



**SB 660 - Office of the Comptroller – Taxpayer Advocate Division
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**

March 9th, 2023

SUPPORT

Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 660. This bill would establish a Taxpayer Advocate Division in the Office of the Comptroller.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

CASH was one of the co-chairs of the Tax Administration and Customer Engagement workgroup as a part of the Comptroller's transition committee. The workgroup's goal was to research ways the Comptroller's Office could improve customer engagement through examining current tax practices and procedures. The full transition committee report can be found here: [Transition Report Comptroller of Maryland 2023](#).

The clients served by CASH and its partners often have complex tax situations that require support from the Comptroller's Office. These clients are routed through general customer service channels and it can take weeks to resolve issues. To address these concerns, CASH supports the creation of a Taxpayer Advocate Office. This would mirror the [Taxpayer Advocate Service](#), which is under the IRS, and are already in existence in several states.

Maryland's Taxpayer Advocate Division would have officers that are dedicated to helping taxpayers navigate through the tax issues they are facing and will help taxpayers utilize policies and practices to resolve their problems. They will also keep the Comptroller's Office updated on common and frequent issues taxpayers are facing, so the Comptroller's Office can make systems-level adjustments.

Creating a Taxpayer Advocate Division will improve the taxpayer experience and strengthen the relationship between taxpayers and the Comptroller's Office.

Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for SB 660.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope