



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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Dear Colleagues and Friends:

The 426th regular session of the Maryland General Assembly concluded with over 2,600 bills introduced and only 751 bills passed both chambers. The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland entered the 2009 session with the desire to put forth legislation that would eliminate the disparities within the state and ensure economic opportunities and progress.

This year the following legislative priorities have passed:

SB 186- Correctional Facilities-Released Inmates-Identification Cards Sponsored by Senator Catherine Pugh

This bill will require the Commissioner of Correction to issue an identification card to an inmate before being released from confinement in a State Correctional facility. The identification card must comply with the requirements for secondary identification for the purpose of an identification card issued by the Motor Vehicle Administration.

SB 489- Minority Business Enterprise Certification-Cap on Personal Net Worth Sponsored by Senator Catherine Pugh

This bill requires that the personal net worth cap for eligibility in the State's Minority Business Enterprise program be adjusted annually according to the Consumer Price Index. Personal net worth does not include up to \$500,000 of the cash value of any qualified retirement savings plan or individual retirement account. The Maryland Department of Transportation, in consultation with the Attorney General's office and specified legislative committees must evaluate whether the personal net worth cap should be further adjusted, and report its findings to the General Assembly by December 1, 2010.

SB 568-Minority Business Enterprise Program-Directory of Minority Business Enterprise Sponsored by Senator Catherine Pugh

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Transportation to include in its directory of Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) a list of all MBEs that are ineligible to participate in the State's MBE program because (1) one or more of its owners has a personal net worth that exceeds the statutory cap; or (2) the MBE no longer qualifies as a small business under federal guidelines.

HB 637- Task Force on Prisoner Reentry
Sponsored by Delegate Gerron Levi

This emergency bill establishes a Task Force on Prisoner Reentry. The Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services, or the Secretary's designee, must chair the task force and provide staff support for the taskforce from the Department. An interim report to the Governor and the General Assembly is required by December 31, 2010 and final report of findings and recommendation is required by December 31, 2011.

Under our budgetary priorities:

- Bowie State University received the \$34 million needed for their new fine and performing arts building;
- Coppin State University received \$4.1 million of the \$9.4 million needed for their science and technology center;
- Morgan State University received \$43.5 million of the \$45 million needed for campus-wide renovations, new environment studies and business schools;
- The Minority Outreach and Technical Assistance program funding remained in the budget; and
- The Office of Minority Health received \$335,000 out of \$1 million set aside for infant mortality programs.

Other Supported Legislation

SB 187- State Procurement-Structuring and Bundling of Procurements
Sponsored by Senator Catherine Pugh

This bill enables the population that is most affected from being excluded from the process of contract bid African American firms have not had the ability to procure contracts from State Government in investment and banking services. The bill addresses the undertaking of measures that remove barriers that limit their full participation, including but not limited to developing guidelines that assist in achieving these goals.

SB 211-Minority Business Enterprise Program- Participation by Race or Gender
Sponsored by Senator Catherine Pugh

This bill will authorize a woman-owned business to participate in individual procurement contracts as either a woman-owned business or a business owned by a member of an ethnic or racial minority group for specified purposes within the Minority Business Enterprise Program; altering a provision relating to the Department of Transportation and the application of requirements for its procurement contracts; altering a definition under the Minority Business Enterprise Program; etc.

**SB 241- Education-Suspension and Expulsion Procedure-Attendance-Related Offense
Sponsored by Senator Catherine Pugh**

This bill will prohibit a principal from suspending or expelling a student from school solely for attendance-related offenses. If a principal finds that a suspension of more than 10 school days or expulsion is warranted, the principal immediately shall report the matter in writing to the county superintendent which causes further academic disability of more than likely African American students that exasperates the real problem behind these occurrences.

**SB 248/HB 84- State Government-Commemorate Days-Negro Baseball League
Sponsored by Senator Verna Jones and Delegate Melvin Stukes**

This bill states that the second Saturday in May as Negro Baseball League Day in recognition and support of the few surviving members of the Negro Baseball League.

**SB 279- Criminal Law-Death Penalty-Evidence
Sponsored by Senator Lisa Gladden and the Administration**

This Administration bill restricts the death penalty to cases in which the State presents the court or jury with (1) biological evidence or DNA evidence that links the defendant with the act of murder; (2) a videotaped, voluntary interrogation and confession of the defendant to the murder; or (3) a video recording that conclusively links the defendant to the murder. The bill prohibits a defendant from being sentenced to death if the State relies solely on evidence provided by eyewitnesses in its case.

If the State has already properly filed a notice of intent to seek a death sentence, that notice must be considered withdrawn. In such instance, the State must also be considered to have properly filed notice to seek a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

**SB 946-Minority Business Enterprises Program-Report to Joint Committee on Fair Practices
Sponsored by Senator Catherine Pugh**

This bill requires each unit of the State to submit a certain report regarding the Minority Business Enterprise Program to the Joint Committee on Fair Practices within a certain number of days after the end of the fiscal year.

**HB 41- Health Insurance-Mandated Benefits-Hospitalization and Home Visits Following a Mastectomy
Sponsored by Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam**

This bill will require insurers and HMOs to provide in-patient hospitalization coverage following mastectomy for the treatment of breast cancer for up to 48 hours.

**HB 389-Minority Business Enterprise Program- Prohibitions and Penalties for Contractors
Sponsored by Delegate Herman Taylor, Jr.**

This bill will prohibit a prime contractor from falsely including a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) in a bid or proposal. A contractor may not include a certified MBE in a bid or proposal with requesting, receiving or obtaining the MBE's authorization to identify them in the proposal or bid; notifying the MBE of its inclusion; and actually using the MBE services to perform the contract. In addition, the contractor may not pay the MBE solely for the use of its name in the bid or proposal. The Governor's Office of Minority Affairs must operate a fraud hotline that may be used to report violations.

**HB 507-Hepatitis C-Inmates-Referral to Medical Assistance Program
Sponsored by Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam**

This bill requires DHMH to develop a process to refer an inmate who has been diagnosed with Hepatitis C to the Department of Human Resources for enrollment in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program or the primary adult care program on release of the inmate.

**HB 635- Criminal Procedure-Occupational Licenses or Certificate-Issuance of a Certificate of Employability
Sponsored by Delegate Gerron Levi**

This bill states that the State shall establish a policy to encourage the employment of nonviolent ex-offenders and provide a process through which nonviolent ex-offenders may demonstrate fitness for occupational licenses or certifications required by the State. The bill also states that a nonviolent ex-offender is eligible for a certificate of employment at the time of parole or mandatory supervised release.

**HB 756-Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Provider Competency Program
Sponsored by Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam**

This bill establishes a Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Provider Competency Program where health care providers are offered educational classes to improve their cultural and linguistic competency in order to address the needs of their patients.

**HB 1297-Procurement-Minority Business Enterprise-Prime Contractors
Sponsored by Delegate Herman Taylor, Jr.**

This bill will require the Board of Public Works to include in its regulations for the minority business enterprise program provisions that promote and provide for the counting and reporting of MBEs as prime contractors. This bill also adjusts the annual MBE reporting requirements to reflect these changes.

We thank you for your continued support and look forward to working with you in the future.

Please Save the Date –Our 2009 Legislative Weekend will be held October 1st through October 3rd, 2009 in Annapolis, Maryland.

Yours in Solidarity,

Delegate Veronica Turner
Chair