

**THE RON REPORT**  
(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

# **THE RON REPORT**

**The 2008 Legislative Session Summary from Delegate Ron George**

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# THE RON REPORT

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With a desire to inform you of my effort to represent you, I submit the following report. Please note: This report is not printed at taxpayer expense or through public funds.

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By Authority: Committee To Elect Ron George, Donald Lee, Treasurer

## ISSUES

These were the major issues of the 2008 session. There were many others I supported and voted for as well as many the majority party avoided.

- 1 BUDGET AND TAXES** (Growing the size of government)
- 2 ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION** (Legal is good)
- 3 ENVIRONMENT** (They called me The Green Elephant)
- 4 EDUCATION** (It's suppose to be about the children)
- 5 SMALL BUSINESS** (Driver of the economy)
- 6 CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY** (Local and statewide)
- 7 HEALTH CARE** (Government cannot run it)
- 8 VOTING** (Don't "Fix" it)
- 9 VETERANS AFFAIRS** (Not to be forgotten)
- 10 OTHER ISSUES**

**THE RON REPORT**  
(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

**BUDGET AND TAXES**

As you know, the Democrats pushed through the largest tax hike in Maryland history this past November. In the just finished regular session they continued to search for ways to siphon even more from you with the intention to further grow government. They tried taxing teeth whitening, laser eye surgery, body piercing, and eight other services. Other new taxes would increase what you pay for heating and cooling systems for your home, tires for your cars, and premiums for your health insurance. They again reintroduced legislation to take the balance from gift certificates and gift cards if you do not use them and put it in the General Fund. **With gas prices on the rise, another new hike in electric rates, and the cost of consumer goods at all-time highs, working families need relief – not more taxes.**

*“You attempt to show why the state’s revenues are low in order to support tax increases, yet your figures prove there is less revenue because of an economic downturn. Is there anything in our state’s history or anywhere in the country that shows that this is the time to push a huge tax increase? It seems that this is not the time to drag more anchors out the back of the economic boat!”* [Ron George, quoted on WBAL television news during joint hearings during the Governor’s Special (Tax) Session.]

The Democrats could not control their spending, even with the outcry from their constituents on the new taxes from November. The proof is in the budget. The Governor proposed his ‘09 budget of \$31.5 billion. That is a growth in spending of \$1.8 billion dollars. The overall increase includes a 3.6% increase in education funding, as well as a 9% increase in higher education. Other significant increases include more money for environmental funding and Medicaid expenditures. The Governor gave the impression that his proposal abolished 500 vacant positions that we were still paying salaries for. In truth, he did not mention that he increased positions by 898 for an overall net gain of 398 positions. The final proposal after Senate and House amendments put the increase in spending at 4.6%

**Please note that when Appropriations Committee Chairman Norm Conway said on the House floor that the total budget was up \$1.2 billion and when Majority Leader Kumar Barve said the total budget was up 4%, “and that’s less than the rate of inflation”, they were misleadingly using a false figure for 2008 which reduces the apparent rate of growth between 2008 and 2009. You see, the Democrats purposely increased the 2008 budget during the session with supplemental budget increases, thus making the jump to 2009 appear less severe. Smoke and mirrors!**

I was a leader in the fight to repeal the tax on computer services. I co-sponsored four Computer Tax Repeal Bills, and I helped organize the Tech businesses. Unfortunately, the governor and his cronies decided to counter the repeal by adding an additional income tax on higher income earners who had just had their taxes increased in November. During the November Special Session, our Maryland legislature changed the fixed rate of 4.5% on all earners to a “progressive” tax code that would increase taxes on high earners at a new rate of 5.5%. Now O’Malley raised it another .75% so those making over 1 million a year saw their total income tax increase from 4.5% to 6.25%, 33% more in ‘08 than ‘07. This means they will not be investing much in our economy this year. And just as was the case with the proposed computer tax, many of the 6,000 “millionaires” will consider living elsewhere (their taxes are much lower in surrounding jurisdictions).

## THE RON REPORT

(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

*“(Democrats) don’t understand what they are doing. (The taxes) are hitting the people who invest and create the jobs” – Ron George, Capital Newspaper, 11-11-07, during the Governors Special (Tax) session.*

### I co-sponsored the following Taxpayer-Friendly measures:

HB 187, HB 196, HB 253, HB 326 - Repeals of the Computer Services Tax – Tech companies could simply avoid the tax by moving their modems out of state or by moving their company to a friendlier state. Many of the Democrats that voted for the tax last “Special Session”, “co-sponsored” a bill to repeal it that was designed to die. This would give them cover. However, the Tech people lobbied hard and I asked each of them during the hearing to explain to the Committee that the State would loose more revenue by keeping the tax than if they repealed it. The Tech testifiers are business people like myself and their answers were convincing. It soon became apparent that the Democrats cover was not going to work and that they needed to repeal the tax. So they tied the repeal to an alternative tax increase and now run for cover by saying they voted for the repeal...when actually they were voting for another increase in its place. I was proud to have stood with the Tech Industry as they fought for this. Most are small businesses. They were forced to sacrifice income in order to come to Annapolis to testify. In the end they saved their businesses and supported Maryland by helping to repeal this.

HB 122 – Income Tax – Subtraction Modification – Retirement Income. Since retirement income does not increase even though costs do, we should have given them this break. Other states do!

HB 189 – State Property Tax – Homeowners Property Tax Assessment Cap Reduction.

HB 193 – Maryland Estate Tax – Family Property Protection Act. This would have killed the Death Tax which forces surviving family members to sell their homes, farms, and/or family business in order to pay the tax.

HB 358 – Maryland Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2008 (**Passed**). This is a huge victory for us because you will now be able to see where the money comes from and where it goes.

HB 530 – Limit On Growth In State Spending

HB 999 – Income Tax – Subtraction Modification – Retirement Income. Would help keep our retirees from moving to Pennsylvania.

HB 871 – Sales and Use Tax Exemption – University and College Textbooks.

HB1256 – Homestead Property Tax Credit.

HB1299 – Taxpayers Bill of Rights. Would have held spending increases to rate of inflation and population growth.

HB 1521 – Sales and Use Tax – Exemption – Veterans’ Organizations.

HB 1570 – Motor Vehicle Excise Tax – Leased Vehicles – Application of Trade-In Value. This added Leased Vehicles to an amendment I proposed and which was accepted in my sub-committee during the November Special Session which mandated that the trade-in value of a car be deducted BEFORE the excise tax is added. (Passed)

**THE RON REPORT**  
(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

**MORE TAXES**  
(Liberals never stop searching for more ways to increase  
the size and scope of government)

Following is a list of some of the new taxes proposed during the 2008 Session. 45 of them had Democrats as lead sponsors. One had a Republican. Names in parenthesis represent the sponsors of the respective bills. Because their constituents were still grumbling about the new tax increases from November, most of the proposed new taxes were designed to be more palatable by targeting “sin” taxes and luxury services.

**Income and Consumption Taxes**

**1. State Income Tax Surcharge – SB 1004 (Democrat Sen. Jones)**

a) After Increasing the highest state income tax bracket from 4.5% to 5.5% in November’s Special Session, the Legislature increased it again to 6.5% and made it retroactive to this past January 1<sup>st</sup>. Thus a 33% increase in one year

b) About \$231.8 million in new taxes expected in the first year

**2. State Income Tax Surcharge - HB 737 (Elliott, et al)**

a) Imposes a state income tax surcharge of \$1,000 per single and \$2,000 per couple for not having health care insurance if the person’s income is at least \$50,000 (\$100,000 for couples)

b) About \$43.2 million in new taxes expected in the first year

**3. Hotel Tax - HB 178 (Democrat Delegate Barve, et al)/SB 131 (Democrat Senator King, et al)**

a) Authorizes municipalities to impose a maximum 2% hotel tax

b) Additional \$3.2 million in taxes expected per year

**4. Alcohol Tax Increase - HB 904 (Democrat Delegate Gutierrez, et al)**

a) More than doubles alcohol tax from \$1.50 to \$3.50 for distilled spirits, \$0.40 to \$1.00 for wine, and \$0.09 to \$0.25 for beer.

b) Approximately \$43.9 million in new taxes expected in the first year

**5. Alcohol Tax Increase - HB 1310 (Democrat Delegate Bronrott, et al)/ SB 562 (Democrat Senator Madaleno, et al)**

a) Triples alcohol tax from \$1.50 to \$4.50 for distilled spirits, \$.40 to \$1.20 for wine, and \$.09 to \$.27 for beer

b) Approximately \$57.5 million in new taxes in the first year.

**6. Alcohol Tax Increase - SB 232 (Democrat Senator Forehand)**

a) Triples alcohol tax from \$1.50 to \$4.50 for distilled spirits and \$0.40 to \$1.20 for wine, and raises the beer tax by 600%, from \$0.09 to \$0.54

b) Approximately \$86 million in new taxes expected in the first full year in effect

**7. Tobacco Tax Increase – HB 1095 (Democrat Delegate Rosenberg, et al)/ SB 513 (Democrat Senator McFadden)**

a) Increases the tax for tobacco products other than cigarettes from 15% to 25% of the wholesale price

**8. Tobacco Paraphernalia Tax – SB 363 (Democrat Senator Muse)**

a) Imposes a \$20 surcharge on the purchase of tobacco paraphernalia

**9. “Little Cigar” Tax Increase – HB 617 (Democrat Delegate Tarrant, et al)**

a) Redefines cigarettes to include “little cigars” so the higher cigarette tax applies to “little cigars”

b) About \$1.9 million in new tax revenue expected in first year

# THE RON REPORT

(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

**10. Moist Snuff and “Little Cigar” Tax Increase** – SB 383 (Democrat Senator Currie and Democrat Senator McFadden)

- a) Increases moist snuff tax from 15% of wholesale value to 54-cents per ounce
- b) Redefines cigarettes to include “little cigars” so the higher cigarette tax applies to “little cigars”
- c) About \$3.9 million in new tax revenue expected in first year

**11. Ammunition Tax** - HB 517 (Democrat Delegate Burns, et al)

- a) Requires a new tax of 5-cents per round of encoded ammunition (in addition to the new 6% sales tax)

## Gas and Vehicle-Related Taxes

**12. Gas Tax Increase** – SB 567 (Democrat Senator Garagiola, et al)

- a) Increases the gas tax by 33% (from 23.5-cents per gallon to 31.5-cents per gallon)
- b) Repeals the computer services tax and shifts the tax burden to gas consumers

**13. Fuel Efficiency Vehicle Surcharge** – HB 338 (Democrat Delegate Cardin, et al)

- a) Imposes a \$250 surcharge on each new automobile if the fuel economy rating of the automobile is less than or equal to 15 miles per gallon

**14. Tire Tax** – HB 338 (Democrat Delegate Cardin, et al)

- a) Imposes a \$10 surcharge on each tire sold other than an energy-efficient tire

## Property Taxes

**15. Property Tax Increase** – HB 512 (Democrat Delegate McIntosh)/ SB 302 (Democrat Senator Conway)

- a) Imposes an additional state property tax of \$0.02 per \$100 of assessed value for most property and \$0.05 per \$100 of assessed value for operating real property of a public utility
- b) About \$130.7 million in new taxes expected in the first year

**16. HVAC Tax** – HB 338 (Democrat Delegate Cardin, et al)

- a) Imposes a \$100 surcharge on the sale of any residential heating or cooling system other than an energy-efficient heating or cooling system or solar energy property

**17. Building Excise Tax** - HB 663 (Democrat Delegate Barve, et al)

- a) Authorizes municipalities to impose building excise taxes – in addition to the building excise taxes already imposed by counties

**18. Fertilizer Application Impact Fee** - HB 466 (Democrat Delegate Kullen)

- a) Requires that homeowners pay a new fee of 10% of the total cost of applying fertilizer to residential land

**19. Recordation Tax Increase** - HB 260 (Democrat Delegate Kaiser, et al)/ SB 559 (Democrat Senator Madaleno, et al)

- a) Would subject indemnity mortgages to the recordation tax
- b) Montgomery County expects \$30 million in taxes, a 30% increase over current collections
- c) Harford County expects \$750,000 in taxes, a 4% increase over current collections
- d) Other counties still calculating their specific increase

## Health Care-Related Taxes

**20. Health Insurance Premium Tax** – HB 1093 (Democrat Delegate Morhaim)

- a) 50% increase in the health insurance premium tax from 2% to 3%
- b) Additional \$20.3 million in taxes in the first year

**21. Mandatory Employer-Provided Health Insurance** – HB 1540 (Democrat Delegate Benson, et al)

# THE RON REPORT

(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

- a) Mandates that employers provide health insurance coverage at an expense to the employer of at least 7.5% of wages paid to employees
- b) In the alternative, the employer will be required to pay into the state's Health Trust Fund

**22. Teeth Whitening Tax** – HB 614 (Democrat Delegate Ali)

- a) Applies the 6% sales tax to teeth whitening services

**23. Laser Eye Surgery Tax** – HB 614 (Democrat Delegate Ali)

- a) Applies the 6% sales tax to laser eye surgery

**24. Breast Reduction or Augmentation Tax** – HB 614 (Democrat Delegate Ali)

- a) Applies the 6% sales tax to breast reduction or augmentation services

**25. Rhinoplasty Tax** – HB 614 (Democrat Delegate Ali)

- a) Applies the 6% sales tax to rhinoplasty surgery

**26. Face Lift Tax** – HB 614 (Democrat Delegate Ali)

- a) Applies the 6% sales tax to face lift surgery

**27. Liposuction Tax** – HB 614 (Democrat Delegate Ali)

- a) Applies the 6% sales tax to liposuction surgery

**28. Gastric Bypass Surgery Tax** – HB 614 (Democrat Delegate Ali)

- a) Applies the 6% sales tax to gastric bypass surgery

**29. Laser Hair Removal Tax** – HB 614 (Democrat Delegate Ali)

- a) Applies the 6% sales tax to laser hair removal services

**30. Tanning Services Tax** – HB 250 (Democrat Delegate Morhaim, et al)

- a) Applies the 6% sales tax to tanning services
- b) About \$545,600 in new tax revenue is expected in the first year

**31. Tattooing Tax** – HB 614 (Democrat Delegate Ali)

- a) Applies the 6% sales tax to tattooing services

**32. Body Piercing Tax** – HB 614 (Democrat Delegate Ali)

- a) Applies the 6% sales tax to body piercing services

## Business-Related Taxes

**33. Mixed Martial Arts Tax** – HB 795 (Democrat Delegate Reznik, et al)/ SB 649 (Democrat Senator Conway)

- a) Imposes a new mixed martial arts license fee of \$10 per participant, \$15 per judge, and \$25 per manager per year
- b) Imposes a new tax on mixed martial arts admission fees of \$200 or 10% of gross receipts, whichever is greater
- c) Imposes a new tax on mixed martial arts television charges of 10% of gross receipts

**34. Unused Gift Card Assessment** – HB 613 (Democrat Delegate Pena-Melnyk, et al)/ SB 998 (Democrate Senators Pugh and Harrington)

- a) Requires companies to pay unused gift certificate and gift card balances to the state government
- b) About \$5.7 million to be collected by the government in 2009 and \$55.7 million anticipated by 2013

**35. Commercial Bank Fee Increases** – HB 752 (Democrat Delegate Chair, Economic Matters Committee)

## THE RON REPORT

(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

a) Substantially increases fees imposed on commercial banks, including a 1000% fee increase on a new commercial bank charter examination from \$1,500 to \$15,000

36. **Clean Air Permit Fee Increase** – SB 442 (Democrat Senator Frosh, et al)

a) Doubles the maximum clean air permit fee from \$25 to \$50 per ton

b) More than doubles the maximum fee for a single source from \$200,000 to \$500,000 and in 2010 would remove the maximum fee for a single source altogether

37. **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Fee** – HB 712 (Democrat Delegate Barve, et al)/ SB 309 (Democrat Senator Pinsky, et al)

a) Authorizes a greenhouse gas emissions fee with a maximum fee of four-cents per ton of carbon dioxide equivalent emitted

Compiled through the help of The Maryland Republican Party Research Department. Visit the MDGOP Web site ([www.mdgop.org](http://www.mdgop.org))

## ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

I was the lead sponsor of HB288 – The Proof Of Legal Presence Act of 2008. The bill had 58 co-sponsors. Like last year, it failed in committee by a 2 vote margin. We are the only state in the Union that has not moved toward requiring someone to either show citizenship or that they are here legally before obtaining a driver's license. I argued the need for this requirement on talk radio, local forums, newspaper articles and Op-Ed pieces. I believe the argument for legal presence is firmly on the side of the majority. I showed that this is not "anti-immigration", but rather it is for the rule of law, the need to protect our infrastructure from collapsing and our hospitals from closing, and that it is necessary for our security.

Security – Maryland's proximity to Washington D.C, and the fact that Maryland is home to the NSA, The United States Naval Academy, the 95 Corridor, The Harbor Tunnel and the Port of Baltimore as well as BWI Airport, combined with our issuing of Driver's Licenses without proof of legal presence means we are an easy target for terrorists.

Infrastructure – When a local elementary school is over capacity within two years of being a new school, and parents and teachers are upset that students ability to learn is distracted with language and other issues; when traffic and housing and sewer problems are caused by illegal boarding houses; when Prince George's Hospital is now being kept operational by an additional 50 million dollars a year from "emergency" tax dollars; we have infrastructure issues caused primarily from the large influx of illegal immigrants coming to Maryland, the last state to award licenses to illegals. **The Maryland MVA cannot handle the 660% increase between '07 and '08 of out-of-country applicants. In 2007 they processed 1,054 out-of-country applicants each month. In 2008 the number has increased to 2,000 per WEEK!** I have ads from Hispanic Newspapers from around the country that say in Spanish "Undocumented friends, come to Maryland. We will help you get a driver's license, the first step in allowing you to stay." The rate of increase will continue to grow. CASA is registering them to vote. It seems the Dems have a plan to stop these close elections for Governor. No wonder they won't act!

Health – Besides the hospital emergency room over crowding, any foreigner that has a disease or needs an operation can come here illegally and readily receive free care or a free operation in our hospitals. This puts us at a huge risk for infectious diseases. California had 80 health care facilities close because of the influx they had before requiring proof of legal presence. But now that we are the last state not to require it, our situation is about to get much worse.

## THE RON REPORT

(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

Next year, look for the federal government to start penalizing O'Malley's little kingdom. We are holding back the nation from having the needed uniform national licensing laws asked for by the 9/11 commission.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

I came to office promising to work for an environmental policy that does not demonize or disenfranchise individuals that live, recreate, and work near the water precisely because of their love of the environment. These individuals are waterfront property owners, boaters, local businesses, farmers, and watermen. Instead, I promised to support initiatives that empowered these people as part of the solution. I followed through on that promise last year and, once again, proved it could be done this year.

**I was the lead sponsor of HB 1056 - WETLANDS AND WATERWAYS PROGRAM. (Passed) This was signed into law on April 24, 2008.**

Imagine the stunned expressions on the members of the House Environmental Matters Committee when they saw the following panel all testifying in favor of an important environmental bill: The Maryland Homebuilders Association, The Aggregates, The Maryland Chamber of Commerce, and waterfront homeowners, sitting **with** The Maryland Department of the Environment, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, The Terrapin Institute and other environmental groups. I promised to bring them together and I delivered. My bill was an answer to the fact that many people try to get around environmental inspectors, not because they are enemies of the environment, but because the inspectors are overworked and can hold up projects for many days before they can do their required inspection. The result was that the homebuilder had no predictability; homeowners were eating large costs of delay; and the environment suffered when the land near the waterways was not built on in an environmentally friendly manner. For some, in order to do business, it was easier to build it and get slapped with a fine rather than to follow the law. Some property owners had built into the waterway and eventually, despite the fine, ended up owning the additional land through adverse possession. Many of us could not understand how something could be built without the awareness of inspectors.

My bill charges a fee upfront to the waterfront homeowner, yet actually saves them money by erasing delays. The fee pays for additional inspectors that are used only for this purpose. Left over funds are put in a new Wetlands and Waterways Program Fund (established by the bill) to help the environment. The money cannot revert to the General Fund, meaning it is used only for the purpose intended. The fee is based only on the land impacted by the construction, not the total property.

I was also the **lead sponsor** of:

HB 562 – Transportation – Rail Transportation Between Annapolis and the Washington and Baltimore Areas – Feasibility Study

HB 563 – Transportation – Annapolis Light Rail – Feasibility Study

## THE RON REPORT

(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

Note: These two feasibility study bills never came out of the Environmental Matters Committee, **however, as a direct result of the hearing, the Maryland Department of Transportation agreed to add this study to their 2009 grant program.**

**I was also a co-sponsor on the following Environmental bills:**

HB 117 – Real Property – Solar Collector Systems **(Passed)**

HB 140 – Income Tax – Credit for Cellulosic Ethanol Technology Research and Development **(Passed)**

HB 377 – Solar and Geothermal Tax Incentive and Grant Program **(Passed)**

HB 581 – Environment – Bay Restoration Fund – Authorized Uses of Fund **(Passed)**

## EDUCATION

Maryland is now ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> nationally in its public school education. The year started with Governor O' Malley politicizing and criticizing State School Superintendent Nancy Grasmick. He was still furious over the State's attempt to take over failing Baltimore City schools when he was Mayor of Baltimore. He finally realized that there are reasons that the Governor is not allowed to fire the Superintendent and that the position is non-political. He also realized that polls showed her success was resonating with Marylanders.

I fought the Department of Labor's takeover of Workforce Education, including education within the Correctional Institutions, from the Maryland Department of Education. MSDE has been responsible for workforce education and **has these programs ranked second in the nation.** The Labor Unions saw a chance to increase their numbers by taking these programs over and moving the graduates right into the Unions. Thus Workforce Education is being moved to Community Colleges (who were on board with it because they are promised more money) and the Unions got their way. Apparently MSDE's national ranking in this area does not stop the Maryland Legislature from claiming it needed fixing. So many of them do whatever the Unions tell them to do. This was not pro-labor, it was only pro-labor unions. Politicians forget that it's about the students... "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

**I co-sponsored the following education pieces of legislation:**

HB 185 – Parental Choice Scholarship Program

HB 186 – Great Schools Tax Credit Program

HB 188 – Smart Start Scholarship Program

HB 192 – State Board of Education Members – Qualification

HB 199 – Public Schools – Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation – Policy and Disciplinary Standards. **(Passed)**

HB 812 – Building Opportunities for All Students and Teachers (BOAST) in Maryland Tax Credit.

HB 854 – Income Tax – Credit for Providing Adult Literacy Programs

## THE RON REPORT

(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

HB 1158 – Safe Schools Reporting Act (Passed)

### SMALL BUSINESS

*“They say that there are two things that one should never wish to see being made. One is sausage, the other is law. The difference is that the people making sausage know what they are doing. In Maryland, laws are made that affect the economy by legislators who overwhelmingly have no knowledge of economics.”*

*Delegate Ron George*

As a small business owner, I am aghast at the ignorance within the legislature of how the free market system works, creates jobs and a broader tax base. Yet I am undeterred in the defense of free market economics.

**Please refer to the tax section of this report to see all the proposed business taxes that I debated against within the Ways and Means Committee and on the House floor.**

In addition, I rose and spoke against the expansion of flexible leave. Unfortunately, many religious groups have no idea what it does and supported what they viewed as a justice issue that allows workers to take off when a loved one is ill. I voted against HB 40, the Flexible Leave Act. It creates an employer mandate with the government mandating how employers administer paid sick leave. Employers would be forced to ensure their paid sick leave programs expand the coverage to family members and close relationships. Mandating how and when paid leave can be utilized will have the unintended result of employers simply not offering paid sick leave so they are not adversely impacted by a resulting increase in their accounts payable. This bill expands coverage over the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), it restricts employers in questioning if an employee is abusing it, and it keeps the employer from providing disciplinary action.

In my business I give time off for family needs. It is my decision based on fairness and my desire to keep good employees. This April, I gave a full time employee 3 paid days off (which she combined with her 2 days off) to witness her first grandchild being born in North Carolina. She was very grateful. She did not feel it was a right or that it was owed to her. I had to pay extra to have another employee cover for her, although I cannot afford to always do this. Employees will easily feel this is their right. Many people argued that this will help keep people from lying that they are sick in order to take off because now the owner must let them off if they say it is to help a loved one. In fact, more lying will occur since the employer is not allowed to question it. Businesses will need more employees to cover. The bill offers a kind thought, but no sense. The only good news is that, in reality, they cannot legislate that a business does this. So they added the amendment that states that **only the businesses that offer flexible leave are the ones that must expand it** to visiting and caring for relatives, dependents, or close friends. I asked the proponents if they would support a bill that did away with flexible leave and they said "no". I responded that they just did **because now no one will offer it.** Employers will continue to do what they can to help employees when things come up. However, they will not openly offer flexible leave to applicants since it will require larger accounts payable and larger payrolls. We also amended it to exclude those businesses with 15 or less full time employees. I would hope this one gets criticized like the computer tax did.

## THE RON REPORT

(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

*“Every time government tries to meddle in business, there are ramifications. If you have 10 employees, it’s another reason not to hire the 11<sup>th</sup>.” [Delegate Ron George, Capital Newspaper, 5-9-07, on government attempts to set employee limits]*

**Liberals new game plan is to pit employee against employer since there are more employees than employers. This makes these liberal politicians into a new union-type representative who can give employees the power to run businesses through them (the government) while defining fairness in ways that favor them (thus driving businesses under and costing jobs).**

### **Goodbye Free Market... Hello Animal Farm!!!!**

**I sponsored the following pro-business legislation:**

**HB 1056 – Environment – Water Management Administration. (See the environment section of this report).** Gives homeowners and homebuilders predictability and cuts cost overruns while helping the environment. **(Passed)**

**“Seller’s Privilege” Amendment – attached to Special Session sales-tax bill.** My amendment did away with law that said a retailer could not offer to pay the sales tax. This means a business owner in Maryland can compete with the internet and with Delaware by paying the sales-tax for their customer. This amendment helps the Eastern Shore make a sale where they are struggling to compete with Delaware because of our sales-tax. It also helps Main Street Maryland compete with the internet. **(Passed)**

**Please refer to the tax section of this report to see all the taxes (on businesses and individual who purchase goods) which I fought against on committee. In addition, I fought the 34% increase<sup>1</sup> on income taxes on the higher earners which translates into a reduction in investment by the locals that have had money to invest. We continue to follow New Jersey’s actions which have more and more businesses migrating out of that state each year.**

*“Taxes by themselves are not unacceptable, Mr. George said, but when government encourages residents to flee its borders for tax breaks, the whole economic base will shatter.” –Ron George, Capital Newspaper (11-11-07) during the Governor’s Special (Tax) Session.*

*“Only the Governor could call a tax increase a tax cut,” said Delegate Ron George, “He’s playing classic class warfare.” Capital Newspaper (9-20-07).*

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<sup>1</sup> There was a 20% increase on these in the Special Session in November, and another 14% increase on the same people in this session.

## THE RON REPORT

(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

### CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY

#### Drug Free Zones

I was the lead sponsor of HB 1054 City of Annapolis – Drug Free Zones. The bill passed unanimously in the county delegation. The chairman of the Judiciary Committee does not like the bill. He is known to not like stiffer penalties and mandatory sentences. He felt his opinion was too important to afford local courtesy to the delegation. The bill's hearing showed broad support across lines of gender, race, income levels and political party. It keeps the dealers away from the children within 1,000 feet of a community or recreation center within the city. This 1,000 foot buffer covers most of the high crime areas in the City.

#### Expansion of Department of General Services Police

I was a co-sponsor of HB 1550, along with my District 30 colleagues, for a bill that expands the duties of the General Services Police that serve the State Capital property. This bill expands the boundaries that they protect to 1,000 feet around any State Government Property in the Capital. This means that parts of Clay Street and also of West Street will receive help. **(Passed)**

#### Fought to keep the Taylor Avenue Police Barracks.

I found in the budget that the Governor was eliminating the Annapolis State Police Barracks and could not believe it. "Barrack J" as it is called has a presence in Annapolis and southern Anne Arundel County. **At these barracks, criminal arrests were up by 39%, juvenile arrests were up by 275% (yes, 275%) , DUI arrests were up by 14% and CDS arrests were up by 43%, over 2005 totals.** O'Malleys solution... close the Barracks. He doesn't seem to mind cutting our ability to fight crime. Oh, by the way, if you visited the Maryland.Gov web sight recently, you would have seen where O'Malley claims to fight crime. His example on the web sight of fighting crime is that he "closed the most violent prison in the State". ?????????!!!!!!

#### **In addition, I was the lead sponsor of HB 160 - Anne Arundel County – Correctional Facilities – Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program.**

After noticing the growing crime rate in and around Annapolis (80% are drug related), I formed a "Fill the Gaps" group to see how the legislature may help in fighting crime. **One glaring fact was that Anne Arundel County is the only county in the state that does not have an in-prison drug rehabilitation program.** These prisoners are not in for life and will be out again doing the same crimes that led to incarceration. There is a program that is so effective the federal government pays for it with grant money called RSAT (Residential Substance Abuse Treatment). The money was available this year so I put in the bill to obtain it. The bill received the full support of the County Delegation, yet once again the Chair of the Judiciary Committee stood in the way and did not grant local courtesy to our delegation.

## THE RON REPORT

(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

### I co-sponsored the following bills on crime and public safety for the state:

- HB 75 – Juveniles – Arrests for Reportable Offenses – Expansion of Notification  
**(Passed)**
- HB 76 – Furnishing an Alcoholic Beverage to Underage Individual – Penalty **(Passed)**
- HB 161 – Criminal and Juvenile Law – Malicious Destruction to Property by Act  
of Graffiti – Additional Penalty
- HB 252 – Child Protection From Predators Act
- HB 259 – Consumer Protection – Required Disclosure of Social Security  
Number – Prohibited
- HB 344 – Crimes – On Line Harassment
- HB 378 – Criminal Law – Abuse or Neglect of Animals and Aggravated  
Cruelty to Animals – Increased Penalties
- HB 436 & HB 574 – Criminal Law – Possession of Child Pornography – Penalties
- HB 488 – Motor Vehicle Accident Reports – Access **(Passed)**
- HB 564 – Identity Fraud – Prohibition of Unauthorized Skimming and Re-Encoding  
Devices
- HB 608 – Public Service Commission – Energy Efficiency and Conservation  
Programs and Services – Customer Notification and Report. **(Passed)**  
This stopped energy companies from giving “free” items, such as light bulbs, or “free”  
services while secretly charging the consumer on their bill for these things.
- HB 719 – Criminal Law – Dogfight and Cockfight Attendance – Penalties **(Passed)**
- HB 1060 – Victims of Crime – Burglary and Crimes of Violence – Civil Immunity
- HB 1061 – Public Safety Denial of Permit to Carry Handgun – Return of Application Fee
- HB 1075 – Criminal Law – Self-Defense – Immunity for Use of Physical Force in  
Defense of Dwelling or Place of Business
- HB 1113 – Identity Fraud – Prohibitions, Evidence, and Penalties **(Passed)**
- HB 1171 – Crimes – Altering Results of Drug or Alcohol Screening Test – Synthetic  
Urine **(Passed)**
- HB 1210 – Higher Education – Credit Cards – Student Applicants **(Passed)**  
Helps protect college students from being enticed into debt.
- HB 1550 – Department of General Services – Jurisdiction, Authority, and Responsibility  
**(Passed)** (see above)

### LOCAL FUNDING

My District 30 colleagues and I secured funding for local needs such as:

- HB 423 Lighting for the Deale Elementary School Baseball Fields
- HB 430 Galesville Rosenwald School
- HB 449 Lighthouse Shelter
- HB 490 Hammond-Harwood House
- HB 715 Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts
- HB 799 Annapolis Summer Garden Theater
- HB 1422 Goshen House **(All Passed)**

**THE RON REPORT**  
(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

**HEALTH CARE**

**I was the lead sponsor of:**

HB 541 – Teenage Pilot Protection Program. This bill would allow a teenage girl to see the sonogram of her baby if she so desired when seeking abortion services. Statistics show that these young women are often the ones that suffer in later years for making a decision they felt forced to make due to embarrassment, finances, fear, etc. This was not a requirement but an allowance if she so chooses it. The very fact one may choose to see the sonogram indicates that she may really be unsure of having the abortion. It allows her to make an informed decision.

HB 288 - The Proof of Legal Presence Act of 2008. As stated previously, illegal immigrants are coming here in overwhelming numbers which has put a strain on our hospitals and their emergency rooms. Maryland is a sanctuary for them because it is the only state that has not moved toward proof of legal presence.

**I co-sponsored the following:**

HB 343 – Pharmacy Benefits Managers – Therapeutic Interchanges (Delegate Nick Kipke was the lead sponsor). **(Passed)**

HB 419 – Pharmacy Benefits Managers – Registration **(Passed)**

HB 503 – Task Force on Student Physical Fitness in Maryland Public Schools.  
There is a concern that our children are not getting necessary recesses and physical education, and this correlates to other factors such as young boys getting restless and disruptive.

HB 923 – State Board of Nursing – Temporary Licenses and Temporary Practice Letters – Extensions. **(Passed)**

HB1391 – Kids First Act **(Passed)**

Our health system is being forced into failure by our state government and those that desire government-run health care. I am astounded by the number of legislators that believe government is the answer to everything. Our doctors need litigation reform. Not one graduate of Johns Hopkins Medical School stays here. Good doctors are leaving or retiring early. Despite many efforts to promote free market answers, the majority party believes it is meant to be the savior to any problem by taking it over (and ensuring failure).

**VOTING**

Maryland is a leader in destruction of fair elections. It seems if races are close, the majority party will “fix” it. Last year, a bill passed to let felons vote (Fact: Felons are overwhelmingly Democrats, so it made sense to them). Also last year they passed the establishment of early voting locations. These locations chosen overwhelmingly favor the left. This year we are allowing 17 year olds to register to vote (they desire to make it even younger). Lastly, the reason Maryland does not require Proof of Legal Presence is that these same Democratic Party leaders wish to

## **THE RON REPORT**

(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

increase the numbers of illegal immigrants and quicken their ability to be allowed to vote (Note: CASA, an organization that assists illegal immigrants, has signs outside their buildings to register voters, many who also register at the MVA when they get a license without showing legal status. Joe Vallario, the Judiciary Committee Chairman, tells CASA to get these people voting ASAP saying, "We need your votes THIS November".) The same party is working nationally to do away with the Electoral College because they did not like the 2000 election outcome. I explain more on the need for the Electoral College in my 2007 Report which I will send upon request and will be putting on my website soon.

**In the interest of fair (not fixed) elections, I co-sponsored the following bills:**

HB 1102 – Election Law – Statewide Voter List – Information from Circuit Courts

HB 1103 – Election Law – Periodic Audit of Statewide Voter Registration List

HB 1199 – Election Law – Voting Procedures – Identification

HB 1355 – Election Law – Identification of Voters

The majority party smothered these in the Ways and Means Voting Sub-Committee headed by Delegate Jon Cardin. It is a sad period in the history of our democracy to see the erosion of fair elections. The majority party did feel that there is voter intimidation and false statements in mailings done by only Republicans, so they passed a bill that formed a task force to study it. The State Attorney General (Democrat) headed it and chose task force members from the ACLU, NAACP, League of Woman Voters, and John Willis from the Glendening Administration. If this isn't a partisan, left agenda driven "task force", then my name isn't Ron George. Accordingly, they released their findings on May 2, 2008. As you already know, it was very biased and hurt the minority party. There is not a way to discern when a political mailing is true or not. I was the target of false statements in mailings from the Democrats during my election in 2006. But I am a Republican, so it wasn't seen as false by the State "rulers". According to these liberals, calling for voter ID, not allowing felons to vote, nor illegal immigrants, wanting poll watchers, and demanding to have scrolls purged of dead people or of those migrating out of state, is all voter "intimidation". Yet Justice John Paul Stevens and Jimmy Carter have both recently called for voter ID to insure fair elections around the world.

## **VETERANS AFFAIRS**

I am honored to serve on the Veterans Caucus. Not having served in the military, I owe these citizens so much for what they have done. I am very close with the young men and women we sponsored at the Naval Academy over the years. I pray for the ones serving in Iraq and elsewhere. When I think of how they are fighting to protect our freedom and system of government, I am deeply saddened as I do not see legislators doing the same.

**I proudly co-sponsored the following bills:**

HB 346 – Family Law – Child Custody and Visitation – Military Deployment

HB 522 – Military Service Credit – Eligibility

HB 549 – Income Tax - Subtraction Modification – Military Retirement

## THE RON REPORT

(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

HB 669 – Motor Vehicle Excise Tax – Exemption for Returning Military Members (**Passed**)

HB 784 – Task Force on Educational Issues Affecting Military Children (**Passed**)

HB 1521 – Sales and Use Tax Exemption – Veterans’ Organizations

HB 371 – Divestiture from Iran and Sudan – (**Passed**) Senate version was adopted. I was the lead co-sponsor on the House side. This was a watered-down version of my bill from last year that kept Maryland state employee pension funds from being invested in foreign companies that are in four countries that sponsor terrorism. This year’s bill, however, only limits investment in the energy sector. My bill last year was one of the first in the nation and it received national exposure. The governor and legislature had to answer questions as to why they did not support it last year. Thus this bill was put through because I raised and forced the issue. I spoke in favor of it at the hearing and on the floor. It is incomplete and I will propose a more serious version next session. We should not be funding terrorism against our troops, our country or our allies.

**“In Maryland, Delegate Ron George worked for two years to help get Iran divestment legislation passed in his state. He was very blunt about his motivation: “We’re basically funding the opposite side in the war on terror. We need to stop funding the enemy. This is not a game. This is not about politics, nor is it about feeling good about ourselves. This is war.”**

[from June 3, 2008 issue of Human Events, a national publication]

## OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES

HB 1345 – Maryland’s Marriage Protection Act

Many will say this is a social issue not needed in the legislature. However, as the pro-gay marriage lobby has openly stated, they are moving multiple pieces of legislation that inject a definition into the Maryland Code for domestic partners into health insurance, inheritance tax, visitation legislation, etc. They know that before long the courts will rule that gay marriage is legal since gay relationships are already shown in the Code to be similar to marriage. The issue is **not** about the private acts of two consenting adults (which is not something to be legislated). It **is** an issue of not having gay relationships promoted or even taught as an alternative to our young people in schools. Science shows that sexual preferences are largely self oriented at young adolescent ages. It takes years to begin to trust that the differences between the male and female brains, as well as the physical differences, are complimentary to each other. It is easier for the young to want to relate to same sex friends, or to experiment, or to make decisions before they are ready to.

I respect my gay constituents and wish to end any forms of discrimination against them. I have found that many of their concerns can be addressed through power of attorney and by being pro-active in obtaining other documentation. I do search for answers for concerns of health care and inheritance, but I cannot be part of a scheme to get something

## **THE RON REPORT**

(2008 Legislative update from Delegate Ron George)

into Code that will redefine a uniqueness of male-female marriage. I must also defend that marriage between a man and woman is something that is unique toward the design of the family and should not be socially engineered. I know that there are many gay couple relationships that are better than many heterosexual ones. And I know that this debate is real and shrinking from it serves no one. I also do not wish the argument for this uniqueness I speak of to be used to promote any hatred to the many that have come to kindly voice their concerns. I say all this because I have a responsibility to let you know where I currently stand in thinking out this issue.

I also co-sponsored legislation to have dedicated funds for the Transportation Trust Fund (HB 1127) and to protect those funds from being drained for non-transportation issues (HB 1128).

Thank you for taking the time to read this summary. Please be sure to contact me if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions on how I may better serve you. It is an honor. I can be reached at: (w) 410-841-3439, (c) 410-353-2380 or e-mail: [ron.george@house.state.md.us](mailto:ron.george@house.state.md.us).

Sincerely,  
Ron George