

OTHER LEGISLATION

Other legislation to improve our safety program will be laid before you at this session. And this brings me around to some ideas which I have for new laws which I believe are required at this time to make our State government more responsive to the needs of the people. The examination of traffic statistics proves conclusively that drunken driving is a chief contributing factor to deaths and injuries on our highways. I therefore, recommend strongly that you pass legislation requiring motorists suspected of drunkenness either to submit to chemical tests or else surrender their driving privilege. Likewise, committees of your two Houses have been studying other traffic safety measures, and I hope you will give their recommendations your careful consideration. The sale of firearms to persons incapable of handling them with good judgment and responsibility has become a menace in our day. Many local governments have taken steps to restrict the sale of weapons. I believe the time has come for us to enact a State-wide law to prohibit the unreasonable and indiscriminate sale of firearms.

You met your responsibility as legislators most creditably last year when you took steps to reapportion your two bodies and to redefine the State's congressional districts in accordance with the "one man, one vote" principle laid down by the courts. The reapportionment measure has been upheld by our Court of Appeals. The redistricting bill which you passed was petitioned successfully to referendum and is suspended. Consequently, in view of a previous court decision, Maryland will have no congressional districts for the election next fall unless you or the courts provide them.

Finally regarding new legislation, I think the time has arrived when we no longer can delay the construction of a second Chesapeake Bay crossing. You were witness last summer to the chaotic traffic conditions that occurred on weekends at the Bay Bridge. It has reached a point now that it is not only an inconvenience to the traveling public but actually threatens the economic welfare of a large section of our State. You will be offered additional traffic studies at this session. I believe that you will be convinced, as I have been, that the most desirable location is at the present bridge site and the most feasible project a parallel span. This enumeration of proposed measures does not purport to be a complete and final list of the legislation the executive will propose. On the contrary, other measures will be presented to you from time to time as the session progresses.