

MELONY G. GRIFFITH
25th Legislative District

Appropriations Committee

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on Pensions

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Capital Budget Subcommittee

Education and Economic
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Message to 25th District
Honorable Melony Ghee Griffith
Delegate, Legislative District 25
November 16, 2007

SLOTS REFERENDUM

After meeting with voters across the state, Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown called us back to Annapolis to solve an inherited \$1.7 billion dollar budget deficit. Before we began our deliberations at the end of last month, they proposed a comprehensive revenue package that would bring a long-term solution to our state's budget problems. Part of their proposal included a compromise on one issue that has been a distraction in Annapolis for over five years or more, that issue being slots.

Many of you have let me know you understand the changing needs of the State. You have let me know that you understand that those needs must be addressed and that costs money that we simply are not generating at the rate needed to pay our bills.

I came into this special session prepared to vote against the referendum. However, after lengthy discussion and debate in Annapolis, as well as thoughtful personal deliberation, and conversations with many community and civic leaders, I am convinced that it is time to include public participation in this process.

I am assured the public is ready to consider the benefits and costs of allowing Video Lottery Terminals to operate in MD. Citizens have assured me they are aware of the addictive nature of video lottery terminals, they know about the potential negative impacts on personal and family relationships, financial challenges and law enforcement costs that other states have experienced. We have discussed health care and treatment costs, and even economic opportunity costs as it relates to use of entertainment dollars.

I believe that the voters of Maryland are ready for this referendum. I believe that like so many have done already, each voter will read, discuss, and debate the issue thoroughly. As always, I continue to be personally opposed to slots in Maryland and have at each opportunity voted against the bill that would have brought slots directly to the State; I am convinced that the voters will send a resounding message to the State Officials and decide the outcome that is in the best interest of all.

I will be in touch again very soon with additional information regarding actions taken in Session 2007.

Delegate Griffith's House Testimony to the Maryland General Assembly