

Special Redistricting Session Recap

October 25 , 2011

During our brief Special Session, the Legislature approved the Governor's 2011 redistricting plan. While in Annapolis, I attended a Baltimore County Delegation briefing with BGE officials regarding hurricane response and preparedness, and chaired a briefing from the State Board of Elections. Finally, I do not want to let this Report pass without informing you of some exciting features of my new and improved website.

As you know, Governor O'Malley convened the General Assembly for a special session on October 17 to determine legislative reapportionment and redistricting in light of the 2010 Census results, as the U.S Constitution requires of state legislatures. While I predicted the Special Session to last three days, the General Assembly convened for a total of three days and one hour to consider Governor O'Malley's proposed redistricting plan, as well as a number of other proposals for our State. After hours of debate, the Governor's redistricting map was ultimately approved by a vote of 91-46.

Although the proposal was not perfect, I voted against the competing proposals and in favor of the Governor's plan for three basic reasons: First, I believe that this plan will stand up to constitutional scrutiny based on the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Voting Rights Act. Second, it is the only plan that maintained at least 70% of our current congressional districts. Finally, while it can be argued that gerrymandering for political purposes played a role in the proposal, in the end no other alternative was as fair and even-handed as this one.

Thanks to Chairman Olszweski, Baltimore County's hearing with BGE officials on Hurricane Irene response, preparedness, and lingering residential issues was informative. Along with my colleagues, I challenged the executives about the wasted time and expense of contractors "on the job" in Baltimore County back lacking job orders during the many days of power outages following the hurricane. Our questioning resulted in reassurances that lingering unresolved issues will be promptly attended to, and that mistakes will be learned from. I will work hard to make sure this occurs.

The State Board of Elections briefed the Ways and Means Committee on the State's progress in transitioning to a fully automated voter registration program, as required by the legislature last year. The Board also described advances in getting ballot information to overseas and military voters in compliance with Federal law. I am thrilled that our hard work on these issues over the past number of years is culminating in this progress at the State Board.

Finally, please be sure to check out my new and improved website, www.joncardin.com. I completely overhauled the site to create a forum where I can effectively communicate with my constituents regarding current news, events and legislative topics. I also created a community calendar so that we all can stay informed of local happenings. As I continue to familiarize myself with the site, I hope to fill the calendar with important events. If you have any suggestions for the

calendar, please let me know. Thanks to my new website, you can even keep up with me on Facebook and Twitter.

I now return to our 11th District to prepare for the upcoming 2012 legislative session beginning in January. I eagerly look forward to the legislative session so that I may once again represent the interests of my constituents in Annapolis. In the meantime, please stay in touch and stay tuned for my next Annapolis Report.

Sincerely,

Jon S. Cardin

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