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To Members of the Legislature:

This letter is to express my opposition to **HB 1554/SB 1045** that would create a new 2.5% tax on essential business services including marketing and public relations in the State of Maryland. Of course, when you directly target a group of marketing professionals, they KNOW how to get the word out.

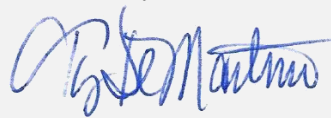
I received several calls and emails from my marketing/PR colleagues here in Western Maryland, one of the poorest areas in the State. As a lifelong resident of Maryland, I have worked as a marketing/publication specialist for most of my career. Many of those years have been working in a freelance (1099) capacity. This new tax would further harm freelancers who are already struggling in a work environment threatened by AI advances and those believing that “anyone with editing software on their phone” can create a marketing video.

Living in Western Maryland, my personal services are used to create tourism marketing videos to attract individuals to our area and its offerings. Some of my videos have won awards and increased visitors from out-of-state. The other half of my time is used to help promote community organizations that want to showcase their services, which are often -- and not to sound *too* dramatic -- life-saving. I've created videos for school lunch programs for youth, those struggling with addiction, services for the elderly and other at-risk communities. Of course, being in an economically challenged area, my colleagues and I do not charge outrageous pricing for our services. This additional tax will definitely affect our incomes and make us reconsider offering our services. Why should we be punished for helping our neighbors and our State?

While the list includes many other services that will receive this extra 2.5% tax (*Accounting, payroll and bookkeeping services; Office administrative support services; IT services, data processing and web hosting; Employee and contractor placement services; Consulting services; Scientific and development services; Photography, design and printing services; Landscaping and property maintenance; Repair services for electronics, machinery and vehicles; Financial planning and tax preparation; Non-real estate appraisal services; and Valet and parking services*), I can only speak on behalf of the PR/marketing professionals. But in reviewing this list, it does feel like you're picking on the “little guy” in many of these instances. Valet parking attendants??? Come ON! Please reconsider.

On behalf of myself and the other marketing/public relations professionals from Western Maryland, I implore you -- **DO NOT PASS HB 1554/SB 1045.**

Sincerely,



Ty DeMartino
Frostburg, Maryland