

# HOUSE BILL 1118

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By: **Delegates Clagett, Barve, Beidle, DeBoy, Frick, Olszewski, and Walker**  
Introduced and read first time: February 7, 2014  
Assigned to: Economic Matters

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Economic Development – Office of the Business Ombudsman – Establishment**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Office of the Business Ombudsman in the Office  
4 of the Governor; specifying the purpose of the Office of the Business  
5 Ombudsman; requiring the Office to establish, maintain, and update each year  
6 a certain list of business assistance programs and services; requiring the Office  
7 to implement a certain business fairness and responsiveness service; requiring  
8 the Office to develop and maintain a certain program regarding permits  
9 required for business initiatives, projects, and activities; requiring the Office to  
10 establish and implement certain procedures to assist certain applicants for  
11 permits; requiring the Office to submit a certain report to the Governor and  
12 certain standing committees of the General Assembly each year; requiring the  
13 Governor to include certain funds in the State budget in certain fiscal years;  
14 defining certain terms; and generally relating to the Office of the Business  
15 Ombudsman.

16 BY adding to

17 Article – Economic Development  
18 Section 14–201 through 14–204 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 2. Office  
19 of the Business Ombudsman”  
20 Annotated Code of Maryland  
21 (2008 Volume and 2013 Supplement)

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

24 **Article – Economic Development**

25 **SUBTITLE 2. OFFICE OF THE BUSINESS OMBUDSMAN.**

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 **14-201.**

2 (A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS  
3 INDICATED.

4 (B) "OFFICE" MEANS OF THE OFFICE THE BUSINESS OMBUDSMAN.

5 (C) "OMBUDSMAN" MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL APPOINTED BY THE  
6 GOVERNOR WHO SERVES AS A LIAISON BETWEEN BUSINESSES, ECONOMIC  
7 DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS, COMMUNITIES, AND FEDERAL, STATE, AND  
8 LOCAL UNITS AND AGENCIES.

9 **14-202.**

10 (A) THERE IS AN OFFICE OF THE BUSINESS OMBUDSMAN IN THE  
11 OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR.

12 (B) THE PURPOSE OF THE OFFICE IS TO:

13 (1) RESOLVE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY BUSINESSES  
14 INTERACTING WITH STATE AGENCIES;

15 (2) FACILITATE RESPONSIVENESS OF STATE GOVERNMENT TO  
16 BUSINESS NEEDS;

17 (3) SERVE AS A CENTRAL CLEARINGHOUSE OF INFORMATION FOR  
18 BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE STATE;

19 (4) ASSIST BUSINESSES BY REFERRING BUSINESSES AND  
20 INDIVIDUALS TO RESOURCES THAT PROVIDE THE BUSINESS SERVICES OR  
21 ASSISTANCE REQUESTED;

22 (5) PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT INFORMATION AND  
23 ASSISTANCE;

24 (6) ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN METRICS IN ORDER TO MONITOR  
25 THE PROGRESS OF THE OFFICE AND REPORT THE DATA TO THE GOVERNOR AND  
26 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY; AND

27 (7) REPORT AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR  
28 AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGARDING BREAKDOWNS IN THE DELIVERY OF  
29 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS, INCLUDING PROBLEMS  
30 ENCOUNTERED BY BUSINESSES INTERACTING WITH STATE AGENCIES.

1 14-203.

2 THE OFFICE SHALL:

3 (1) ESTABLISH, MAINTAIN, AND UPDATE EACH YEAR A LIST OF  
4 THE BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN THE STATE,  
5 INCLUDING THE NAMES, LOCATIONS, WEB SITE ADDRESSES, AND TELEPHONE  
6 NUMBERS OF THE ENTITIES PROVIDING THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES;

7 (2) IMPLEMENT A BUSINESS FAIRNESS AND RESPONSIVENESS  
8 SERVICE THAT:

9 (I) RESOLVES PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY BUSINESSES  
10 WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES AND REGIONAL AND LOCAL ECONOMIC  
11 DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS;

12 (II) COORDINATES PROGRAMS AND SERVICES  
13 IMPLEMENTED BY FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES;

14 (III) FACILITATES RESPONSIVENESS OF STATE  
15 GOVERNMENT TO BUSINESS NEEDS; AND

16 (IV) REPORTS TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE GENERAL  
17 ASSEMBLY REGARDING ANY BREAKDOWNS IN THE DELIVERY OF ECONOMIC  
18 DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS;

19 (3) DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A PROGRAM TO PROVIDE  
20 COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC REGARDING PERMITS  
21 REQUIRED FOR BUSINESS INITIATIVES, PROJECTS, AND ACTIVITIES; AND

22 (4) ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT PROCEDURES TO ASSIST PERMIT  
23 APPLICANTS WHO HAVE ENCOUNTERED DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING TIMELY  
24 AND EFFICIENT PERMIT REVIEW.

25 14-204.

26 (A) (1) EACH YEAR, THE OFFICE SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE  
27 GOVERNOR AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1246 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT  
28 ARTICLE, THE STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAVING  
29 JURISDICTION OVER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS.

30 (2) THE REPORT SHALL CONTAIN:

1                   **(I) INFORMATION REGARDING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE**  
2 **OFFICE, INCLUDING DATA INDICATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAMS AND**  
3 **PROCEDURES REGARDING PERMITTING;**

4                   **(II) DATA SPECIFYING THE NUMBER OF BUSINESSES AND**  
5 **INDIVIDUALS THAT HAVE CONTACTED THE OFFICE OR USED THE SERVICES OF**  
6 **THE OFFICE; AND**

7                   **(III) RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING IMPROVEMENTS TO**  
8 **EXISTING LAWS RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**

9           **(B) IN FISCAL YEAR 2016 AND IN EACH FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER, THE**  
10 **GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE FUNDS IN THE STATE BUDGET TO IMPLEMENT THIS**  
11 **SUBTITLE, INCLUDING FUNDS TO:**

12                   **(1) EMPLOY A FULL-TIME OMBUDSMAN; AND**

13                   **(2) OPERATE AND MAINTAIN AN OFFICE.**

14           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
15 October 1, 2014.