

HOUSE BILL 1531

J1, J5, C4

6lr2191

By: **Delegate Fair**

Introduced and read first time: February 13, 2026

Assigned to: Health and Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland Helping Everyone Afford Life–Saving Treatments and Health Care**
3 **(HEALTH) Fund – Establishment**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Helping Everyone Afford Life–Saving
5 Treatments and Health Care (HEALTH) Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund to assist
6 certain individuals with health care costs associated with legally protected health
7 care services and benefits provided under State law that are subject to federal
8 restrictions; requiring the Comptroller to distribute certain proceeds under the
9 Maryland Uniform Disposition of Abandoned Property Act to the HEALTH Fund;
10 requiring that certain funds from the Abortion Care Clinical Training Program Fund
11 be credited to the HEALTH Fund; establishing that a certain premium tax is
12 imposed in addition to certain sales and use and property taxes; requiring the
13 Comptroller to distribute certain sales and use tax revenue and State property tax
14 revenue to the HEALTH Fund; and generally relating to the establishment of the
15 Maryland Helping Everyone Afford Life–Saving Treatments and Health Care
16 (HEALTH) Fund.

17 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
18 Article – Commercial Law
19 Section 17–101(a) and (c)
20 Annotated Code of Maryland
21 (2025 Replacement Volume)

22 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
23 Article – Commercial Law
24 Section 17–317
25 Annotated Code of Maryland
26 (2025 Replacement Volume)

27 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
28 Article – Health – General

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Section 13–4706(a)
2 Annotated Code of Maryland
3 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

4 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
5 Article – Health – General
6 Section 13–4706(j)
7 Annotated Code of Maryland
8 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

9 BY adding to
10 Article – Insurance
11 Section 6–102(g) and 31–107.3
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2017 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

14 BY adding to
15 Article – Tax – General
16 Section 2–1302.6
17 Annotated Code of Maryland
18 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

19 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
20 Article – Tax – General
21 Section 2–1303
22 Annotated Code of Maryland
23 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

24 BY adding to
25 Article – Tax – Property
26 Section 5–104
27 Annotated Code of Maryland
28 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

29 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
30 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

31 **Article – Commercial Law**

32 17–101.

33 (a) In this title the following words have the meanings indicated.

34 (c) “Administrator” means the State Comptroller.

35 17–317.

1 (a) (1) (i) All funds received under this title, including the proceeds of the
2 sale of abandoned property under § 17–316 of this subtitle, shall be credited by the
3 Administrator to a special fund.

4 (ii) The Administrator shall retain in the special fund at the end of
5 each fiscal year, from the proceeds received:

6 1. An amount not exceeding \$5,000,000 for information
7 technology costs of the Administrator, including cybersecurity, customer relation systems,
8 and a system for managing unclaimed property; and

9 2. An amount of funds the Administrator reasonably
10 estimates is sufficient, from which sum the Administrator shall pay any claim allowed
11 under this title.

12 (2) After deducting all costs incurred in administering this title from the
13 remaining net funds the Administrator shall distribute \$8,000,000 to the Maryland Legal
14 Services Corporation Fund established under § 11–402 of the Human Services Article.

15 (3) (i) Subject to subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, the Administrator
16 shall distribute all unclaimed money from judgments of restitution under Title 11, Subtitle
17 6 of the Criminal Procedure Article to the State Victims of Crime Fund established under
18 § 11–916 of the Criminal Procedure Article to assist victims of crimes and delinquent acts
19 to protect the victims' rights as provided by law.

20 (ii) If a victim entitled to restitution that has been treated as
21 abandoned property under § 11–614 of the Criminal Procedure Article is located after the
22 money has been distributed under this paragraph, the Administrator shall reduce the next
23 distribution to the State Victims of Crime Fund by the amount recovered by the victim.

24 (4) For fiscal year 2025 and each fiscal year thereafter, after making the
25 distributions required under paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection, the Administrator
26 shall distribute \$500,000 from the remaining net funds to the Tax Clinics for Low–Income
27 Marylanders Fund established under § 1–207 of the Tax – General Article.

28 (5) For each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028, after making the
29 distributions required under paragraphs (2) through (4) of this subsection, the
30 Administrator shall distribute \$14,000,000 from the remaining net funds to the Access to
31 Counsel in Evictions Special Fund under § 8–909 of the Real Property Article.

32 **(6) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027 AND EACH FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER,**
33 **AFTER MAKING THE DISTRIBUTIONS REQUIRED UNDER PARAGRAPHS (2) THROUGH**
34 **(5) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE ADMINISTRATOR SHALL DISTRIBUTE \$20,000,000**
35 **FROM THE REMAINING NET FUNDS TO THE MARYLAND HELPING EVERYONE**
36 **AFFORD LIFE–SAVING TREATMENTS AND HEALTH CARE (HEALTH) FUND**
37 **ESTABLISHED UNDER § 31–107.3 OF THE INSURANCE ARTICLE.**

1 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
2 INDICATED.

3 (2) “EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR” MEANS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
4 THE EXCHANGE.

5 (3) “FUND” MEANS THE MARYLAND HELPING EVERYONE AFFORD
6 LIFE-SAVING TREATMENTS AND HEALTH CARE (HEALTH) FUND ESTABLISHED
7 UNDER THIS SECTION.

8 (4) “LEGALLY PROTECTED HEALTH CARE” HAS THE MEANING
9 STATED IN § 2-312 OF THE STATE PERSONNEL AND PENSIONS ARTICLE.

10 (B) (1) THERE IS A MARYLAND HELPING EVERYONE AFFORD
11 LIFE-SAVING TREATMENTS AND HEALTH CARE (HEALTH) FUND.

12 (2) THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND IS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO
13 MARYLAND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ENROLLEES, INDIVIDUALS WITH
14 HEALTH INSURANCE, AND INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE FOR HEALTH
15 CARE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH LEGALLY PROTECTED HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND
16 BENEFITS UNDER STATE LAW THAT ARE SUBJECT TO FEDERAL RESTRICTIONS,
17 INCLUDING FUNDING RESTRICTIONS.

18 (3) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND.

19 (4) (I) THE FUND IS A SPECIAL, NONLAPSING FUND THAT IS NOT
20 SUBJECT TO § 7-302 OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE.

21 (II) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL HOLD THE FUND
22 SEPARATELY, AND THE COMPTROLLER SHALL ACCOUNT FOR THE FUND.

23 (5) THE FUND CONSISTS OF:

24 (I) PROCEEDS DISTRIBUTED TO THE FUND UNDER § 17-317 OF
25 THE COMMERCIAL LAW ARTICLE;

26 (II) FUNDS CREDITED TO THE FUND UNDER § 13-4706 OF THE
27 HEALTH – GENERAL ARTICLE;

28 (III) SALES AND USE TAX REVENUE DISTRIBUTED TO THE FUND
29 UNDER § 2-1302.6 OF THE TAX – GENERAL ARTICLE;

1 (IV) STATE PROPERTY TAX REVENUE DISTRIBUTED TO THE
2 FUND UNDER § 5-104 OF THE TAX – PROPERTY ARTICLE;

3 (V) PRIVATE DONATIONS RECEIVED UNDER A PROCESS
4 ESTABLISHED BY THE EXCHANGE;

5 (VI) MONEY APPROPRIATED IN THE STATE BUDGET TO THE
6 FUND; AND

7 (VII) ANY OTHER MONEY FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE ACCEPTED
8 FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FUND.

9 (6) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (7)(II) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE FUND
10 MAY BE USED ONLY TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO
11 PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF A NEED FOR HEALTH CARE ASSISTANCE FOR LEGALLY
12 PROTECTED HEALTH CARE SERVICES AUTHORIZED UNDER STATE LAW THAT HAVE
13 BEEN IMPACTED BY FEDERAL RESTRICTIONS.

14 (7) (I) TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE UNDER PARAGRAPH (6) OF THIS
15 SUBSECTION, THE EXCHANGE SHALL PROVIDE GRANTS TO HEALTH CARE
16 PROVIDERS THAT DELIVER LEGALLY PROTECTED HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO
17 ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE.

18 (II) IF, IN THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DISCRETION, THERE IS
19 A SIGNIFICANT SURPLUS OF AVAILABLE ASSISTANCE, THE EXCHANGE MAY EXPAND
20 THE LEGALLY PROTECTED HEALTH CARE SERVICES ASSISTED UNDER THE FUND TO
21 INCLUDE OTHER HEALTH CARE SERVICES THAT HAVE BEEN IMPACTED BY FEDERAL
22 RESTRICTIONS.

23 (III) THE EXCHANGE MAY ENTER INTO ANY CONTRACT
24 NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THIS PARAGRAPH.

25 (8) (I) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL INVEST THE MONEY OF THE
26 FUND IN THE SAME MANNER AS OTHER STATE MONEY MAY BE INVESTED.

27 (II) ANY INTEREST EARNINGS OF THE FUND SHALL BE
28 CREDITED TO THE GENERAL FUND OF THE STATE.

29 (9) EXPENDITURES FROM THE FUND MAY BE MADE ONLY IN
30 ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATE BUDGET.

31 (10) MONEY EXPENDED FROM THE FUND FOR HEALTH CARE
32 ASSISTANCE IS SUPPLEMENTAL TO AND NOT INTENDED TO TAKE THE PLACE OF

1 FUNDING THAT WOULD OTHERWISE BE APPROPRIATED TO THE EXCHANGE FOR
2 HEALTH CARE COSTS.

3 (C) (1) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31 EACH YEAR, BEGINNING IN 2027,
4 THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
5 IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, ON THE
6 ADMINISTRATION OF THE FUND.

7 (2) THE REPORT REQUIRED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS
8 SUBSECTION SHALL INCLUDE:

9 (I) THE GROSS AMOUNT OF FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER
10 SUBSECTION (B)(5) OF THIS SECTION, DISAGGREGATED BY SOURCE; AND

11 (II) A DETAILED ACCOUNTING OF THE USE OF THE FUND.

12 (D) THE EXCHANGE SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS
13 SECTION.

14 Article – Tax – General

15 2-1302.6.

16 IN ADDITION TO THE DISTRIBUTIONS REQUIRED UNDER §§ 2-1301 THROUGH
17 2-1302.5 OF THIS SUBTITLE, THE COMPTROLLER SHALL DISTRIBUTE THE SALES
18 AND USE TAX REVENUE THAT IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO A PERSON SUBJECT TO TAXATION
19 UNDER TITLE 6 OF THE INSURANCE ARTICLE TO THE MARYLAND HELPING
20 EVERYONE AFFORD LIFE-SAVING TREATMENTS AND HEALTH CARE (HEALTH)
21 FUND ESTABLISHED UNDER § 31-107.3 OF THE INSURANCE ARTICLE.

22 2-1303.

23 After making the distributions required under §§ 2-1301 through [2-1302.5]
24 2-1302.6 of this subtitle, the Comptroller shall pay:

25 (1) revenues from the hotel surcharge into the Dorchester County
26 Economic Development Fund established under § 10-130 of the Economic Development
27 Article;

28 (2) to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund established under § 5-206
29 of the Education Article, the following percentage of the remaining sales and use tax
30 revenues:

31 (i) for fiscal year 2023, 9.2%;

- 1 (ii) for fiscal year 2024, 11.0%;
- 2 (iii) for fiscal year 2025, 11.3%;
- 3 (iv) for fiscal year 2026, 11.7%; and
- 4 (v) for fiscal year 2027 and each fiscal year thereafter, 12.1%; and
- 5 (3) the remaining sales and use tax revenue into the General Fund of the
- 6 State.

7 **Article – Tax – Property**

8 **5–104.**

9 **THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DISTRIBUTE THE STATE PROPERTY TAX REVENUE**

10 **THAT IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO A PERSON SUBJECT TO TAXATION UNDER TITLE 6 OF THE**

11 **INSURANCE ARTICLE TO THE MARYLAND HELPING EVERYONE AFFORD**

12 **LIFE–SAVING TREATMENTS AND HEALTH CARE (HEALTH) FUND ESTABLISHED**

13 **UNDER § 31–107.3 OF THE INSURANCE ARTICLE.**

14 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July

15 1, 2026.