

March 23, 2006

Subject: Action on SB 650 and HB 1130

HB 1130 and SB 650 are companion bills in the General Assembly to create a funding formula for adult education and to increase the funding for adult education.

There were hearings on both bills in the general Assembly on Friday March 17. We had a really positive set of hearings. There was no testimony in opposition in either Committee.

Senator Hogan introduced the bill in the Senate Budget and Tax Committee. The Baltimore Sun had a photographer taking pictures during the hearing in the Senate and followed up with a large picture in the Saturday Sunpaper. Senator Currie, chair of the Senate Committee, made positive comments about the bill and its need several times during the hearing. At the end of the hearing, he said he liked the bill and that it is written very well. He went on to talk about the importance of the bill and said that “perhaps no more important bill will present itself to the committee this year.”

In the House Ways and Means Committee, Shelia Hisxon who chairs the Committee was also very cordial to the panel members.

For each bill, there were several Panels of individuals who testified. One panel included 8 adult learners from various parts of the state – Western Maryland, Eastern Shore, Baltimore City, Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. Another panel included employers such as Adventist Health Care, Abbey Drum (a small business in Baltimore), the Daily Record, and Goodwill Industries. There was extensive written testimony from a broad spectrum of businesses and community groups. Support included many sectors of the economy – healthcare, construction, hospitality, and others. Numerous organizations such as the Committee for Montgomery and the Job Opportunities Task Force also testified or submitted written testimony.

Your elected officials in the General Assembly will be deciding on their vote any day. If you have an opinion on this legislation, now is the critical time for you in the network to express your views to them.

I have attached a list of the legislators in the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. Calling these members in the next couple of days and asking them to vote for the bill would be very helpful. The senators in the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee should be asked to vote for SB 650 and the delegates in the House Ways and Means Committee should be asked to vote for HB 1130.

You can call toll free at 1-800-492-7122 and ask for the legislators office.