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Think Tank Analyzes 2011 Maryland General Assembly Session

On the heels of the state's special legislative session and in the midst of calls for increased taxes, the Maryland Public Policy Institute has released its third annual edition of "The Annapolis Report," a review of the state's 2011 legislative session.

Authored by Senior Fellow Gabriel J. Michael, the report examines legislation in key areas, such as taxes, healthcare, and education, and also provides an overview of the year's progress in public sector pension reform. In contrast to previous years, this year's session witnessed a significant improvement in the overall approach to the state's budget, primarily due to a concerted effort to reduce the state's structural deficit by one-third. Education has proved to be a consistently high-scoring area for the state, and remains so this year; however, this outcome is offset by failing scores in tax policy, driven by tax increases and windfall tax credits.

Unlike legislative report cards, The Annapolis Report is not dominated by a single issue, nor does it evaluate the performance of individual legislators. Rather, it considers the actions of Maryland's General Assembly as a whole. The bulk of the report is made up of brief yet cogent analyses of selected legislation. Its goal is to act as an issue guide for Maryland's citizens, taxpayers, and residents, by explaining policy and grouping related legislation together.

Discussing the report, Michael noted, "Many legislative analyses produced by policy organizations are very narrow. Here we've tried to counter that approach and create a document that is broad enough to be widely useful, yet still detailed enough to do justice to thorny policy issues. Refinements in our scoring system also present a better picture of the relative importance of legislation. Regardless of your politics, The Annapolis Report likely contains important legislative information you might have overlooked."

In addition to the issues mentioned above, the report also reviews legislative action relating to regulation, energy, labor issues, collective bargaining, ethics, and government transparency. For a detailed look at these and other important issues, read the full report.

The full report can be viewed online at <http://www.mdpolicy.org/research/detail/annapolis-report-2011>

Founded in 2001, The Maryland Public Policy Institute is a nonpartisan public policy research and education organization that focuses on state policy issues. The Maryland Public Policy Institute's work can be found online at mdpolicy.org.

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