

HOUSE BILL 753

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By: **Delegates Lehman, Foley, Guyton, Harrison, Kaiser, Martinez, Moreno, Pasteur, Ross, Solomon, Taveras, Terrasa, Toles, Vogel, White Holland, Wims, Woods, and Wu**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

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,

13 Article – Tax – Property

14 Section 2–112(b) and (e), 14–811(i) and (j), 14–836(a) and (b)(4)(i)3., 14–883, and
15 14–884

16 Annotated Code of Maryland

17 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

18 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

19 Article – Tax – Property

20 Section 2–112(d), 14–811(h), and 14–885(a) and (b)

21 Annotated Code of Maryland

22 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

23 BY adding to

24 Article – Tax – Property

25 Section 14–888(e)

26 Annotated Code of Maryland

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

2 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

3 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

4 **Article – Tax – Property**

5 2–112.

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

7 (d) The Ombudsman shall:

8 (1) assist homeowners to understand the process for collection of
9 delinquent taxes;

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

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

16 (4) maintain a website that functions as a clearinghouse for information
17 concerning:

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

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

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

23 (6) **DEVELOP A PROCESS TO ALLOW A HOMEOWNER TO DESIGNATE A**
24 **FAMILY MEMBER OR ANOTHER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOMEOWNER TO**
25 **COMMUNICATE AND WORK WITH THE OMBUDSMAN ON THE HOMEOWNER'S BEHALF.**

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

29 14–811.

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

12 (II) THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE CITY OR
13 THE GOVERNING BODY OF A COUNTY MAY ADOPT ADDITIONAL METHODS FOR
14 ESTABLISHING A TERMINAL ILLNESS OR MEDICAL HARDSHIP IN ACCORDANCE WITH
15 SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

16 (i) The collector shall withhold from sale the dwelling of a homeowner who is
17 enrolled in the Homeowner Protection Program established under Part VII of this subtitle.

24 14-836.

25 (a) The plaintiff in any action to foreclose the right of redemption shall be the
26 holder of the certificate of sale.

27 (b) (4) (i) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (3) of this
28 subsection, the plaintiff shall send written notice of the proceeding to:

31 14-883.

32 (a) In this part the following words have the meanings indicated.

(b) "Combined income" means the combined Maryland adjusted gross income of all individuals who actually reside in a dwelling except an individual who:

3 (1) is a dependent of the homeowner under § 152 of the Internal Revenue
4 Code; or

5 (2) pays a reasonable amount for rent or room and board.

6 (c) "Dwelling" has the meaning stated in § 9–105 of this article.

7 (d) "Homeowner" means:

0 (i) the estate of the homeowner;

(ii) the personal representative of the homeowner; or

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

4 (e) "Ombudsman" means the State Tax Sale Ombudsman established under §
5 2-112 of this article.

6 (f) "Program" means the Homeowner Protection Program established under this
7 part.

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

19 14-884.

20 (a) There is a Homeowner Protection Program administered by the Ombudsman
21 in the Department.

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

25 (1) minimizing tax collection costs to homeowners;

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

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

28 14-885.

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

(i) reside in a dwelling that has an assessed value of [\$300,000]
and

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

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

(1) give priority for enrollment in the Program to homeowners who are:

(i) at least 60 years old; [or]

(ii) currently receiving disability benefits from the federal Social
Security Insurance program or the federal Supplemental Security Income

(III) EXPERIENCING A DOCUMENTED TERMINAL ILLNESS OR HIP; and

(2) ensure that homeowners are enrolled in the Program who reside in each State.

17 14-888.

18 (E) THE OMBUDSMAN SHALL DEVELOP A PROCESS TO ALLOW A
19 HOMEOWNER ENROLLED IN THE PROGRAM TO DESIGNATE A FAMILY MEMBER OR
20 ANOTHER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOMEOWNER TO COMMUNICATE AND WORK
21 WITH THE OMBUDSMAN ON THE HOMEOWNER'S BEHALF.

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