

**Opposition to HB 1354-Sales and Use Tax-Services by the Maryland State
Dental Association and the Maryland Society of Oral & Maxillofacial
Surgeons**

Respectfully submitted by Daniel T. Doherty, Jr.

The Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA) and the Maryland Society of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons (MSOMS) are non-profit organizations representing a membership of licensed dentists. The purpose of each of these Associations is to promote and encourage the advancement of the practice of dentistry through education, political and social endeavors. They provide their members with a variety of benefits ranging from discounted products/services from reliable companies; to assisting dental professionals in identifying quality providers of continuing education; to serving as a job search resource center; etc. These two associations review and alert their members concerning new or changed federal and state regulatory requirements that affect the practice of dentistry and the providing of care to Maryland dental patients. A vital part of the advocacy for their members interests and the care of their dental patients is lobbying on dental and health care issues before the Maryland General Assembly.

Membership costs for most professional organizations are an issue. The organizations must have sufficient dues and none-dues income to sustain their offices, staff, costs of professional services etc. in order to accomplish these goals. The costs of qualified professional services are not an insignificant budgetary item. However, the hit is even more impactful with respect to Lobbying representation. Under Federal law Lobbying expenses are to a large extent not deductible as a business expense. The proposed tax on lobbying services is essentially double taxation. To tax these services will potentially limit the ability of these organizations to continue as an advocate for dentistry and dental health, and limit their availability to the General Assembly as a resource on issues of dental health and dental care.

The Maryland Constitution, Declaration of Rights provides in Article 13: “That every man hath a right to petition the Legislature for the redress of grievances in a peaceable and orderly manner.” In this 21st Century, given the discrepancy of financial resources of major business enterprises versus non-profit professional and charitable organizations, levying a 6% sales tax on lobbying services merely creates another barrier to MSDA and MSOMS’ ability to exercise on behalf of their member dentists their right to petition the General Assembly. Clearly, an unfortunate consequence of HB 1354 is to potentially impair their ability to advocate “toe-to-toe” with big corporate and insurance interests.

The MSDA and the MSOMS respectfully urge that HB 1354 receive an Unfavorable Report.

**Submitted March 2, 2020 by:
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