

LEGISLATURE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Senate Officers

- James Clark, Jr., *President of the Senate*
- Rosalie Silber Abrams, *Majority Floor Leader*
- Edward J. Mason, *Minority Floor Leader*
- John F. Breitenberg, *Administrative Assistant to the President*
- Oden Bowie, *Secretary*
- Henry L. Harrison, *Assistant Secretary*
- W. Gary Gray, *Journal Clerk*
- William B. C. Addison, *Assistant Journal Clerk*
- Frederick L. Kelly, *Reading Clerk*
- Mary Catherine Johnson, *Chief Page*
- Sgt. Millard K. Daugherty, *Sergeant-at-Arms*

House of Delegates Officers

- Benjamin L. Cardin, *Speaker*
- Donald B. Robertson, *Majority Floor Leader*
- Raymond E. Beck, *Minority Floor Leader*
- Jacqueline M. Spell, *Chief Clerk*
- Margery S. LaMar, *Assistant Chief Clerk*
- C. Hurley Cox, *Journal Clerk*
- Brenda C. Ward, *Assistant Journal Clerk*
- Alan Bernstein, *Reading Clerk*
- Cornelia Connelly, *Page Coordinator*

The legislative powers of the State of Maryland are vested in the General Assembly, which consists of two distinct branches, the Senate and the House of Delegates (Const. 1867, Art. III, sec. 1). The General Assembly consists of 188 members, with 47 Senators and 141 members of the House of Delegates. They are elected from 47 legislative districts.

Every Senator or Delegate must be a citizen of the State and a resident of it for at least one year

preceding the date of his election. For six months prior to his election he must have resided in his legislative district. A Senator must be at least twenty-five years of age at the time of his election and a Delegate at least twenty-one. No member of Congress or any person holding a civil or military office under the United States Government is eligible for election to the General Assembly (III, 9, 10, 11). The term of each Senator and Delegate is four years from the second Wednesday of January following the date of his election (III, 6). The Governor is required to appoint to any vacancy that occurs in either House through death, resignation, or disqualification a person whose name is submitted to him in writing by the State Central Committee of the political party with which the Delegate or Senator, so vacating, had been affiliated in the County or District from which he or she was elected, provided that the appointee shall be of the same political party as the person whose office is to be filled. All persons so appointed serve for the unexpired portion of the term (III, 13). Each House elects its own officers, is judge of the qualifications and election of its own members, and establishes rules for the conduct of its business.

The General Assembly meets annually. Sessions begin the second Wednesday in January and are for a period not longer than ninety days. The General Assembly may extend its sessions beyond ninety days, but not to exceed an additional thirty days, by resolution concurred in by three-fifths vote of the membership in each House. The Governor may call special sessions at any time he deems it necessary (III, 14), but no single special session may last longer than thirty days.

The General Assembly must pass at each regular session a budget bill that contains the budget for the State government for the next fiscal year. Upon the passage of the bill by both Houses, it becomes a law without further action (III, 52). By Constitutional Amendment adopted by the people at the General Election held November 7, 1978, the General Assembly is authorized to enact laws (other than appropriation bills) that mandate the Governor, in the preparation of the annual budget, to provide for the funding of specific programs at specified levels (III, 52(11) and (12)).

Under the provisions of a Constitutional Amendment ratified by the voters in 1972 (Chapter 369, Acts of 1972), the Senate and the House of Delegates may adopt a "consent calendar" procedure permitting bills to be read and voted upon as a single group on both second and third readings, affording members of each House reasonable notice of the bills so placed on each consent calendar (III, 27, 28).