Port of Virginia Economic and Infrastructure Development Zone Grant Fund. Adds the City of Franklin and the Counties of Page and Shenandoah to the list of localities in which certain businesses related to commerce through the Port of Virginia may locate or expand and be eligible to apply for grants based on the number of new jobs created. This was unanimously reported by the Appropriations committee and passed the full House by a vote of 100-0.

HB1559 - Fourth or subsequent DUI. Provides that any person convicted of an offense of §18.2-266 (DUI) after having been convicted of a previous felony DUI or DUI-related offense is guilty of a Class 6 felony for each subsequent DUI. Under current law, penalties are the same but the offenses must occur within a 10-year period and a person could go to jail for a 3rd DUI and upon release from jail obtain a 4th DUI and due to the passage of time from being in jail it will be treated as a 1st DUI. This was unanimously reported by the Appropriations committee and passed the full House by a vote of 100-0.

HB1927 - Emergency medical services personnel; penalty for assault and battery. Adds emergency medical services personnel who are employed by or volunteers of an emergency medical services agency providing services pursuant to an agreement between the agency and a local government to the list of individuals of whom assault and battery may be a Class 6 felony. This was unanimously reported by the Appropriations committee and passed the full House by a vote of 100-0.

Contact Me

As always, my staff and I are here to serve you. I want to hear what you think about the legislation pending before the House, or if there's anything I can do to help you in dealing with a state government agency. My office can be reached at (757) 912-1644 or via the Internet at DelRMorris@house.virginia.gov. If you are planning to visit Richmond during Session, I encourage you to visit me in Room 817.

Links of Interest

Transportation

³⁵₁₇ [Statement of Governor Bob McDonnell on House of Delegates Passage of Transportation Funding and Reform Package](#)

³⁵₁₇ [Governor Calls for Action on Transportation](#)

- [Statement of Governor Bob McDonnell on Senate Democrats Vote against Transportation Legislation](#)

Budget

³⁵₁₇ [Statement of Governor Bob McDonnell on House and Senate Passage of Amendments to Current Biennial Budget](#)

Education

³⁵₁₇ [Governor McDonnell's Legislation to Create Opportunity Education Institution to Turn Around Failing Schools Passes House of Delegates](#)

³⁵₁₇ [Statement of Governor McDonnell on Senate Passage of A-F School Grading System](#)

- [Statement of Governor Bob McDonnell on Senate Democrats Vote against Transportation Legislation](#)
- [Statement of Governor Bob McDonnell on Princeton Review Recognition of UVa. As Nation's 'Best Value Public College'](#)
 - [Governor McDonnell's "Educator Fairness Act" Passes in the Senate on a 40-0 Vote](#)
 - [Statement of Governor McDonnell on House Passage of A-F School Grading System](#)
 - [Virginia Council on Women Announces 2nd Annual STEM Essay Contest "Kickoff" for 2013](#)
 - [Governor McDonnell Announces SAVVY Schools and Communities Recognition Program](#)

Other

[Governor McDonnell Announces an Additional \\$3.9 Million in Community Development Block Grant Funding](#)

Visitors

Realtors, Sheriffs, Boy Scouts, WaWa / Retail Alliance Day, Healing Dogs