



MOORE FROM THE HILL

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As we inch closer to session beginning in January, I thought this may be a good time to re-cap a few of the things the Tennessee General Assembly accomplished this year. Of course this is not an all inclusive list, but it does list several important items that relate to criminals, child abuse, protection of our elderly and more.

- * **Public Chapter 583** - Establishes “attempt to commit first degree murder” as a dangerous felony for the purpose of the mandatory sentences imposed under the “Crooks with Guns Law.”
- * **Public Chapter 603** - Establishes that all residential burglaries committed within a 24-hour period count as separate prior convictions for purposes of determining if the defendant is a multiple, persistent, or career offender under the Criminal Sentencing Reform Act.
- * **Public Chapter 582** - Adds aggravated child abuse, aggravated child neglect, rape of a child, and aggravated rape of a child to the list of criminal offenses that support sentence of death or life imprisonment without parole when committed in conjunction with first degree murder.
- * **Public Chapter 413** - Authorizes, under certain circumstances, a jury to hear as evidence a videotaped statement made by a child under the age of 13 years describing any act of sexual contact or physical abuse if the child is unavailable and the statement is deemed reliable.
- * **Public Chapter 414** - Redefines "indecent exposure" to include knowingly engaging in certain sexual or lewd conduct, in the presence of a child for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification, while within the person's own residence.
- * **Public Chapter 529** - The “Tennessee Clean Energy Future Act of 2009” which is designed to attract “green businesses” and “green jobs” to the state. The state is required to overhaul its vehicles and buildings with more energy efficient products and materials.

- **Public Chapter 550** - Kept the unemployment trust fund from running out of money and increased oversight to help assure that those who are not qualified do not take from the fund, thereby making sure funds are available for those who legitimately qualify; increased the number of weeks that those who qualify can draw from the fund.
- **Public Chapter 401** - Passed legislation for the protection of elderly and disabled adults. This law updated a registry that tracks individuals who have engaged in certain conduct adverse to elderly or vulnerable individuals and expanded protections for elderly and vulnerable individuals against exploitation.
- **Public Chapter 410** - Expanded the scope of background checks on certain persons who come into contact with children and the elderly.
- **Public Chapter 590** - Instituted a "Senior Alert" program to maximize our resources to help find our elderly citizens who might wander off or otherwise become missing.
- **Public Chapter 592** - Increased the amount of personal needs allowance from \$40.00 to \$50.00 per month for certain nursing home residents.
- **Public Chapter 501** - Expanded eligibility for our "Helping Heroes Grant Program" to include current members of a Reserve or Tennessee National Guard Unit who have served on active military service and who meet current grant criteria. Removed limit on number of service members who can receive this grant.
- **Public Chapter 591** - Put in place the "Commercial Breeder Act" which regulates large commercial breeders of dogs and cats. This Act requires licensing and inspection of those operations to ensure they are clean, sanitary and operate in a humane manner.
- **Public Chapter 469** - Passed the "Uniform Debt Management Services Act," which is designed to protect consumers by regulating businesses or individuals who engage in debt management services. Many consumers who have become entangled in mortgage problems have been taken advantage of by some fly-by-night individuals or businesses which offer to help them manage their debt problems. This bill cracks down on those wrong-doers and helps protect the public.

And to our service men and women, veterans and the families who love them; thank you again for giving your best and your all so that we may continue to enjoy the freedom we cherish.

I hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving. As always, please let me know if I may help you in any way.

Gary

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