

# News Release

## Comptroller Lierman's Legislative Priorities Successfully Pass 2024 General Assembly Session

*Key tax legislation allows Comptroller's Office to expand and continue to modernize agency's operations*

**ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 8, 2024) —** Comptroller Brooke Lierman thanked the General Assembly for their partnership and announced that all of the agency's legislative priorities have passed the General Assembly.

"I am pleased the Maryland General Assembly, with bipartisan support, approved the agency's legislative priorities that will allow the Comptroller's Office to continue to serve the needs of all Marylanders," **Comptroller Lierman** said. "Our work to modernize the agency is an ongoing and evolving effort to deliver top-notch service and be a reliable resource of tax information by reaching out to our communities and to make filing taxes an easy, convenient, and seamless process.

Comptroller Lierman shared her experience as a survivor of sexual assault and extended her condolences to the victims of sexual misconduct: "I offer my deepest condolences, on behalf of our state, for what you have endured. It was the deepest betrayal of trust – the trust you put into our university system. Too many adults failed too many young people," Comptroller Lierman said. She continued: "It is clear that the university's inaction to known sex-based harassment, including unwanted sexual touching of male athletes as well as discrimination against female athletes, happened on an ongoing basis for years. Despite repeated pleas for help and opportunities for adults and staff, athletic administrators, and campus police to intervene, this behavior continued unchecked leading to a hostile environment and toxic culture in the UMBC community. The details, however disturbing to us, should not have been a surprise to anyone involved in that program."

The following legislative priorities passed the 2024 General Assembly session and have been passed by the General Assembly:

**[HB845/SB1105](#): Individual Income Tax Credit Eligibility Awareness Campaign**

Many of the most impactful tax credits the General Assembly has created, particularly those aimed at supporting children, families, and seniors, are underutilized. Data indicates that effective outreach and education resources could significantly shrink the gap between those eligible for tax credits and those claiming them. This bill creates a recurring appropriation of \$300,000 to support targeted outreach and education on personal income tax credits.

**[HB455/SB677](#): Electronic Tax and Fee Return Filing Requirements**

An agency-wide modernization effort is underway in the Comptroller's Office that aims to improve the quality, transparency, and reliability of the services delivered to the public. This bill supports that effort by establishing a gradual process to move all tax filings online. By creating a timeline with ample time for businesses and individuals to prepare to file online and with adequate exemptions and safeguards built in, this bill will provide significant benefits to Maryland taxpayers.

**[HB451/SB676](#): Tax Assistance for Low-Income Marylanders**

The tax filing process can be confusing and even intimidating for many Marylanders. This bill provides funding support for Low-Income Tax Clinics and the CASH Campaign and creates a grant program to incentivize mobile or on-demand tax clinics in underserved or under-resourced areas.

**[HB452/SB675](#): Stop Scam Tax Preparers Act**

Maryland's rules and regulations related to the oversight of the tax preparer industry are outdated and not aligned with the state's current needs. As a result, we have seen an uptick in the victimization of taxpayers, particularly elderly and immigrant communities, by those they have turned to for help navigating Maryland's complex tax laws. This bill has three key components meant to protect Maryland taxpayers.

- Mandates information sharing between the Office of the Comptroller and the Maryland Board of Individual Tax Preparers (MBITP) within the Department of Labor (DOL) when either body takes disciplinary action against an individual.
- Directs the MBITP to develop and publish a code of ethics and rules of professional conduct for individual tax preparers registering in Maryland.
- Authorizes the Comptroller's Field Enforcement Bureau to pursue financial penalties against individuals engaging in scams and unregistered tax preparation services.

## **[HB454/SB679](#): Disclosure of Tax Information- Tax Compliance Activity and Binding Data Use Agreements**

To help close the “Tax Gap” – the multi-billion-dollar difference between what the State of Maryland is owed in taxes and what is paid – the Comptroller’s Office needs to partner with other public and private entities with expertise in complex tax compliance. While these relationships will help level the playing field and balance the state’s budget, ensuring adequate protections are in place for confidential tax data is critical. This bill authorizes the Office of the Comptroller to enter into data-sharing arrangements with outside entities.

## **[HB453/SB678](#): Income Tax Technical Corrections**

Bill repealed certain obsolete provisions of law concerning the distribution of income tax revenue; and correcting erroneous cross-references.

Additionally, the Office of the Comptroller saw the following budgetary requests approved during the 2024 General Assembly session.

- \$6.5M for 87 new positions across the agency.
- \$485,000 for branch office relocations.
- \$340,000 for new equipment at the Motor Fuel Lab.
- \$150,000 in additional funding to the Creating Assets, Savings, and Hope (CASH) Campaign.
- \$250,000 for additional funding for free, low-income tax clinics.
- \$150,000 for free pop-up tax clinics for rural and senior communities.
- \$8M for cybersecurity, fraud, and accessibility-related projects, including translation services.

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