

General Assembly Report – Seniors

As your Delegate, I am committed to protecting older Virginians from fraud, increasing your access to healthcare and the medicine you need, and making college more affordable for our children and grandchildren. As this session wraps up, I wanted to provide an update on the issues important to you.

I continue to oppose Obamacare's Medicaid expansion, which is funded by \$716 billion in cuts to Medicare Advantage. These Medicare cuts will have a drastic impact on those who rely or will soon rely on Medicare. Seniors will lose access to doctors, hospitals, healthcare plans and see drastic benefit cuts due to Obamacare. Some experts say that as many as 15 percent of hospitals and nursing homes will stop accepting Medicare patients in the next 10 years.

I am also fighting to make sure that our children and grandchildren have the same opportunity to succeed as we did. The House of Delegates is working to make college more affordable by capping student athletic fees, giving colleges additional administrative flexibility to cut costs, and incentivizing the creation of affordable degree programs in high-demand fields.

HB 2277 Life insurance for retired state employees. (Patron: Ingram – R – 62) Provides that the basic life insurance coverage for retired state employees with 30 or more years of creditable service shall not be reduced to less than \$8,000, indexed to the amount of post-retirement supplements for retirees as calculated for employees hired on or after July 1, 2010. **Status:** Passed House (99-Y 0-N), Senate: Passed Senate with amendment (38-Y 0-N), awaiting Governor's action.

HB 2229 Small estates; checks and negotiable instruments. (Patron: Minchew – R – 78) Provides that if the successor to a decedent receives certain small assets in the form of checks, drafts, or other negotiable instruments that are payable to the decedent's estate, the successor may endorse or negotiate such checks, drafts, or other negotiable instruments. **Status:** Passed House (98-Y 0-N), Passed Senate (38 –Y 0-N), awaiting Governor's action.

HB 1286 Individual income tax refunds; payment. (Patron: Ware – R – 65) Requires the Tax Commissioner and State Comptroller to implement procedures to allow an individual to elect to have his income tax refund paid by check mailed to his address. The bill applies to individual income tax returns relating to taxable year 2015 and taxable years thereafter. **Status:** Passed House (98-Y 0-N), Senate: Passed Senate (38-Y 0-N), awaiting Governor's action.

HB 1357 Automobile and homeowners insurance policies; notices. (Patron: Miller – R – 50) Authorizes insurers to send certain notices, including nonrenewal and cancellation notices, pertaining to a motor vehicle or homeowners insurance policy by a first-class mail tracking method used or approved by the United States Postal Service (USPS). Currently, such notices are effective only if sent by registered or certified mail. The measure will permit insurers to send such notices using the USPS Intelligent Mail barcode. **Status:** Passed House (66-Y 30-N), Passed Senate (38-Y 0-N), awaiting Governor's action.

HB 1413 Hospital discharge procedures; designation of individual to receive information and instructions. (Patron: Filler-Corn – D – 41) Requires hospitals to provide patients with the opportunity to designate an individual to receive information about the patient's discharge plan, together with information and instruction about any follow-up care, treatment, or services that the individual may require, and requires hospitals to provide a discharge plan and information regarding follow-up care, treatment, and services to the designated individual prior to the patient's discharge or transfer to another facility. **Status:** Passed House (98 – Y 0 – N), Passed Senate (38-Y 0-N), awaiting Governor's action.

HB 1279 Motor vehicle sales and use tax; exemption. (Patron: Garrett – R – 23) Expands the exemption from payment of the motor vehicle sales and use tax for gifts of vehicles to certain family members to include gifts to a parent. **Status:** Passed House (100-Y 0-N), Senate: Passed Senate (37-Y 0-N), awaiting Governor's action.

HB 1444 Vision care plans; reimbursement for services. (Patron: Ware – R – 65) Prohibits a participating provider agreement between a vision care plan carrier and an optometrist or ophthalmologist from establishing the fee or rate that the optometrist or ophthalmologist is required to accept for the provision of health care materials or services, or from requiring that an optometrist or ophthalmologist accept the reimbursement paid by the vision care plan carrier as payment in full, unless the services or materials are covered services or covered materials under the applicable vision care plan. Reimbursements by a vision care plan carrier are required to be reasonable, and vision care plans shall not require an optometrist or ophthalmologist to use a particular optical laboratory, manufacturer, or third-party supplier as a condition of participation in a vision care plan. Changes to a proposed participating provider agreement shall be submitted in writing to the optometrist or ophthalmologist at least 30 days prior to their effective date. Any person who violates this provision shall be civilly liable for liquidated damages of \$10,000 and reasonable attorney fees, plus provable damages caused as a result of such violation, and is subject to such other remedies, legal or equitable, including injunctive relief, as may be available to the party damaged by such violation. The State Corporation Commission does not have jurisdiction to adjudicate individual controversies arising out of this measure. **Status:** Passed House (100-Y 0-N), Senate: Passed Senate with amendment (38-Y 0-N), awaiting Governor's action.

HB 1747 Health insurance; mental health parity. (Patron: O'Bannon – R – 73) Conforms certain requirements regarding coverage for mental health and substance use disorders to provisions of the federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act. The measure requires that group and individual health insurance coverage shall provide mental health and substance use disorder benefits. Such benefits shall be in parity with the medical and surgical benefits contained in the coverage in accordance with the federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, even where those requirements would not otherwise apply directly. The measure requires any health insurer whose policy, contract or plan provides coverage for mental health and substance use disorder benefits to provide to the Bureau of Insurance information regarding the rates at which claims for mental health and substance use disorder benefits are denied under each policy, contract, or plan it provides. The Bureau shall make annual reports available to the public. The reports shall provide the means to compare the rates at which each insurer, for each of its policies, contracts, and plans, has denied claims for mental health and substance use disorder benefits. **Status:** Passed House (98-Y 0-N), Passed Senate with amendment (38-Y 0-N), awaiting Governor's action.

SB 719 Elections; absentee voting by persons age 65 or older. (Patron: McWaters – R – 8) Entitles persons age 65 or older on the day of an election for which an absentee ballot is requested to vote absentee. **Status:** Passed Senate (39-Y 0-N), Assigned to House Privileges and Elections, Elections Subcommittee, tabled by voice vote

SB 865 Administration of intestate estate; person convicted of fraud, misrepresentation, robbery, etc. (Patron: Chaffin – R – 38) Provides that the clerk of court shall not, in addition to current categories of prohibition, grant administration of an estate to a person convicted of (i) any fraud or misrepresentation in any connection or (ii) robbery, extortion, burglary, larceny, embezzlement, fraudulent conversion, gambling, perjury, bribery, treason, or racketeering, regardless of whether his civil rights have been restored. **Status:** Passed Senate (40-Y 0-N), House: VOTE: BLOCK VOTE PASSAGE (99-Y 0-N), awaiting Governor's action.