

LEGISLATURE

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JOSEPH R. BYRNES, President of the Senate

C. FERDINAND SYBERT, Speaker of the House of Delegates

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 at the present time consists of 152 members: 29 Senators and 123 members of the House of Delegates. Each County and each of the six Legislative Districts of the City of Baltimore is entitled to one Senator. The members of the House of Delegates are elected by the counties and the Legislative Districts of Baltimore City, and the number of Delegates from each legislative area is determined by its population.

Counties having a population of

less than 18,000.....	2 Delegates
18,000-28,000	3 Delegates
28,000-40,000	4 Delegates
40,000-55,000	5 Delegates
55,000-and over	6 Delegates

Each of the Legislative Districts of Baltimore City is entitled to the number of Delegates accorded the most populous county of the State (III, 2, 4).

Every Senator or Delegate must be a citizen of the State, and a resident of it for at least three years preceding the date of his election and the last year thereof, he must have resided in the county or the Legislative District of Baltimore City which he represents. 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 nor any clergyman or minister shall be eligible for election to the General Assembly (III, 9, 10, 11). The term of each Senator and Delegate shall be for four years from the date of his election (XVII). All vacancies occurring in either House through death, resignation or disqualification shall be filled by the Governor, who shall appoint a person whose name is submitted to him in writing by the State Central Committee of the party to which the person holding the vacated seat belonged, and the person appointed must be affiliated with that party. All persons so appointed shall serve for the unexpired portion of the term (III, 13, amended November 1936). Each House shall elect its own officers and shall be judge of its own members and shall establish rules for the conduct of its business.

The General Assembly meets annually. Sessions in odd-numbered years begin the first Wednesday in January and are limited to ninety days; the sessions meeting in even-numbered years begin the first Wednesday of February and are limited to thirty days. The Governor may call special sessions at any time he deems it necessary (III, 14, amended).

The General Assembly is required to pass at each regular session a budget bill which shall contain the budget for the State Government for the next fiscal year. Upon the passage of the bill by both Houses, it becomes law without further action (III, 52).