

Richmond Report #2

Delegate Al Eisenberg

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Into its third full week, the pace of the General Assembly is quickening as more bills are reported out of committee and head to the floor. The deluge of legislation will occur later as we approach Crossover. Crossover is on February 14th this Session, the day on which all House bills must move to the Senate and all Senate bills must move to the House – or die in their chamber of origin.

My bill (HB 1162) to establish a pilot program to extend the independence of frail, elderly, moderate income persons, while saving the state substantial Medicaid costs, was quickly and unanimously approved in the House General Laws Committee and sent to House Appropriations for consideration. The bill has strong support from a number of organizations and associations. With the Chairman of House Appropriations, Vince Callahan (R-Fairfax), a co-patron of the legislation, I am hopeful that the measure will make it into the final budget - but anything can happen.

I opposed legislation (HB 101) that provided for a Constitutional Amendment defining marriage to be a union between a man and a woman. This legislation intrudes upon relationships among consenting adults and severely restricts civil rights. It proscribes relationships that have “the effects” or “the qualities” of marriage—words no one can define. These same words are sufficient to undermine civil unions, domestic partnerships, and such civil concerns as health care insurance, wills, and related contracts essential to daily living. I view this legislation as nothing more than punitive, hurtful actions against people who want nothing more than the right to be left alone.

I sponsored legislation (HB 1163) to shut down dealers who fraudulently sell bogus “international drivers licenses” that fleece unwary immigrants who desperately seek drivers licenses so they can get to work. These fake licenses, often sold for hundreds of dollars, only add to the problems of these individuals when they are arrested for driving without valid licenses. In addition, these licenses offer opportunities for terrorists to breach our

security. The legislation was referred from the House Transportation Committee to the House Committee for Courts of Justice because of that committee's jurisdiction over the Criminal Code.

I introduced legislation (HB 1466) to require that should public/private development of HOT Lanes occur within the Northern Virginia - Fredricksburg corridor, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service must be provided in the right of way.

Members of the House of Delegates have become increasingly concerned about identity theft. Several bills have been introduced on this subject including one that I sponsored (HB 1583) to reduce the potential for incapacitated persons to be victimized. The problem I am working to address involves legal documents, such as guardianship papers, that are available for public viewing. These documents contain substantial amounts of personal information, including Social Security Numbers. While public access to certain public documents is appropriate, I am concerned that the presence of Social Security numbers on these public documents can encourage identity theft. My legislation would require the courts to seal social security numbers.

I am once again urging that Virginia law enforcement agencies have written policies governing high speed police chases. The bill I introduced last year had the support of every law enforcement association in the state, but failed in the House Militia, Police and Public Safety Committee when a delegate argued that the presence of written policies would place law enforcement personnel in legal jeopardy. While this year's bill (HB 1159) makes the case that accreditation of local law enforcement agencies can only happen if they have a written policy on high speed pursuits, the bill was once again killed in a subcommittee of Militia, Police and Public Safety. Law enforcement associations continue to support the bill.

Stay tuned for information on other bills, including the competition among House, Senate, and the Kaine Administration on Transportation funding, and my bill (HB 1169) requiring electronic recording of interrogations of juveniles arrested for felonies. This measure seeks to reduce the potential for false confessions, and inaccurate presentations of evidence due to detectives' hand-written notes of the interrogation. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at 804-698-1047, or at delaeisenberg@house.state.va.us

