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HEARING DATE: March 29, 2023

BILL: HB0236

TITLE: Tax Sales - Homeowner Protection Program - Outreach

SDAT POSITION: SUPPORT

HB0236 would enable the State Tax Sale Ombudsman's Office to expand its outreach to homeowners who may be eligible for the Homeowner Protection Program by permitting the State Tax Sale Ombudsman (TSO) to spend a portion of the program budget balance each year on outreach, by prioritizing outreach methods, and by providing information resources.

This legislation:

1. Provides statutory guidance of at least 2% of the program budget to use for outreach.
2. Sets preferred outreach methods, including live telephone calls and methods other than sending information by mail.
3. Prioritizes contacting homeowners as soon as possible after their liens are sold at tax sale.
4. Permits the TSO to conduct this outreach by using state employees and resources, or by contracting with a private vendor.
5. Permits the TSO to obtain the information necessary to conduct outreach from both private and public sources, including county finance offices, the Comptroller, and other state and local agencies.

For these reasons, SDAT urges a favorable vote on HB0236.