

HOUSE BILL 753

Q1

(6lr0751)

ENROLLED BILL

— Ways and Means/Budget and Taxation —

Introduced by **Delegates Lehman, Foley, Guyton, Harrison, Kaiser, Martinez, Moreno, Pasteur, Ross, Solomon, Taveras, Terrasa, Toles, Vogel, White Holland, Wims, Woods, ~~and Wu~~ Wu, and Palakovich Carr**

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

Proofreader.

Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this _____ day of _____ at _____ o'clock, _____ M.

Speaker.

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Tax Sales – Homeowner Protections – Revisions**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the State Tax Sale Ombudsman to develop a process to allow
4 a homeowner to designate a family member or another representative of the
5 homeowner to communicate and work with the Ombudsman on the homeowner’s
6 behalf; requiring the dwelling of a homeowner to be withheld from tax sale if the
7 homeowner has a documented terminal illness or medical hardship; increasing the
8 maximum value of a dwelling that a homeowner may reside in and be eligible for the
9 Homeowner Protection Program; requiring homeowners with terminal illness or
10 medical hardship to receive priority for enrollment in the Homeowner Protection
11 Program; and generally relating to protections for homeowners in tax sale.

12 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.

Italics indicate opposite chamber/conference committee amendments.



1 Article – Tax – Property
2 Section 2–112(b) and (e), 14–811(i) and (j), 14–836(a) and (b)(4)(i)3., 14–883, and
3 14–884
4 Annotated Code of Maryland
5 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

6 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
7 Article – Tax – Property
8 Section 2–112(d), 14–811(h), and 14–885(a) and (b)
9 Annotated Code of Maryland
10 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

11 BY adding to
12 Article – Tax – Property
13 Section 14–888(e)
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

18 **Article – Tax – Property**

19 2–112.

20 (b) There is a State Tax Sale Ombudsman in the Department.

21 (d) The Ombudsman shall:

22 (1) assist homeowners to understand the process for collection of
23 delinquent taxes;

24 (2) actively assist homeowners to apply for tax credits, discount programs,
25 and other public benefits that may assist the homeowners to pay delinquent taxes and
26 improve their financial situation;

27 (3) refer homeowners to legal services, housing counseling, and other social
28 services that may assist homeowners to pay delinquent taxes and improve their financial
29 situation;

30 (4) maintain a website that functions as a clearinghouse for information
31 concerning:

32 (i) the process for collection of delinquent taxes; and

33 (ii) services and programs that are available to assist homeowners
34 to pay delinquent taxes and improve their financial situation; [and]

1 (5) maintain a toll-free telephone number that a homeowner may call to
2 obtain individualized personal assistance with delinquent taxes; AND

3 (6) DEVELOP A PROCESS TO ALLOW A HOMEOWNER TO DESIGNATE A
4 FAMILY MEMBER OR ANOTHER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOMEOWNER TO
5 COMMUNICATE AND WORK WITH THE OMBUDSMAN ON THE HOMEOWNER'S BEHALF.

6 (e) A county may, by law, establish a County Tax Sale Ombudsman to fulfill all
7 the responsibilities of the State Tax Sale Ombudsman under subsection (d) of this section
8 with respect to homeowners within the county.

9 14-811.

10 (h) (1) In this subsection, "dwelling" and "homeowner" have the meanings
11 stated in § 9-105 of this article.

12 (2) The Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City or the governing body of
13 a county or municipal corporation may withhold from sale a dwelling owned by a
14 homeowner or occupied by an heir of a deceased homeowner who is low-income, at least 65
15 years old, or disabled if the homeowner or heir meets eligibility criteria established by the
16 county or municipal corporation.

17 (3) (I) THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE CITY OR
18 THE GOVERNING BODY OF A COUNTY SHALL WITHHOLD FROM SALE THE DWELLING
19 OF A HOMEOWNER WHO HAS A TERMINAL ILLNESS OR MEDICAL HARDSHIP AS
20 DOCUMENTED BY A ~~PHYSICIAN~~ LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROVIDER WHO HAS
21 TREATED OR EXAMINED THE HOMEOWNER.

22 ~~(II) THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE CITY OR~~
23 ~~THE GOVERNING BODY OF A COUNTY MAY ADOPT ADDITIONAL METHODS FOR~~
24 ~~ESTABLISHING A TERMINAL ILLNESS OR MEDICAL HARDSHIP IN ACCORDANCE WITH~~
25 ~~SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS SUBSECTION.~~

26 (II) THE DEPARTMENT AND THE STATE TAX SALE OMBUDSMAN
27 SHALL, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, DEFINE
28 "TERMINAL ILLNESS" AND "MEDICAL HARDSHIP" BY REGULATION FOR PURPOSES
29 OF SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH.

30 (III) THE COLLECTOR FOR EACH COUNTY SHALL ESTABLISH A
31 PROCESS FOR A HOMEOWNER, A FAMILY MEMBER OF A HOMEOWNER, OR ANOTHER
32 REPRESENTATIVE OF A HOMEOWNER TO APPLY FOR THE HOMEOWNER'S DWELLING
33 TO BE WITHHELD FROM SALE UNDER THIS PARAGRAPH.

1 (2) if a homeowner as defined in § 9–105 of this article is deceased:

2 (i) the estate of the homeowner;

3 (ii) the personal representative of the homeowner; or

4 (iii) an heir or legatee of the homeowner who is entitled to inherit the
5 homeowner's dwelling.

6 (e) "Ombudsman" means the State Tax Sale Ombudsman established under §
7 2–112 of this article.

8 (f) "Program" means the Homeowner Protection Program established under this
9 part.

10 (g) "Tax" has the meaning stated in § 14–801 of this subtitle.

11 14–884.

12 (a) There is a Homeowner Protection Program administered by the Ombudsman
13 in the Department.

14 (b) The purpose of the Program is to divert vulnerable homeowners from the
15 private tax lien sale process under Part III of this subtitle into an alternative program with
16 the primary purpose of:

17 (1) minimizing tax collection costs to homeowners;

18 (2) assisting homeowners to pay their taxes; and

19 (3) allowing homeowners to remain in their homes.

20 14–885.

21 (a) (1) To be eligible for the Program a homeowner shall:

22 (i) reside in a dwelling that has an assessed value of **[\$300,000]**
23 **\$450,000** or less; and

24 (ii) have a combined income of \$60,000 or less.

25 (2) The Department may establish, by regulation, additional eligibility
26 criteria for enrollment in the Program.

27 (b) **(1)** The Department shall establish, by regulation, a process to:

1 ~~(1)~~ **(I)** give priority for enrollment in the Program to homeowners who
2 are:

3 ~~(i)~~ **1.** at least 60 years old; [or]

4 ~~(ii)~~ **2.** currently receiving disability benefits from the federal
5 Social Security Disability Insurance program or the federal Supplemental Security Income
6 program; **OR**

7 ~~(iii)~~ **3.** **EXPERIENCING A DOCUMENTED TERMINAL ILLNESS**
8 **OR MEDICAL HARDSHIP; and**

9 ~~(2)~~ **(II)** ensure that homeowners are enrolled in the Program who reside
10 in each county in the State.

11 **(2) THE REGULATION ESTABLISHED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS**
12 **SUBSECTION SHALL INCLUDE THE DEFINITIONS OF “TERMINAL ILLNESS” AND**
13 **“MEDICAL HARDSHIP” ADOPTED UNDER § 14-811 OF THIS SUBTITLE.**

14 14-888.

15 **(E) THE OMBUDSMAN SHALL DEVELOP A PROCESS TO ALLOW A**
16 **HOMEOWNER ENROLLED IN THE PROGRAM TO DESIGNATE A FAMILY MEMBER OR**
17 **ANOTHER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOMEOWNER TO COMMUNICATE AND WORK**
18 **WITH THE OMBUDSMAN ON THE HOMEOWNER’S BEHALF.**

19 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
20 October 1, 2026.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.