

# News Release

## Comptroller Lierman Celebrates Agency's Many Achievements During First 100 Days in Office

*Maryland's first female Comptroller highlights strong team, new direction for office, key legislative partnerships and victories*

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 26, 2023) - Comptroller Brooke Lierman on Wednesday will mark the passage of her first 100 days as the 34th Comptroller of the State of Maryland and the first woman to hold the position, underscoring the new team she has built, partnerships with the General Assembly she has forged, and realignment of the office that has begun.

“Because we worked so diligently between November and January, my team hit the ground running and has been working in close partnership with our staff and division leaders to strengthen the overall function of the agency while delivering on commitments made during my campaign and transition to begin building more equitable, resilient, and prosperous Maryland communities,” **Comptroller Lierman said.** “While plenty of work remains to be done, we have set a clear course toward modernizing the Office of the Comptroller with an eye toward providing best-in-class service to the diverse businesses, families and organizations that depend on us.”

Comptroller Lierman's administration has wasted no time since taking office on January 16 to deliver for Marylanders. Since her inauguration, the Comptroller has presided over the 2023 tax season, during which the agency has processed more than 2.7 million tax returns and has sent out 1.8 million refunds valued at more than \$2.25 billion.

As a member of the Board of Public Works, Comptroller Lierman has reviewed and voted to approve:

- \$2.061 billion in state investments

- 46 contracts to prime certified small businesses, including veteran-owned small businesses
- \$116.3 million in small business prime contracts
- 27 prime contracts totaling more than \$80 million to minority business enterprises (MBEs)

Comptroller Lierman also was elected to serve as the Vice Chair of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System Board, where she has been an active participant. At the March meeting, she led an effort to engage with Charlesbank, a private equity company in which the Maryland Pension System invests, and which owns Hearthside Foods, recently the subject of an exposé by the New York Times for federal labor law violations. She worked to ensure a unanimous vote by the Board to push Charlesbank to ensure changes are made at Hearthside.

Under Comptroller Lierman's leadership, the 2023 General Assembly session was one of the most consequential legislative sessions ever for the Office of the Comptroller. She and her team worked with Speaker Adrienne Jones and Senate President Bill Ferguson to pass six legislative priorities, including creating an Office of the Taxpayer Advocate to better assist Marylanders with their tax needs and setting in motion the modernization of Maryland's accounting systems.

Additionally, as a result of her advocacy, the Governor and the General Assembly awarded the Comptroller's Office more than \$7 million in the FY24 budget to hire new staff and acquire new technology to increase the efficiency of the Comptroller's Office as a whole.

In February, Comptroller Lierman released her Transition Report, a list of more than 60 recommendations generated by more than 100 Marylanders, to help reshape and guide the activities of the Office of the Comptroller. She also kicked off her tour of the Branch Offices across the State, meeting with staff and taxpayers to discuss ways to improve the services offered by the Comptroller's Office. In line with recommendations from the Transition Report, she has made two historic hires, the first Chief Information Officer and the first Chief Equity and Transformation Officer for the Office of the Comptroller.

### **Key Accomplishments Over the First 100 Days**

**Jan. 16** – Brooke E. Lierman [took oath of office](#) as the 34<sup>th</sup> Comptroller of Maryland.

**Jan. 17** – Comptroller Lierman elected Vice Chair of the State Retirement & Pension Board.

**Jan. 19** – Comptroller Lierman [briefed the House Appropriations Committee on agency budget priorities](#) to modernize the agency. She outlined the need to make it easier for families and businesses to pay taxes and to take advantage of underused state programs,

while streamlining the state procurement and payment systems to encourage more participation from small, minority, woman-owned and veteran-owned businesses.

**Jan. 23** – Comptroller Lierman [kicked off the 2023 Tax Season](#).

**Jan. 25** – Comptroller Lierman participated in her first Board of Public Works meeting as a voting member.

**Jan. 27** – Comptroller Lierman spoke at the CASH Campaign event in Baltimore to assist Marylanders with federal and state tax return filings. Comptroller Lierman spoke about the Earned Income Tax Credit that helps low to moderate-income families and urged them to take advantage of this underutilized tax credit.

**Feb. 1** – Comptroller Lierman [recognized National Unclaimed Property Day](#) to remind Marylanders to check the state database to reclaim lost property.

**Feb. 27** – Comptroller Lierman [released her Transition Team Report](#).

**Feb. 28** – Comptroller Lierman [outlined her legislative agenda at a press conference in the Assembly Room](#) joined by leaders of the CASH Campaign of Maryland, the Maryland Society of Accounting and Tax Professionals, CASA of Maryland, Turn Around, Inc., and the Maryland Center on Economic Policy.

**Mar. 1** – Comptroller Lierman spoke in support of the Family Prosperity Act at a press conference with CASA de Maryland, Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, Vice Chair Jheanelle Wilkens, and Delegate Palakovich Carr.

**Mar. 6** – Comptroller Lierman [kicked off her "Branching Out" statewide tour of Branch Offices](#) with a visit to the Greenbelt Branch Office in Prince George's County.

**Mar. 8** – Comptroller Lierman held the first "Getting to Know You" staff listening session as part of her commitment to proactively engage staff and ensure they have a voice in shaping the direction of the office.

**Mar. 15** – Comptroller Lierman voted as a member of the Board of Public Works on the first Bond Sale of 2023. Afterward, Comptroller Lierman led Governor Moore and Treasurer Davis on a tour of the art of The Black Art Foundation's "We the People" project, on display in the Treasury Building.

**Apr. 11** – Comptroller Lierman [celebrated legislative victories upon the conclusion of the 2023 General Assembly Session](#).

**Apr. 18**—Comptroller Lierman marked Tax Day and celebrated the close of the 2023 Tax Season in Maryland.

**Apr. 26** – Comptroller Lierman will mark her 100<sup>th</sup> day as Comptroller of Maryland.

### **Office of the Comptroller Legislative Priorities (2023)**

**The Tax Parity for Delayed Unemployment Insurance Payments, HB708 / SB661, passed the Senate, not the House.** This legislation establishes a rebate program to refund taxes withheld from or paid as a result of Unemployment Insurance payments received in 2022 to bring the recipients into parity with other taxpayers whose benefits were both earned and paid during the timeframe envisioned by the RELIEF Act of 2021.

**21st Century Financial Systems Council-Establishment, HB709 / SB659, signed into law.** Brought by the Comptroller in partnership with the Treasurer and Secretary of Budget & Management, this legislation directs the Comptroller, with partners, to investigate, adopt, and implement a new general accounting system for the entire state government. Maryland has one of the oldest accounting and payment processing systems in the country and needs to begin a thoughtful but expedient process to replace this outdated system to guarantee continued service to vendors, businesses, and non-profits who rely on timely state agency payments as well as to balance the state's checkbooks every year.

**The Supporting All Taxpayers Act of 2023, HB707 / SB660, will be signed into law by the Governor.** This legislation establishes an Office of the State Taxpayer Advocate within the Comptroller's Office and provides at least six staff members to assist Marylanders with timely resolutions to tax issues and work to identify and address systemic challenges to efficient tax processing and problem resolution for Marylanders. This legislation mirrors best practices from other state and the IRS.

Three other bills brought by the Office of the Comptroller are more technical in nature:

**Commercial Law – Abandoned Property – Alterations, SB241, signed into law.** This allows the Comptroller's Office to dispose of abandoned property with no commercial value. These items have been abandoned for years and the state has been unable to reunite them with an owner. These are items like human hair and baby teeth, that have been held by the agency's Unclaimed Property division.

**Income Tax - Work Opportunity Tax Credit - Technical Correction, SB242, signed into law.** This bill corrects certain incorrect cross-references to the federal Internal Revenue Code relating to the federal work opportunity credit in the state code.

**Income Tax - Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit – Alterations, SB243, signed into law.** This legislation closes a loophole in the law to ensure only Maryland residents can claim the child and dependent tax credit.

**Updating the rules for Pass-Through-Entities to level the playing field for Maryland small businesses with out-of-state peers (SB240).** This legislation fulfils the original goal of revenue-neutrality for the 2020 PTE legislation and promotes fairness by putting Maryland-based PTEs on equal tax footing with out-of-state peers by requiring resident members of pass-through entities that paid entity-level taxes to another state to 'add back' the amount of the credit received in that other state.

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