

NEWS FROM.....SENATOR RICHARD F. COLBURN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 19, 2010

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Senator Colburn Reports from Annapolis (This Week)

ANNAPOLIS – Senator Richard F. Colburn (R. Eastern Shore) reported on events that took place this week. Senator Colburn stated, “On Tuesday, February 16, the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee heard Senate Bill 382 (Marine Contractors – Licensure and Regulation – Wetland Permits and Authorizations). I co-sponsored this bill and I sponsored a similar bill late in the 2009 Session. This legislation proposes that those performing marine work in the State of Maryland be licensed through a wetland permitting process. Those considered marine contractors would be the contractors doing work on structures in the State’s tidal and non-tidal wetlands, including but not limited to boathouse ramps, docks, piers, and wharfs. Acquisition of the license will include, among other things, the application for the license, submission of pertinent documents, passing of a written marine contractor’s test, two years relevant experience, and a licensing fee. The license is to have a limited duration of two years. Those who engage in activity requiring a Wetland Permit are to either hire or consult a licensed marine contractor. Failure to acquire or consult a licensed marine contractor will result in a fine.

On Wednesday, February 17, Senate Bill 17 (Criminal Law – Salvia Divinorum and Salvinorin A – Distribution to and Possession by Individual Under 21 Years of Age) was heard in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. The bill prohibits the distribution of Salvia to an individual under the age of 21 and prohibits an individual under that age from possessing Salvia Divinorum. On or before December 1, 2010, the Attorney General would have to submit a report detailing recommended regulations governing the sales of Salvia Divinorum including requirements for sellers and the placement of products in stores. I introduced this bill because Salvia is cheaper than marijuana; many say it is stronger than LSD and as fast-acting as crack cocaine, and because it is legally available to minors in most of Maryland. When taken, people say they experience delusional episodes that mimic psychosis. It also includes:

- Changes in visual perception, mood, and body sensations
- Emotional swings
- Modified perception of reality
- Dizziness, nausea, lack of coordination, slurred speech, and a decreased heart rate

Several years ago, Delaware teen, Brett Chidester, experimented with Salvia. The Delaware Chief Medical examiner listed Salvia Divinorum as

contributing to Chidester’s suicide. The Delaware Legislature later outlawed Salvia calling it “Brett’s Law”.

The Chief of Police for Ocean City, Maryland, Chief Bernadette A. DiPino testified in favor of the bill. Chief DiPino spoke about the dangers of Salvia to minors and stated that she felt that it should be totally banned in Maryland. Thirteen other states have banned it, including Delaware and Virginia. Noting Salvia’s skyrocketing popularity, Chief DiPino urged the Passing of Senate Bill 17.”

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Senator Colburn Reports from Annapolis (Next Week)

ANNAPOLIS – Senator Richard F. Colburn (R. Eastern Shore) reported on events that will take place next week. Senator Colburn stated, “On Friday, February 26, the Maryland General Assembly will have passed the 45th day,

or halfway point of the 2010 Session. Thus far, almost 1,000 Senate Bills and well over 1,400 House Bills have been introduced.

I will be introducing several new bills: Senate Bill 976 (Income Tax – Film Production Activity Credit) would repeal the Film Production Rebate Program. It would allow film production entities to claim a credit against the State income tax for certain costs incurred for film production activities within the State. The State of Maryland has a long and successful history of moviemaking. Producing large scale movies in Maryland provides strong stimulus to the State’s economy by creating jobs for Maryland workers and generating sales by Maryland businesses. Significant amounts of State and local tax revenues are generated by the economic activity created from producing films in Maryland. Maryland’s geographic, cultural, physical, and historic attributes provide many favorable settings for film production in our State. In addition to economic benefits derived from film production activity, the long-term benefits include development and establishment of spin-off film production activities such as editing, sound production, creative and artistic activities, development of permanent facilities such as sound stages, studios, and cottage industries related to independent moviemaking, and documentaries, advertising, and other film and video activity.

Another bill that I will be introducing relates to State pension plans.

Senate Bill 974 (Optional Retirement Program – State and Participating Government Unit Employees – Participants) would exempt new state employees hired on or after July 1, 2010 from the Maryland State Pension system. The legislation would also include teachers, state troopers, and other state employees hired after that date. Employees would become eligible for an optional retirement program set up by the State of Maryland. This bill would help address the rapidly increasing built-in structural deficit in Maryland’s pension plans. It would also better insure that those employees currently in the system (s) receive their full pension benefits. And finally, it would help the State of Maryland address major budget deficits for future years.

On Wednesday, February 24, at 1:00, the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee will hear Senate Bill 264 (State Board of Education – Financial Literacy Curriculum – Graduation Requirement) which I have co-sponsored. This bill would require the State Board of Education to develop curriculum content for a course in financial literacy for statewide use. It would require county boards of education to implement this curriculum in high schools. Students will learn the basics of financially managing a household. They will learn how to write checks, reconcile a bank statement, manage household finances, manage a credit

card account, understand the importance of saving money, and manage money for college expenses and medical costs. Years ago the public school system taught a course in Functional Reading. When the federal “No School Left Behind” program began mandating performance level testing, the Functional Reading courses went to the wayside. Now, many public school administrators and parents are seeing the need for such curriculum and are quick to want to incorporate this in to their systems. While some counties across the state offer financial literacy as an elective, Talbot County has become a state leader in financial literacy programs, implementing a stand-alone course graduation requirement along with Carroll and Allegany counties. A Press Conference which will include the State Comptroller, Peter Franchot, and Senate Bill 264’s chief sponsor Senator Anthony Muse (D – Prince George’s Co.) will be held on Wednesday, February 24 at 9:30 a.m. at the Lowe House Office Building in Room 142 in Annapolis.

On Thursday, February 25, at 1:00, the Senate Finance Committee will hear Senate Bill 542 (Health – National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline – Posting of Information) which I have co-sponsored. This bill would require the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to adopt regulations requiring the posting of a notice informing individuals of the phone number for and other information about the National Human

Trafficking Resource Center hotline. It would also require the regulations to establish the buildings and commercial establishments where the notice is required to be posted.

Also on Thursday, February 25, at 1:00, the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee will hear Senate Bill 421 (Election Law – Delay in Replacement of Voting Systems). This bill alters the date for replacing the State’s direct-recording electronic (DRE) touchscreen voting system with a voter-verified paper record voting system. It would require the State to continue using the touchscreen voting system for elections until payments for the touchscreen voting system are concluded or until 2016. I sponsored this bill because of lingering budgetary concerns experienced by the State of Maryland and counties.

The Senate Budget and Taxation Committee will hear Senate Bill 773 (Corporate Income Tax – Repeal). This bill would repeal the State income tax on corporations. It would take effect July 1, 2010 and be applicable to all taxable years beginning after December 31, 2009, but before January 1, 2014. It would remain effective for a period of 3 years and 6 months and, at the end of December 31, 2013, with no further action by the General Assembly, this Act would no longer be in effect.”