

For immediate release:

August 27, 2009

SENATE PRESIDENT, SPEAKER ANNOUNCE LEGISLATIVE FURLOUGH PLAN

Annapolis, MD – Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., and House Speaker Michael E. Busch today announced a Furlough and Service Reduction Plan for the legislative branch of State government. Similar to the Governor’s Executive Branch plan, legislative offices will close for 5 days, centered around holiday weekends, and include a graduated furlough plan, based on salary.

“The Governor and the legislature are confronting unprecedented challenges because of the global economic meltdown,” said Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. “I will return the maximum number of days to the State. I hope every member of the General Assembly will share in our workforce’s sacrifice by participating in the furlough program and making the appropriate contribution to the State.

The plan impacts Maryland General Assembly employees and Department of Legislative Services employees. A total of 633 employees work for the legislative branch, resulting in a \$1.1 million savings to the State.

Under the State Constitution, the salary of legislators cannot be reduced. However, a voluntary program is being established to allow lawmakers to give back a portion of their salary to the State. In 2008, 85% of lawmakers participated in the program. Based on a legislator’s salary of \$43,000, each lawmaker would fall into the category of 8 furlough days. President Miller and Speaker Busch are both contributing the maximum 10 days and are encouraging every lawmaker to participate in 2009.

“President Miller and I made the difficult decision to furlough legislative employees, in an effort to keep as many people employed as possible during these tough economic times,” said Speaker Busch. “While we understand that this is a real sacrifice for many families, the decisions we make today will help continue Maryland’s fiscal stability into the future.”

Since the global recession began, the Maryland General Assembly has cut \$9.5 million from its budget, totaling a 12% reduction to the legislative budget.

For more information:

Alexandra Hughes, Office of the Speaker Patrick Murray, Office of the Senate Pres.

410-841-3917 (office)

410-841-3700 (office)

443-807-3881 (cell)

443-977-5076 (cell)