

SUSAN W. KREBS
Legislative District 9B
Carroll County

Health and Government
Operations Committee

Health Facilities &
Occupations Subcommittee

Public Health & Long Term
Care Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 324
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3200
800-492-7122 Ext. 3200
Fax 410-841-3028
Susan.Krebs@house.state.md.us

The Maryland House of Delegates
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

April 13, 2010

Dear Neighbor:

The confetti and balloons have fallen, signaling the end of the 427th Session of the Maryland General Assembly. Thank you for the honor of representing you for the last eight years here in Annapolis, where I try to be a voice for common sense and fiscal responsibility.

First and foremost, I am extremely pleased to share with you that we **successfully fought off attempts to raise taxes this year**. This is important because Maryland is already the fourth highest taxed state in the nation, and our taxpayers work, on average, 109 days each year to pay their share of the cost of government. This puts our state at an economic disadvantage, especially considering that some of our neighboring states have lower taxes and are aggressively soliciting employers away from our state. **We must ensure that our tax and regulatory environment in Maryland positions us to create and retain jobs.**

I am happy to report major progress in several key areas. We tightened laws against sex offenders and gang leaders; increased access to medical and dental care; and improved public access to the inner workings of the General Assembly. In contrast, the state budget picture worsened, as the majority party continued its long-standing practice of passing unaffordable and unsustainable budgets that spend more than they generate in state revenues. I am very concerned that spending in the \$32 billion budget is creating a perfect storm on the horizon for massive tax increases. As a Member of the House of Delegates, I will continue to vote to hold the line on taxes and advocate for fiscal discipline.

Budget

The budget is the only legislation that the General Assembly is required to pass every year. More than 2,700 additional bills were introduced this year, and 810 of them passed. I voted against the budget for two key reasons:

- The operating budget ignores the \$8 billion deficit facing our state over the next five years, setting the stage for a tax increase after the November election. The shortfall represents more than \$3,800 per Maryland family. With Maryland's historic 7.7 percent unemployment rate, taxpayers can ill afford the massive tax increases that this budget guarantees.
- The capital budget includes \$15 million in local bond bills—Maryland's version of earmarks (the same amount of earmarks as last year). Some of these projects were

inserted at the last minute by Democratic budget leaders to benefit their districts—without holding hearings or filing any paperwork as required by House rules.

We Republicans proposed an alternative budget that would have eliminated the deficit through cuts, reforms and constrained budget growth in the future. Our budget, which was ignored by the majority party, would also reverse the tax increases of 2007—all with NO NEW TAXES and a smaller, less-intrusive government.

Health Care

In my Committee, Health & Government Operations, we focused on how President Obama's healthcare overhaul affects Maryland. I worked to protect our rights to make our own healthcare decisions by co-sponsoring the **Health Care Freedom Act of 2010**. This Constitutional Amendment would have allowed Maryland voters to determine whether they want to participate in the federal healthcare program. Unfortunately, the majority party voted this bill down in Committee and did not allow it to go to the House Floor for a full vote.

Last week, I joined virtually all House Republicans in voting against legislation that sets up a national high-risk pool health insurance program for Maryland. It passed 103-35. This bill is a stop-gap measure that makes health insurance available to the uninsured prior to Obama's full-blown changes taking effect in 2014. The cost? According to legislative analysts, state expenditures will increase by an "indeterminate amount." Outside estimates are in the range of hundreds of millions of dollars.

As a Member of the Health & Government Operations Committee, I listened to thousands of hours of testimony and briefings on health care policy. This has given me a chance to stand up for consumers on a wide array of health insurance and medical issues. Here's a sampling of the bills I co-sponsored this year to improve access to medical and dental care and also to the inner workings of the General Assembly:

- **Nurse Practitioners.** Maryland's critical shortage of primary care physicians will be eased by this new law, which permits Nurse Practitioners to **independently** perform the tasks they are authorized to perform.
- **Dental Hygienists.** Residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities will have new access to oral health because of this new law authorizing dental hygienists to practice independently within their scope of practice without a supervising dentist on the premises.
- **Open Government.** This widely supported nonpartisan bill will help lift the veil of secrecy from the deliberations of the General Assembly. The bill itself did not go anywhere, but legislative leaders have put portions of it into effect administratively. For the first time, committee votes on bills and amendments are being posted on the internet. Also, the House of Delegates plans to begin the audio- and video-streaming of committee hearings on the internet next year.

Public Safety

- **Child Sex Offenders-Diminution Credits.** Eliminates the use of "good-time" credits that shorten the time inmates serve if they are convicted of first- or second-degree rape or sexual offense against a victim under the age of 16.
- **Jessica's Law Enhancement.** This long-overdue law triples the current sentence and requires a 15-year mandatory minimum sentence for second-degree child rape.

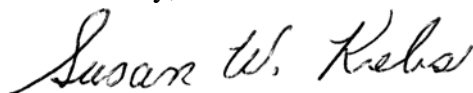
- **Maryland Gang Prosecution Act of 2010.** Prosecutors will have new tools to target gang leaders and extend sentences for gang members convicted of certain crimes. Also, communication will be increased between schools and police about gang activity.
- **Drunk Driving.** An effort to require ignition interlock systems for convicted drunk drivers failed. I have co-sponsored this legislation for years, and am very disappointed.
- **Cell Phones.** Effective Oct. 1, this ban on the use of **hand-held phones** while driving will have the most immediate impact on the greatest number of people. Drivers will be prohibited from using a hand-held phone while their vehicle is in motion, except to begin or end a call or to turn the phone on or off. The only exceptions are for emergency calls, such as 9-1-1, and for on-duty law enforcement and emergency workers. The ban does not apply to calls while the car is stopped—for example, at a red light.
- **Transgender Anti-Discrimination.** This ill-conceived bill died in my committee. This legislation would have allowed males who purport to be females into women's and girls' bathrooms, dressing rooms and locker rooms. Be forewarned: This bill, introduced every year since 2007, will be back after the election.

Education

- **BOAST (Building Opportunities for All Students and Teachers).** My office received many e-mails about this proposed state business tax credit, which would have helped students and teachers in nonpublic and public schools. It was defeated in the House Ways & Means Committee on the last day of Session. However, lawmakers did approve \$4.4 million in funding for textbooks and technology in nonpublic schools.
- **Expansion of Unionization to Home Childcare Providers.** Family childcare providers who care for low-income children and accept their government vouchers were the biggest losers this Session. Even though they work in their own homes, they will have to start paying union dues/service fees. Many Carroll County providers have stated they will stop accepting children who present these vouchers if this bill becomes law. This bill was a successful initiative of the powerful Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and will increase their membership dramatically, bringing millions of dollars into their coffers. I have been strongly opposed to this measure.
- **Education Funding Maintained.** Despite challenging economic times, the Legislature maintained funding levels for K-12 education. In addition, the budget maintains funding for public colleges and universities at last year's levels--\$1.2 billion. While the recession forced an end to the four-year tuition freeze, increases were limited to 3 percent for next fall.

After three months in Annapolis, I am looking forward to spending some much-needed time at home with my family and in my community. Thanks to my talented staff, my office will continue to provide strong constituent service throughout the year. I am very grateful for your interest and input on these and other issues. I look forward to seeing you in the community and encourage you to call or write if there is any way I can be of assistance. Once again, thank you for the honor of serving you as Delegate.

Sincerely,



Susan W. Krebs
Legislative District 9B

