

April 15, 2015

Greetings Fabulous Folks of the Fortieth and beyond!

This morning, while sitting on the back porch, that vibrant dominant color of new green was absolutely stunning! “Yes, by golly it is Spring,” seemed to whisper in my ear while pausing to soak it all in. As soon as the first half of the 109th is complete, which is about two weeks away, you can bet Mike and I will begin the many home projects that await us here in the holler!

Some of This--

We continue to find ways, through legislation, to help our military and their families. HB 425 will allow healthcare providers who are in the National Guard to provide volunteer clinic services in a Tennessee military armory for those in need. Currently this is not possible because no authorization is in place that allows these military members to provide such care. This is a step in the right direction to ensure our veterans receive the care they need and deserve.

HB8 will ensure high school students who train between their junior and senior year in the National Guard or go to advanced training after their senior year can still be eligible for the state's Tennessee Promise program, which is a last dollar scholarship that covers costs not met from the PELL, HOPE or TSAA scholarship programs. The class of 2015 will be the first participants to attend a community or technical college of their choice, free of tuition and fees.

HB172 allows 501(c)19 veterans organizations to raise funds for charitable purposes and is the final step in ensuring that Amendment 4 to the State Constitution, which won approval by voters in November of last year, is enacted. Now, veterans have the same opportunity like 501(c)3 organizations, to conduct annual fundraising events and have cake walks, raffles and other games of chance. Amendment 4 received 69.6 % of the vote! All funds raised under the Amendment must go to purposes that benefit community, veterans, or retired veterans.

Some of That--

HB1105 This bill approved by the House will unlock nearly \$23 million statewide to taxpayers in the form of asphalt infrastructure improvements. It changes the way the state currently manages State Aid Asphalt Grants by allowing funding set by the state to now be used in the form of direct expenditures to upgrade, repair, and rehabilitate roads that need some TLC. To receive this grant, instead of the 25% local match which many local governments cannot afford, that match is now reduced to only 2%. You ask how can this be? Well, a large percentage of the asphalt funding set aside by the state has gone unused. This is a great way to help our local governments afford the grant and create a road, no pun intended, to increase access for improvements across the state.

On the Radar--

HB1147 passed out of Transportation, that would cap the rate of aviation fuel taxes. Tennessee's current aviation tax structure places our state at an unfair competitive disadvantage to surrounding states such as Kentucky, North Carolina, Georgia, Texas; and in Indiana, they have no such tax. One payer in our state pays 66% of the state's entire aviation fuel tax, making their numbers in FY2014 the likes of \$32 million of the entire \$48 million collected. Those fuel tax monies go into the state's Transportation Equity Fund, to be divided up among the 65 or so other airports. Because of basic business economics, FedEx could choose to operate their main hub in Indianapolis, which would affect some 36,000 employees in Memphis and numerous other businesses such as trucking and/or future efforts to grow companies in the state to attract prospective passenger air carriers that would grow the Memphis International Airport. HB1147 would cap the rate to \$10.5 million in fuel taxes paid by one taxpayer and have a four-year phase-in period. Also, on the Senate side the bill was amended, setting up a task force to examine the impact and possible new revenue sources for the smaller airports who look to the Transportation Equity Fund for operating expenses.

HB647 concerning the salary and benefits of all our Tennessee state employees is still under construction. I am of the belief integrity is paramount. Securing the Longevity and Healthcare to the folks who currently work for our great state is the right thing to do.

HB1035 which reviews and replaces Common Core with new standards. A process specific to Tennessee, for Tennessee standards, LEA, & Teacher autonomy, that promotes individual Tennessee teacher creativity.

SJR67 calls for an Article V Convention to address and impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office for members of Congress.

There are many very important bills about to come to the House for a vote and many are not easy to decide. Three questions I ask myself when each bill crosses my desk: 1) Is this good for district 40? 2) What are the unintended consequences? and 3) How much does it cost? There are some bills I just do not believe are ready for a vote and need to pause until next year.

And so, in these next two weeks, I ask for your prayers and that Wisdom from above would reveal clarity so as to make the right decisions that would make our state a better place to live, work, and raise families. Representing you is very important to me because it is such an honor to work for you. Repeals and reforms shape what kind of world my grandchildren will live in, and that, my friend, is why together we can make a difference, and the reason we care about our great state and our great nation.

Faith is Anticipating the Best.

Blessings,
Terri Lynn