



Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition

**Testimony to the Senate Budget & Taxation Committee**

**SB593: Homeowners Property Tax Credit-Calculations & Refunds**

**Position: Support**

February 17, 2021

The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair  
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee  
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
cc: Members, Ways & Means Committee

Chair Guzzone and Members of the Committee:

My name is Marceline White and I'm the executive director of the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition (MCRC). MCRC is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances economic rights and financial inclusion for Maryland consumers through research, education, direct service, organizing, and advocacy. Our 8,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

We are here in support of SB593.

For the past five years, MCRC has helped homeowners, particularly older adults, apply for the Homeowners Property Tax Credit (HOTC). We have spearheaded marketing campaigns, trained financial and housing counselors, VITA staff, and legal service providers on how to assist homeowners in applying for the tax credit, and served as a sounding board when colleagues ran into trouble with the application process. In Baltimore, we have been able to help homeowners avert a tax-sale foreclosure because of these tax credits. In 2020, we returned, \$136,360 to financially fragile families.

SB593 addresses the findings in the OLA October 2020 audit which found that SDAT *"did not ensure HTC's were properly calculated. As a result, HTC's awarded to thousands of homeowners in certain jurisdictions were improperly reduced by at least \$4.4 million in fiscal year 2019"*.

SB593 prohibits SDAT from deducting other tax credits from applicants' total property tax liabilities, which reduced the amount of HOTC tax credit eligible applicants received. Our work shows us how critically important this asset is to many households, particularly older adults, and SB593 will help to ensure that these credits are calculated properly going forward and that eligible applicants will receive the correct amount.

Marceline White  
Executive Director