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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB281: Comptroller - Online Payment Processing Portal

Senate Finance Committee
Thursday, February 17, 2022 | 1pm

As Chair of the Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) Commission, I learned that there are significant problems with our State's payment process. 9-1-1 Center Directors and vendors have experienced inadequate communication; a lack of transparency; and extensive delays in payment. These issues are too common throughout the Maryland State government. No one should have to reach out to their legislators, who then have to contact the Comptroller's Chief of Staff... in order to determine the status of a payment.

After extensive conversations with the Department of Information Technology (DoIT), the Department of General Services (DGS), and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), I am sponsoring [SB281](#)-- which would create an accessible "payment tracking portal" to be used by all State entities. It would be developed by DoIT and maintained by the Comptroller's Office. This would provide accountability and allow vendors to monitor the status of their payment(s).

This legislation is endorsed by the NG911 Commission. Additionally, the Comptroller's Office endorsed this concept in December. After the bill was filed, the Comptroller's Office [started to create its own portal](#), which appears to be rudimentary at best. Additionally, they referenced DoIT's [Maryland Transparency Portal](#). Rather than various agencies doing piecemeal and redundant sites, SB281 would create one transparent and efficient system.

If passed, this legislation would go into effect on July 1, 2022. It allows six months for the Comptroller's Office to share plans for the portal with the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs and the House Health and Government Operations Committees. The online payment portal must go "live" by July 1, 2023. By January 1, 2024, the portal must be integrated with eMarylandMarketplace. And finally, by July 1, 2024, the system must be searchable.

The portal will allow vendors to contact the correct person at the correct agency, rather than navigating blindly through our government bureaucracy. They will be able to find the reviewer's work email and phone number.

Governor Hogan likes to say that Maryland is "Open for Business." We must ensure that if we're going to be "open," **our businesses and nonprofits will know when they are getting paid.**

I urge a favorable report on SB281.