

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

## *G-J checks in with local representatives*



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Del. Chad Green is shown seated in the House of Delegates on Monday, ready to cast his vote on legislation being considered that day. A freshman legislator, he succeeded in getting several bills passed during this session.

### Del. Chad Green

Green, in his first couple of months on the job, said he's finding the workload and pace in the General Assembly "crazy and maddening" after coming from a background on the York County Board of Supervisors. As a supervisor he was able to "call someone to get something done," he said. Now, he added humorously, "I have to have the consent of 50 of my closest friends."

Nevertheless, Green said he's been enjoying his time in the House of Delegates, and that he was the first member of his caucus to get two bills passed by the House. He said his main focus as a legislator is to create laws that improve the quality of life, reduce costs on families, and improve the educational system. Both his mother and his mother-in-law are teachers and his brother is a college professor, he said, so he's a big proponent of pay increases for educators and hopes "we never lose the drive to make schools better." He said he also hopes to "make it easier for local government to do things, and not harder."

An attorney by profession, one of Green's first bills proposed a change to the Criminal Injury Compensation Fund that takes away the statute of limitations for minors that are the victims of sexual abuse. Under current law, claims involving sexual abuse of a minor must be filed within 10 years after the minor's 18th birthday, but Green explained that people who are victims of sexual abuse often don't come forward right away and develop problems later. The bill passed the House unanimously and was reported from the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee with a substitute and unanimous support on Tuesday morning.

House Bill 98, sponsored by Green, passed the House unanimously and passed the Senate 37-3 with an amendment on Monday. That bill requires school boards to accept a student's participation in Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps as fulfillment of any physical education requirements in grades nine through 12.

Another one of Green's successful bills, HB 156, increases from age 70 to 73 the age at which a person can request exemption from jury service based on age. That bill won unanimous support in both houses.

Finally, Green successfully herded a bill that permits the Department of Motor Vehicles to release nonmedical privileged information to a person who's subject to an administrative proceeding conducted by the DMV. It passed the Senate Monday.

Green said one of his bills, to establish an annual retail sales and use tax holiday, had also been proposed by a Democratic delegate, so he dropped his bill and became Chief Co-Patron on the other one, working in a bipartisan fashion "for the good of everybody."

Regarding an issue that many people in Gloucester find upsetting—continued tolls on the Coleman Bridge—Green said he's working with the Virginia Department of Transportation and supervisors to find out how much money has been collected on the bridge and where it's going. He said he'd like to see a more substantial discount on the bridge toll for local residents—to as low as 25 cents per trip. But he said that would have to be measured against the fact that taking the toll off the bridge could put some developmental pressure on Gloucester.

One bill he sponsored would

have provided 100 percent toll relief for veterans, he said, but that proved to be unworkable, since a number of toll plazas across the state are owned by private entities rather than VDOT.

With a background as a commercial waterman and boat captain, Green said he's in favor of efforts to make the blue catfish a marketable species.

"If they can come up with a market for them," he said, "I have faith that our commercial watermen can catch them."

Tax reform is one of Green's goals. He said he would like to do away with the car tax altogether and have the state reimburse localities for what they would lose, but he realizes it's "a heavy lift" because of all the revenue the tax brings into localities. It would take around \$3 billion, or 10 percent of the state budget, to do so, he said, and legislation he sponsored regarding the matter was left in the Finance Committee.

Green said he looks forward to getting to know his Gloucester constituents better. "Gloucester is a wonderful place," he said, "and I want to make sure everything I do up there emphasizes that."