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Annapolis Report Offers Tough Report Card for Maryland Lawmakers

ROCKVILLE, MD (August 16, 2017) – The Maryland Public Policy Institute today released a tough report card for the 2017 Maryland legislative session, which concluded in April. The Annapolis Report scrutinizes the General Assembly and Hogan Administration’s work on the state budget, education, and other pressing issues. The full report can be viewed at mdpolicy.org.

“There are far too many D’s and F’s on this report card,” said Christopher B. Summers, president and chief executive officer of the Institute. “State lawmakers spent more time inserting themselves into Washington politics and too little time promoting economic growth, public safety, or education reform here at home. Marylanders who value free enterprise and limited government should demand more from their elected representatives.”

Grades from the Annapolis Report include:

National Politics – Grade: F

Legislators spent considerable time discussing national issues only tangentially related to Maryland during this legislative session. They gave the Maryland attorney general unprecedented power to sue the federal government on any matter without prior approval. They also passed legislation expressing their support for the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and legislation to replace certain Medicaid funding that might be cut at the federal level.

Budget and Taxes - Grade: D

Maryland’s budget now tops out at \$43.6 billion, \$14 billion more than a decade ago. Lawmakers failed to rein in existing spending and ignored the long-term structural budget deficit, which is expected to increase to \$1.5 billion by Fiscal Year 2022.

Transportation – Grade: A-

The Hogan Administration and General Assembly changed the so-called “Road Kill Bill,” which required the use of a new scoring system to prioritize transportation projects. The concept is reasonable, but the Road Kill measure was heavily biased toward transit projects at the expense of roads, which serve about 90 percent of trips in Maryland. The compromise measure no longer requires the Maryland Department of Transportation to use the scoring system.

Crime - Grade: C

Bail reform was the biggest public safety debate in this year’s legislative session. After significant discussion, legislators failed to move forward with any bail reform. Unfortunately, the system now operates under a flawed state Court of Appeals ruling issued during the session that courts should essentially apply a standard of affordability when setting bail, which leaves too many defendants on the streets. The Institute believes that asking unelected judges to rewrite policy that has served Maryland well for generations is a disservice to public safety.

Economy - Grade: D

Lawmakers passed a series of anti-growth measures. The highest-profile action was to pass legislation mandating that businesses offer paid sick leave. This expensive mandate will have a large negative effect on Maryland employers and exemplifies the disdain with which the labor market was generally treated in the 2017 session. They also passed legislation to stymie growth in the craft brewery industry in order to protect entrenched beer, wine and spirits interests.

About the Maryland Public Policy Institute: Founded in 2001, the Maryland Public Policy Institute is a nonpartisan public policy research and education organization that focuses on state policy issues. The Institute’s mission is to formulate and promote public policies at all levels of government based on principles of free enterprise, limited government, and civil society. Learn more at mdpolicy.org.

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