

number of members of each House, in which case the bill becomes law immediately upon its approval by the Governor.

The General Assembly may add a referendum provision to any local bill but may not submit a statewide bill to referendum (with the exception of a proposed amendment to the Constitution or a Soldiers' Bonus Bill). Most statewide bills, except appropriation bills, and any local bill that concerns a county or Baltimore City, may be submitted to a referendum by petition. No bill subject to a referendum shall be enforceable until approved by a majority of the voters at the election in which the referred bill is voted upon, except an emergency bill, which shall be effective immediately and shall remain effective thirty days following its rejection by the voters (XVI).

The House of Delegates has sole power of impeachment of any officer of the State. A majority of the whole number of members of the House must approve any bill of impeachment. The Senate tries all impeachment cases, and two-thirds of the total number of Senators must concur in a verdict of guilty (III, 26).

Both Houses elect the State Treasurer by joint ballot. The General Assembly also elects the Governor and/or the Lieutenant Governor if the popular election has resulted in a tie or the winning candidate and/or candidates are ineligible. When a vacancy occurs in the office of Governor, the Lieutenant Governor succeeds to that office for the remainder of the term. If a vacancy occurs in the office of Lieutenant Governor, the Governor nominates a person to succeed to that office upon confirmation by a majority vote of all members of the General Assembly in joint session. If vacancies occur in both the offices of Governor and Lieutenant Governor at the same time, the General Assembly must convene and fill the office of Governor by a majority vote of all the members in joint session. The chosen Governor then nominates a Lieutenant Governor with the same confirmation.

The President of the Senate serves as acting Governor if the Lieutenant Governor is not able to serve as acting Governor. If there is a vacancy in the office of President of the Senate when he is authorized to serve as acting Governor, the Senate must convene and fill the vacancy (II, 1A, 1B, 6, 7A).

A HISTORY OF THE 1979 SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly met in regular session on January 10, 1979, and adjourned on April 9, 1979.

A total of 2,945 bills was introduced of which 1,129 were Senate bills and 1,816 were House bills. Of the Senate bills, 343 were passed by both Houses, 301 were signed by the Governor, and 42 were vetoed. Of the 1,816 House bills introduced, 515 were passed by both Houses, 447 were signed by the Governor, and 68 were vetoed.

Joint Resolutions introduced totaled 170 with 70 in the Senate and 100 in the House. Of these, 17 Senate and 25 House Joint Resolutions were passed by both Houses. All these Joint Resolutions were signed by the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Delegates.

No vetoed bills were returned to the Legislature during the 1979 session, because a new General Assembly had been elected and sworn (Constitution, Art. II, sec. 17).

The budget bill enacted at the 1979 Session for fiscal year 1980 (ending June 30, 1980) amounted to \$4,836,421,253. The General Construction Loan of 1979 was passed for a total of \$57,161,900.

Among the more important measures were those providing shelter homes for battered spouses, providing triennial real property assessments, extending the circuit breaker program, clarifying the constant yield tax rate, providing for disposition of family use personal property in divorce and annulment cases, extending for four years the effective date for termination of State funding for drivers' education, requiring the development of a three-year demonstration program for employing persons who have reached seventy years of age, prohibiting expenditures for certain political campaign acts performed on election day, enacting a comprehensive statute concerning public ethics, exempting certain farm machinery and manufacturing machinery from sales and use taxes, increasing the amount of the standard deduction allowed under the State income tax law, creating a program of property tax relief to elderly and disabled persons renting a principal place of residence, removing the interest rate ceiling on loans secured by residential real property, providing that only minors are required to wear protective headgear while riding a motorcycle, requiring the MVA to establish a program for emissions inspections, establishing a new pension system for State employees and teachers, denying a person who voluntarily stops working unemployment insurance benefits for a certain period and clarifying "good cause", and establishing 911 as the primary emergency telephone number in the State and establishing the Emergency Number Systems Board.