

# Legislative Wrap Up

*This Week in the Maryland General Assembly...*

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## Haddaway on the Mark Steiner Show

*Gives Caucus Perspective on State of the State*



*Delegate Tony O'Donnell, Minority Leader and  
Delegate Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Assistant Minority Whip*

Delegate Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio was a special guest on the Mark Steiner Radio Show (88.9 FM) last Wednesday to present the Republican Caucus' response to the Governor's State of the State Address. Tom Perez, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation and Matthew Joseph, Executive Director at Advocates for Children and Youth also spoke. "We are in a serious budget crisis and systematic changes are going to have to be made in the State's spending habits," Haddaway said. "My main concern is for our citizens and our small businesses that are already at a breaking point because of their own financial difficulties. We should not continue balancing the budget on the backs of our taxpayers and that is what I tried to convey on the show."

To listen in, use the following link:

[www.centerforemergingmedia.org/radio/the-marc-steiner-show/january-29-2009](http://www.centerforemergingmedia.org/radio/the-marc-steiner-show/january-29-2009)

## Bill Would Save Talbot Schools

**\$40,000 Per Year**

Delegate Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio introduced a bill that would save Talbot County Public Schools approximately \$40,000 per year by allowing them to operate school buses for 15 years rather than 12 years. The buses must be well maintained and will still have to meet the State's safety standards. Haddaway said that, according to many of the school superintendents she has spoken with, transportation is the second greatest portion of a school's

budget. While the expense is partly due to the rise in fuel costs, the requirement to operate buses for no more than 12 years is a factor.

"These savings will allow them more flexibility in their budgeting, which is extremely important during these tough economic times," Haddaway said. "I commend the Talbot County Council and Talbot County Public Schools for bringing this to my attention and for their efforts to reduce costs." Talbot would join other Eastern Shore counties that already have the authority to do this including Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester. A hearing was held on Tuesday in the Environmental Matters Committee. Delegate Addie Eckardt is a cosponsor and Senator Richard Colburn has a crossfile in the Senate.

## Changes in Mortgage Industry

Delegate Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio and other members of the House Economic Matters Committee were briefed yesterday on federal and state measures to enhance supervision over the mortgage industry. The new measures include a national, web-based licensing system that will serve both the mortgage industry and the general public. Loan originators will benefit from a streamlined licensing process and the public will be able to access information about those licensees such as where they are licensed and if there are sanctions against them. Additionally, users will be able to file consumer complaints on-line.

According to Haddaway, Maryland is slated to start participating in the system this year, but must first come into compliance with other standards established under the federal SAFE Mortgage Licensing Act. Some of these changes include renewing licenses every year instead of every two years, increasing qualifications of the licensee and enhancing penalties for those who break the law. A house bill has been introduced to enact these changes and will be heard in the Economic Matters Committee later in the session.

## Maryland Tax Day

*Sponsored by AARP*

AARP has announced that they have IRS certified volunteers who can address many tax issues faced by low and middle-income taxpayers, with special attention to those ages 60 and older. Since 1980, the program has operated under a cooperative agreement with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as part of its Tax Counseling for the Elderly program. The program is available from February 1st through April 15th. There will be a special Maryland Tax Day scheduled for February 28, 2009 with walk-in sites statewide. To locate an AARP Tax Aide site in Maryland, call toll free 1-888-AARPNOW (1-888-227-7669) or visit their web site at [www.aarp.org/taxaide](http://www.aarp.org/taxaide) and enter your zip code.

For more information on these or other issues, please feel free to contact Delegate Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio's office by calling (410) 841-3429 or by sending email to: [jeannie.haddaway@house.state.md.us](mailto:jeannie.haddaway@house.state.md.us)