

MARYLAND TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

Week of Feb 3 - Spotlight on Annapolis

If you wish to no longer receive these emails, please reply with the simple message "unsubscribe."

If you wish to be added to our email list, please send your email to info@mdtaxes.org and request that you be added.

Be sure to check out

www.mdtaxes.org

It's 2015 and the session is underway!

MD is in need of spending and tax reform. That is what the last election was all about. Let's keep an eye on the legislature.

Education spending has been a big topic in the past week with regard to the Governor's cuts to certain aid to counties set up originally with the Thornton Plan. It seems the more we spend, educational results get worse. This is the **learning gap. More money equals less learning.** More to come .

Hooray for SB 10 and Senator Brochin (D) for his bill to be heard on Wed, Feb 4, Budget & Tax, **Gas Tax COLA Repeal!** The gas tax monies collected have been diverted to the general fund and to mass transit which only 8% of the driving public uses. The COLA was an abuse of drivers. Besides elected representatives ought to decide tax increases instead of relieving themselves of responsibility with automatic increases to a tax.

Boo to another Cigarette and Tobacco Tax increase, SB 37, same date and place as the Gas Tax COLA repeal. The bill adds another \$1 to a pack of cigarettes. Fees for licenses to sell, wholesale, or manufacture are new in some cases or have skyrocketed by as much as ten times. The license fees are so high, it almost looks like the proponents are trying to put legal sellers out of business. Those lobbying for this under the guise of health are misleading themselves. If smoking is down to about 20% of citizens, it is possible not many more will quit. Committed smokers would likely buy out-of-state or from smugglers if it is too expensive to buy legally. We don't think MD needs the expense of extra policing or the dreadful turn of events we saw in New York City recently. See www.mdtaxes.org for full article on tobacco taxes.

Healthy Working Families Act, SB 40, Senate Finance on Tue, Feb 3- State will regulate way in which companies accrue and provide sick leave and "safe" leave. While well meaning, the unintended consequences could add more people to the unemployment rolls. Not so healthy. This could result from the added expenses for businesses on top of the expense burdens of every other regulation.

Reforming the **state's pension system**, which is horribly in the hole, is important. It is not sustainable as it stands. Ironically, the majority of private sector workers don't have pensions to fall back on. They must rely on their 401(k)s and other savings. Perhaps the state should begin to move toward these plans instead of the old-fashioned pension system.

Fiscal briefings are scheduled for Tue, Feb 3, in Senate Environment and Transportation and Thu, Feb 5 in House Judiciary. The former committee will also have a briefing on the benefits of cleaning up the Bay. *Hasn't the state been cleaning up the Bay for decades?*

If you enjoy these missives and other messages, please consider donating to the

Maryland Taxpayers Association
9613-C Harford Road #527
Baltimore, MD 21234

Contributions ranging from \$5 to \$100 or more will be most appreciated. \$25 per family gives voting status in Board elections.
