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About the bloggers



Annie Linskey covers state politics and government for *The Baltimore Sun*. Previously, as a City Hall reporter, she wrote about the corruption trial of Mayor Sheila Dixon and kept a close eye on city spending. Originally from Connecticut, Annie has also lived in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, where she reported on war crimes tribunals and landmines. She lives in Canton.



Julie Bykowicz has been a reporter at *The Baltimore Sun* for 10 years. At the paper, she previously focused on criminal justice, juvenile services and legal matters. Julie is now on the state campaign trail, tracking the governor's race and other major matchups. She lives in Baltimore.

Julie Scharper covers City Hall and Baltimore politics. A native of Baltimore County, she graduated from The Johns Hopkins University in 2001 and spent two years teaching in Honduras before joining *The Baltimore Sun*. She has followed the Amish community of Nickel Mines, Pa., in the year after a schoolhouse massacre, reported on courts and crime in Anne Arundel County, and chronicled the unique personalities and places of Baltimore City and its surrounding counties.

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Baltimore Sun politics

Holdout apparently will support gay marriage

Del. Tiffany Alston said she is now prepared to vote on a proposal to allow gay couples to marry, and it seems she will vote in favor of it.

The Prince George's County Democrat was one of two legislation co-sponsors who **refused to vote on the bill** at a key committee session Tuesday. She told The Sun last night that she had needed "time to think it through."

In a statement delivered in the early morning hours today, Alston, a new delegate, says: "From the beginning of my campaign I have told the people that elected me that I personally supported the same sex couple's right to marry. I believe all people should be treated equally regardless of their sexual orientation. ... I have resolved that if and when the chairman calls the vote I will be ready to vote based on what I believe to be right." (Entire statement after the jump.)

What Del. Jill Carter plans to do remains a mystery for now.

The Baltimore Democrat said she was withholding support to call attention to other issues -- education funding, joint custody of children in divorces -- that she says she views as "more important, or at least equally important."

It's unclear whether the House Judiciary Committee will try again today to take a vote on the **Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act**. The plan needs 12 committee votes to pass, and exactly 12 delegates (including Carter and Alston) signaled their support by signing on as co-sponsors.

Alston statement:

"The same sex marriage debate is a very contentious and controversial issue that cuts to the core of people's religious belief and people's fundamental right to the pursuit of happiness. From the beginning of my campaign I have told the people that elected me that I personally supported the same sex couple's right to marry. I believe all people should be treated equally regardless of their sexual orientation. I also told my constituents that I would listen to their concerns and take them into consideration. As such, I have been weighing the diverse and diametrically opposed feedback from my constituents and the citizens of the Great State of Maryland.

On Tuesday, March 1, 2011, as others members of the committee came forward to express their concerns and reservations, I too shared my interest in having a little more time to weigh my final decision. Marriage is not an institution that should not be entered into lightly nor is the decision to create a public policy shift surrounding marriage. There are several fundamental rights that shape this debate: a fundamental freedom to express yourself; a fundamental right to pursue happiness; and just as important if not more important a fundamental right to religious freedom. I believe that one person's fundamental right(s) end where another person's right(s) began. As a law maker it is my duty and privilege to serve the people and try to find balance and equity where inequity exists. This duty is compounded when your personal religious belief are contrary to what you believe to be fundamentally right for society.

Accordingly, I have resolved that if and when the chairman calls the vote I will be ready to vote based on what I believe to be right. In time the people of Maryland will also have the opportunity to vote on what they each believe is the correct direction for our State to take. In the interim I hope and pray that you will all respect my vote although you may not agree with it. Thank you all for the privilege to serve as your Delegate."

Posted by **Julie Bykowicz** at 7:10 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#)

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Comments

I see the Fleebaggers are alive and well in Md. Politics. lol

Posted by: Felix | **March 2, 2011 8:14 AM**

Jill Carter is lucky that she will never know what it is like to have the law tell her she can't do something just because of who she is. Obviously she has never felt the sting of discrimination if she is willing to play fast and loose with the civil rights of an entire minority for political effect. She sucks. That's all there is to it. Standing in the way of progress and equality is not the way to get your political agenda through.

Posted by: Eli | **March 2, 2011 8:21 AM**

Del Carter is acting like a petulant child. Aren't school funding amounts determined by a formula created many years ago that account for population and other factors for every jurisdiction in the state? If so, her argument to get the \$15M that was cut from Balto City is without merit since that \$15M was cut due to dwindling population in Baltimore City. We don't even need to get into returns for that investment or the per pupil number of dollars spent in Balto City versus the rest of the state, because Heaven forbid we actually take a look at what that money is being used for or how effective it actually is.

Posted by: Jeff | **March 2, 2011 8:35 AM**

Thank you Del. Alston for supporting the rights of ALL Marylanders and doing the right thing in this historic vote.

Posted by: MadelBlue | **March 2, 2011 8:47 AM**

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