

Legislative Report
March 2017
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1. HOUSE BILL 1677. ".....all legislation to be considered by the committee of purview and to receive a recorded vote....." Once again a way to achieve transparency in government has been "side-tracked" by the General Assembly as it never passed the procedures of our Legislature! Several community organizations will continue to work on this most important effort until our Assembly recognizes all this is attempting to do is to make sure we comply with effective democracy.

2. TENURE/BUDGETS/LEGISLATORS. Like Virginia, a number of states (Wisconsin being one) have severe budget problems. All expenses/subjects are on the table for review including the practice of granting tenure to professors. Steep tuition increases along with student debt is making this quite an emotional subject. Some decision makers have brought significant proposals up for discussions: eliminate tenure, reduce the number of tenured professors, offer buyouts to tenured professors, do not offer tenure to new hires, etc. Our academic communities should play an important and active role with our legislators to participate in such discussions and decisions to insure outcomes which minimize severe consequences on our educational institutions. Such decisions could affect the awarding of grants, faculty recruitment, etc.

3. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEADERSHIP-HOUSE. Maybe, maybe, maybe a new era awaits us with House Speaker Bill Howell announcing his retirement. Too many times in the past we have had the lack of cooperation and effective give and take between the House and the Senate to solve our most pressing State problems. The vindictiveness of the past behaviors of BOTH parties can only interfere with putting-in-place effective legislation to solve these major issues. We know this can be done and we hope the ASSEMBLY will make it happen. Please do so!!

4. AIRBNB (the practice of renting a room/house in a private residence in a residential neighborhood) Blacksburg Town Council has approved a number of regulations/requirements to protect the integrity of our neighborhoods one which is registering such accommodations with the Town with a thousand-dollar penalty (\$1000.00) for failure to do so.