

02/13/2018

Greetings Fortieth District!

Its a very dreary and rainy day here in the holler on Seabowisha Lane. My desk is piled high with research papers and books, letters to write, and legislation to read. Alexa is playing great golden oldies of the 70's while I collect my thoughts and remember the actions of this past week in order to give you a thorough report. Without iPhotos and iCalendar, it would be next to impossible to remember all the happenings on the Hill and in Nashville.

Monday will begin our sixth week of session since The General Assembly convened on January 9 at noon. There is a maximum of 90 voting days within the two-year assembly period to conduct our business. Monday February 12th, will be the 53rd day of the 110th General Assembly.

Members now are presenting legislation on the House Floor and numerous bills are being assigned to their respected committee's since being filed on February 1st. The rhythm is picking up pace.

Education Administration and Planning, a committee I serve on, heard HB1460 which allows local school boards to come together and form a recovery school for students who have alcohol or drug abuse dependency. Enrollment is voluntary and students who graduate from a recovery school will receive diplomas from the school in which they are zoned. Starting as a Pilot Program, three recovery schools are to be located in each of the grand divisions of Tennessee and modeled after a template school in Texas. For more info please go to the General Assembly website.

With the Tennessee opioid epidemic claiming the lives of more than 1,600 Tennesseans in 2016 alone, putting our resources together at the very genesis of drug/alcohol abuse for our youth by providing facilities for treatment is a win/win for our families and communities. HB1929 is moving forward with other pieces of opioid legislation to combat our problem head on. The Tennessee Together Plan will encompass \$30M in funds through Governor Haslam's proposed 2018-2019 budget through three major components of prevention, treatment, and law enforcement.

As of January 24, 2018, Higher Education Snapshot and Profile of District 40 is available at Tennessee Higher Education Commission go to county profile Smith, Dekalb, Trousdale, and Sumner.

Students are taking advantage of Tennessee Promise. We are seeing a great rate of success with students being able to utilize this for higher education. Our Tennessee High School graduates from District 40 are also choosing local community colleges such as Motlow State Community, Volunteer State Community College, Tennessee Tech, TCAT Hartsville, and Cumberland University. And a big congrats to TCAT Hartsville for their 80.8% graduation rate!!! That is amazing! I am a big fan of our community colleges where students can obtain education to secure good paying jobs after graduation and they don't have to sell the farm to pay for it! In fact, just this past week I had several discussions on how we can offer college classes in various trades in our current rural school buildings as a vocational training that would provide jobs right out of high school. Maybe we need to redeem vocational schools that we have had in the past and provide yet another option. There are kids who could benefit with training while in high school and go straight to work after graduating. Using our existing school facilities, evening classes could be offered for adults as well. It is something to think about.

Transportation Sub, to which I chair, heard HB1552 sponsored by Rep Parkinson. We had thorough discussions on both sides of the issue of whether or not having proof of liability insurance whenever a temporary plate is issued to a consumer is a hardship on those who can not afford car insurance. Believing driving is a privilege and not a right, it is Tennessee law to have car insurance. This bill when passed requires a salesperson or dealer to maintain record of customers liability coverage. HB1552 passed and will be presented in Full Transportation Tuesday.

NEXT WEEK I will begin to speak about legislation I am sponsoring this year.

Blessings,
Terri Lynn Weaver