

05/12/2017

Greetings Folks of the Fortieth!

Wednesday around 1:30 pm we adjourned after completing the first half of the 110th General Assembly. The House and the Senate will recess until noon, January 9th, in the year of our Lord, 2018. Today after completing "The Loop", my yard and my home will have my attention for the remainder of this week and Sunday. I am looking forward to serving my family as we all gather at the Weaver Farm in Smith County. Though this mom will be preparing, it will be therapy well-welcomed for this homebody as the perfect mother's day gift for me. Staying in the Holler!!

First, allow me to mention how grateful I am that you entrust me to be your representation on the Hill in Nashville. I make it imperative to know your heartbeat on the issues that affect us in Tennessee and D.C., as well. Though this session was a turbulent one, I believe it made me even stronger to stand on the principles you elected me to uphold. So "I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead," Philippians, Chapter Three.

A true Conservative believes and takes action on keeping taxes low and defining what the role of government is. LESS IS MORE. LESS GOVERNMENT MORE FREEDOM. Both Transportation and Education were hot topics that wore me out serving as chair in transportation sub and as a member of the education committee. Though I fought the good fight, we won some and we lost some. HB863 that exempts certain students from paying out-of-state tuition (undocumented students, meaning not citizens) at state institutions of higher education, and its partner bill HB660 that would allow public institutions' governing bodies to determine who and how many students attend their schools, got my big fat heck no vote. Tennessee cannot afford to pay for illegal immigrants to go to college! And the cost of higher education is over the top!! Wonder if they thought that could be the reason the classrooms are lacking students? Just saying. The eyes of the education committee must remain the decisive oversight, not an unelected board at some institution. Those bills will raise their ugly head again next year, as well as seat belts on school buses and school vouchers, to which I remain another Heck NO on all!

Though the so called "Improve Act" passed, it is unfortunate the tax increase will be felt by those living on fixed incomes, as well as working families. For those who have done pretty well, as usual, they feel it less than anyone. What I am most proud of, are the 37 of us in the House that proved you can redirect funds already in the piggy bank for our roads--without a tax increase. We stood our ground and would not vote for the budget in order to prove a point. By standing and not backing down, we won. Our request of how \$55 million will come back to the people was granted for infrastructure needs in our districts. This is extra dollars for counties and cities. It is the General Assembly who was given the authority over the checkbook. We are working to get that back!

Oh, by the way, did you just get your "assessment change notice" in the mail, as well? No surprise, another tax increase. Again, as I mentioned in my last Loop about the addiction problem in our state, and not just opiates, but government never seeming to have enough of our pocketbook. Ugh!

Legislation such as HB1149, which prohibits abortion of a viable fetus except in a medical emergency, passed and made Tennessee the 21st state to protect life inside the womb. That was a huge victory and one that made heard the cries of children inside the womb.

HB529, known as The Tennessee Broadband Accountability Act, mentioned by some as "the simplistic approach to a complicated issue," was created by a report revealing the dire need to provide internet services to rural Tennesseans. Fact of the matter is, 34% of rural residents are without the basics compared to the 2% urban citizens who are underserved. Open up the competition, and I assure you underserved communities will have affordable internet service, which is one as vital as water, electricity and roads. . .HB529 will blaze the trails for work going forward.

I've just skimmed the top of the bills passed this session. I intend to "Loop" you when I have had the opportunity to recap and digest all that was accomplished on the Hill.

In a scene of Lord of the Rings where Frodo makes a comment saying, "I wish the ring had never come to me," Gandalf, his friend, replies, "So do all who live to see such times. But that is not for you to decide. All you have to decide is what to do with the time given to you."

The time given to me to represent you honestly is taxing and tiring; however, that being said, I believe strongly in my heart I am called to this task for such a time as this. Though our course of travel to our destination may differ, one thing we all can agree upon is making District 40 a better place to live, raise our families, do our jobs, and enjoy our great state of Tennessee. Now that the gavel remains silent until 2018, I intend to see you in the district in order to be ready when session resumes. But for now, enjoy your family this Mother's Day weekend and be glad!

Much respect and Blessings to you, Fabulous Folks of the Fortieth,
Terri Lynn