



## The Maryland House of Delegates

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Roy Tarbutton  
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Dear Roy:

The 2009 Session of the Maryland General Assembly ended at midnight on April 13<sup>th</sup>. It was an eventful session in many ways. In order to let you know the outcomes of the legislation that may have concerned you, I thought I would summarize what I believe are the high points of the Session.

**Budget:** Due to tax-revenue shortfalls resulting from the recession and to persistent over-spending, the State budget for 2010 was forecasted to be out of balance by an astounding \$2.8 billion, or \$1,300 per Maryland household. This shortfall was addressed by making a record \$1 billion in reductions in planned spending, \$800 million in transfers from the State's savings accounts, and \$1 billion in federal stimulus money. These steps solved the immediate crisis without tax increases, but the long-term outlook is poor. The challenge will be to effect an additional nearly \$1 billion in spending cuts in each of 2011 and 2012 to balance future budgets with no new taxes. I intend to work hard over the interim to develop a budget proposal that will do exactly that.

**Taxes:** The good news is that there were no new taxes this year and a modest tax cut on automobile purchases. However, Maryland remains the 4<sup>th</sup> most-taxed State in the U.S. and the 6<sup>th</sup> worst in business tax climate. To help address this travesty, Senator Harris and I introduced the Taxpayer Protection Act, which would have required a 60% super-majority of the Legislature to raise taxes. Unfortunately, the bill failed.

**Illegal Immigration:** As a result of pressure from the Federal Government, the Governor and Legislature acted at last to limit the practice of issuing driver's licenses to illegal immigrants. I am proud to have co-sponsored a bill that would have ended the practice entirely. Unfortunately, the bill failed. The approach which was adopted would allow illegal immigrants who have Maryland licenses to renew them until 2015. I opposed this approach.

**Public Safety:** The Governor attempted to repeal Maryland's death-penalty statute. That attempt failed. A compromise was reached to tighten-up the circumstances

under which capital punishment can be invoked. I voted against the compromise. Separately, I offered a bill to require a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years for a second-degree sex offense against a child. Sadly, the bill failed. Finally, the Legislature approved the use of speed cameras in Maryland, which will result in citizens receiving a bill in the mail for an infraction they may not even know they committed.

**Business Issues:** The Legislature passed “agency fee” legislation that allows unions to charge fees to State employees who are not union members. I believe this legislation encroaches on employees’ rights of freedom to assemble (or not to assemble) by effectively forcing them into unions. Separately, the Governor’s attempt to re-regulate the electric-utility industry failed. This proposal failed due in part to skepticism over the Governor’s claims that re-regulation would reduce retail prices to consumers.

**Same-Sex Marriage:** Maryland continues to be a battleground State over this contentious issue. Competing efforts to define marriage as between a man and a woman and to legalize same-sex marriage both failed. However, the Legislature did grant certain tax benefits to same-sex couples, thereby continuing the trend of the last several years of gradually chipping away at traditional marriage. I will continue to support the traditional definition of marriage.

**Education:** The Legislature agreed to fully fund Maryland public schools and to freeze tuitions in the University of Maryland System for another year. Maryland public schools were ranked #1 in the Nation by the highly respected *Education Week* magazine. The District 31 Delegation completed its study of the 24 schools in District 31. Our report is available online at [www.district31schoolassessment.org](http://www.district31schoolassessment.org).

**Environment:** Several major environmental bills were adopted this year. Though I voted generally to support environmental legislation, including a bill to reduce greenhouse gases by 25% by 2020, I could not support two significant bills. One grants “standing” to environmental groups and thereby allows them to mount lawsuits even in situations in which they do not have a direct interest. The other requires new and replacement septic systems near the water to be nitrogen-reducing, but the bill does not provide adequate financial reimbursement to homeowners. Unfortunately, the Legislature voted against my efforts to include full reimbursement to homeowners.

I am honored to serve the citizens of Maryland in the General Assembly. If you have any questions regarding these or any other issues, please contact me at any time.

Sincerely,



Steven R. Schuh  
Delegate, Anne Arundel County