

Senate President Mike Miller undergoing treatment for prostate cancer

On the Senate floor Jan. 10, Maryland Senate President Thomas V. “Mike” Miller confirmed reports that he has been diagnosed with prostate cancer. He will be undergoing chemotherapy during this year’s legislative session, but in a statement said he plans to continue to “fully carry out my Senate responsibilities.”

“As many of you know, beyond my tremendous love for my wife and family, I have no greater commitment than to the success and stability of the Maryland Senate,” said Miller. “I have been told that in spite of my treatments, I will be fully able to join my colleagues and preside this session.”

Miller, who is 76, was elected to serve as Senate president for his 33rd year Jan. 9. He is a Democrat, serving District 27 in Prince George’s, Charles, and Calvert Counties, and is the longest-serving Senate president in the country. He is also a practicing Catholic who attends St. Anthony Catholic Church in North Beach.

Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori offered his prayers for Miller and encouraged the faithful of the Archdiocese of Baltimore to pray for the senator as he battles cancer.

“Despite my longevity as president, I have never sought to retain this position out of personal gratification but out of a true belief I could lead the body to the tremendous achievements we have accomplished together over the years,” said Miller in his statement.

House Minority Leader Nic Kipke and Minority Whip Kathy Szeliga released a joint statement expressing their support for Senate President Miller:

“We wish the president a speedy recovery and will keep him and his family in our continued prayers,” the statement said. “As we have seen so many times, cancer

does not discriminate. We are confident that President Miller will face this new challenge with the same vigorous fighting spirit he has shown throughout his long legislative career.”

Jennifer Briemann, the director of the Maryland Catholic Conference, said everyone at the conference is “very devastated by the news, but we are hopeful that his treatments will be successful and he will be restored to good health soon.”

“Over the years, he has been a good friend to the conference...He is a man of great faith,” she said. “Everyone here at the conference and throughout the dioceses in Maryland are keeping him in prayer and are here for anything he might need.”

Though he and the Maryland Catholic Conference have not always seen eye-to-eye on every issue, Briemann said they could always count on him to be “willing to hear a very balanced viewpoint on everything.”

“His door was always open to us,” she said.

During his tenure as Senate President, he has worked with the Maryland Catholic Conference on issues affecting the poor, immigration, and trafficking, and is a supporter of BOOST due to his commitment to helping low-income students, said Briemann. In 2013, he allowed the vote on the repeal of the death penalty to take place in the Senate.

“No matter if you agree with him or not on issues, I don’t think there is anyone here who doesn’t have the greatest respect for President Miller,” said Briemann.

In a Jan. 10 statement, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, who is a cancer survivor and fellow Catholic, said, “My heart goes out to President Miller on what I know must be one of the toughest days he’s faced. I know firsthand how hard it is to receive a diagnosis like this. But I also know firsthand that Mike Miller has earned his place in Maryland political history because he’s a fighter who always gives it everything he’s got, no matter how tough things get. Mike’s tenacity, bravery, and perseverance will ensure that he wins this battle, and he has my full support.

“Yumi and I send our heartfelt prayers to Mike, his wife, Patti, and his family during this difficult time,” the governor said.

This story is courtesy The Catholic Standard in Washington.