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Budget and Taxation Committee

Capital Budget Subcommittee
Health and Human Services Subcommittee

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Vote Yes on Senate Bill 314

Bill Title: Board of Revenue Estimates and Bureau of Revenue Estimates - Organization and Operations

Hearing Date: January 27, 2021, Budget & Taxation

Chair: Guy Guzzone, Vice-Chair: James Rosapepe

I write to you today to urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 314

What this bill does

Recognizing the importance of having accurate estimates of our state revenue, especially during volatile times, this bill enhances the Bureau of Revenue Estimates and increases its accountability and transparency. makes several changes to the Bureau of Revenue Estimates, including changes to staffing and reporting requirements to make the Bureau more transparent and ensure that it is adequately staffed to better assist the Legislative and Executive branches as they craft the state budget each year, and to aid local governments in their revenue estimates.

The bill makes the following adjustments to the Bureau:

- It modifies the process for selecting a chief analyst, specifies the minimum number of analysts required, and ensures that the deputy chief is a member of the executive pay plan.
- Ensures that the BRE submits its March report to the General Assembly prior to the passage of the budget bill to ensure that the assembly has the most up-to-date numbers available
- Requires quadrennial reporting analyzing the accuracy of reports and estimates
- Requires quadrennial reporting on the transparency and usability of the data and reports and analysis of the staffing needs of the agency
- Ensures a predetermined schedule each year and public notice of the date and time of meetings
- Requires the BRE to develop and maintain its own website to provide information and upcoming Board meetings and live links to video streaming of each open meeting of the board
- Make available to the public reports and analysis on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund, the Transportation Trust Fund, and the Education Trust Fund, as well as other information the BRE considers relevant

Why it matters

In increasingly turbulent times, the importance of the BRE's role cannot be overstated. It needs highly-qualified staff, transparent processes, and accountability to the public and state government. This legislation is about ensuring that this agency is competent, transparent, and accountable.

Adding a level of review at the state of selecting a Chief, as well as mandated reporting from the Bureau and the DLS offers accountability that simply does not exist today. Marylanders deserve the assurances that the public servants in Annapolis - whether elected or selected by other elected officials - are qualified and held accountable for their leadership.

Why you should support this bill

Not only does the bill provide for an expanded process to select an executive leader holding a great deal of power and influence, the bill also provides increased accountability and transparency for all Marylanders. Any Marylander with access to the internet will be able to follow the Board of Estimate meetings, watch archive videos, and much more without having to reach out to the agency to gather the information they are seeking. This immediate, and easy, access saves both the Bureau and citizen's time, money and effort. This bill also positions the Bureau and the Board to be more effective in assisting the Governor and Legislature - as well as local governments - in estimating the revenues on which our budgets are based.

For these reasons, I ask you for your support in moving for a favorable report of Senate Bill 314.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cory V. McCray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long horizontal stroke.

Cory V. McCray
State Senator