SB 300

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 300 (Senators Eckardt and Bates)
Budget and Taxation

Income Tax - Standard Deduction - Inflation Adjustment

This bill alters the value of the standard deduction based on the annual change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The bill takes effect July 1, 2016, and applies to tax year 2017 and beyond.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund revenues decrease by $0.8 million in FY 2018, reflecting the impact of about one-half of a tax year. Future year estimates reflect annualization and the projected increase in the CPI and the number of standard deductions claimed. Minimal increase in general fund expenditures beginning in FY 2018 due to computer programming expenses in the Comptroller's Office.

($ in millions)	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
GF Revenue	$0	($0.8)	($3.2)	($5.9)	($8.3)
GF Expenditure	$0	-	-	-	-
Net Effect	$0.0	($0.8)	($3.2)	($5.9)	($8.3)

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: Local revenues decrease by $0.5 million in FY 2018 and by $5.1 million in FY 2021. Local expenditures are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The value of the standard deduction is equal to 15% of Maryland adjusted gross income (MAGI), subject to minimum and maximum values depending on filing status as shown in **Exhibit 1**. The bill will index the minimum and maximum values of the standard deduction shown below beginning with tax year 2017.

Exhibit 1
State Income Tax Standard Deduction

Single, Dependent Filer, Married Filing Separately		Joint, Head of Household, Widower	
MAGI	**Deduction**	**MAGI**	**Deduction**
Under $10,000	$1,500	Under $20,000	$3,000
$10,000-$13,333	15%	$20,000-$26,667	15%
Over $13,333	$2,000	Over $26,667	$4,000

Background: The CPI is a measure of the average monthly change in the price for goods and services paid by consumers between any two time periods and is the most commonly utilized measure to calculate inflation and deflation. Under the current economic forecast, the CPI is expected to increase by about 2% annually in the next 10 years.

Major components of the federal income tax are indexed for changes in inflation, including federal income tax rate brackets. The Internal Revenue Service issues revenue procedures that set the inflation adjustments for the following tax year. About 40 items are typically adjusted. Indexing tax brackets to the change in inflation prevents "bracket creep," whereby households pay additional income taxes merely because of inflation and not because the taxpayer's economic well-being has improved. The most salient example of bracket creep is the federal alternative minimum tax, originally enacted in 1969 to prevent high-income taxpayers from avoiding income taxes. Since the original legislation lacked indexing, it applied to households of much more limited means than originally intended, leading the U.S. Congress to enact a series of temporary corrective measures until the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 provided permanent relief by indexing the tax.

According to the Federation of Tax Administrators, 17 states, or 40% of all states that impose a broad-based income tax, provided an inflation adjustment in tax year 2015 by indexing their income tax rate brackets, standard deductions, and/or personal exemption to a consumer price or cost-of-living measure. None of Maryland's surrounding states or the

District of Columbia provides for an explicit inflation adjustment of income tax components.

Although the State's income tax brackets are not indexed for inflation, several components of Maryland's income tax system are influenced by inflation, including the State pension exclusion, State earned income tax credit, and poverty level tax credit. The maximum value of the State pension exclusion increases every year based on the maximum annual benefit payable under the Social Security Act, which is indexed to the CPI. The State earned income tax credit is based on a percentage of the federal earned income tax credit, of which the value of and eligibility standards for are adjusted annually based on the change in the CPI. The poverty level tax credit is based on federal poverty standards, which are adjusted annually based on inflation. Taxpayers can claim either a standard deduction or itemized deductions for State income tax purposes. While the value of the standard deduction does not change based on inflation, the value of itemized deductions is sensitive to inflation because (1) federal income tax phase-out rules based on the CPI, when applicable, flow through for State income tax purposes and (2) the amount that taxpayers itemize is influenced by price fluctuations in the economy, particularly changes in home prices.

Income tax brackets and other important components of the income tax, such as the personal exemption and standard deduction, are not adjusted for inflation. As a result, some Maryland businesses and households pay more State income taxes over time due to inflation, even though their economic well-being may not have improved over time.

State Revenues: The new standard deduction amounts under the bill take effect beginning in tax year 2017. Under the current economic forecast, the values of the standard deduction will not change until tax year 2018. As a result, general fund revenues will decrease by $0.8 million in fiscal 2018, which reflects the impact of about one-half of tax year 2018. Future year estimates reflect annualization and the projected increase in the CPI and the number of standard deductions claimed. **Exhibit 2** shows the estimated impact of the bill on State and local revenues.

Exhibit 2
State and Local Revenue Impacts
Fiscal 2017-2021
($ in Millions)

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
State	$0	($0.8)	($3.2)	($5.9)	($8.3)
Local	0	(0.5)	(1.9)	(3.6)	(5.1)
Total Revenues	**$0**	**($1.3)**	**($5.1)**	**($9.4)**	**($13.4)**

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures for the Comptroller's Office may increase minimally beginning in fiscal 2018 as a result of altering the personal income tax forms.

Local Revenues: Local income tax revenues will decrease as a result of the increase in standard deduction amounts specified by the bill. Local revenues will decrease by $0.5 million in fiscal 2018 and by $5.1 million in fiscal 2021, as shown in Exhibit 2.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 146 of 2015 received an unfavorable report from the House Ways and Means Committee. HB 528 of 2014 received a hearing in the House Ways and Means Committee, but no further action was taken.

Cross File: HB 161 (Delegate Krebs, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Comptroller's Office, Federation of Tax Administrators, Global Insight, Moody's Analytics, Department of Legislative Services

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