

Legislative Committee

Submitted by Marilyn Miller, Chair

The 2006 Legislative Committee focused its efforts on the health insurance issues, retirement issues and the budget. This year we had three sponsored bills. Two of the bills we had sponsored passed – one with major amendments.

This legislative session was unlike any other I have been involved in. It seemed as though the legislators were intent on stopping any bills that had been introduced by the Governor or MCEA. We did manage to amend House Bill 605 and Senate Bill 348 regarding the definition of collective bargaining. In addition, the committee members and other MCEA members testified on several other bills of interest, including the retirees' health insurance bill, pension enhancement and correctional retirement bills.

The Legislative Committee sponsored the legislative seminar, which was a great success. About 35 MCEA members participated. The speakers included Del. David Boschert of Anne Arundel County and our lobbyists Ivan Lanier and Jim Doyle.

The committee also hosted a reception in the Miller Senate Building in Annapolis, in which 65 legislators and approximately 150 MCEA members attended.

The Legislative Committee sponsored the annual basketball game between the legislators and MCEA. This year MCEA won the game. The Governor came by to support the event. Everyone had a good time and we raised approximately \$1,000 for a charity of Del. Bobby Zirkin's choice.

The 2007 legislative agenda has been set by the committee. Bills to be sponsored include, but are not limited to, interest to be paid on awards for back pay, appeal of denial of sick leave bank, retirement benefits (i.e., Correctional Officers Retirement System), grievance procedures for the Maryland Department of Transportation, improving health benefits and prescription plans (co-pays), sick leave payout, and having Article 11 regarding disciplinary appeals agree with Article 12 (House Bill 922 and House Bill 923). The committee realizes that some of these will have a fiscal note, but it may save the state money in the long run.

The 2006 Legislative Committee has signed contracts for the following events:

- a. 2007 legislative seminar, which is scheduled for Jan. 6, 2007 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Ashbury Church in Annapolis.
- b. 2007 legislative reception, which is tentatively scheduled for Jan. 22, 2007 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The place will be determined.
- c. 2007 basketball game between MCEA and the legislators, which will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2007 from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at St. Mary's School in Annapolis

The committee is in full agreement that the 2006 legislative session would not have been as knowledgeable without the efforts of a lobbyist. Therefore, the committee strongly recommends that a lobbyist be retained for the 2007 legislative session.

I would like to thank our staff members who devoted many hours to this committee: Robert Stephens, Interim Executive Director; Philip Deitchman, Lead Labor Relations Specialist; and Janet Anderson,