

# **SB1142 Tax Assistance for Low-Income Marylanders -**

Uploaded by: Dean Renee Hutchins

Position: FAV

**Testimony in support of SB1142 – Tax Assistance for Low–Income Marylanders – Funding**

**Before the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**

**March 12, 2024**

On behalf of the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, which houses our Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic, I am writing to express UMB’s deepest support of SB1142 – Tax Assistance for Low–Income Marylanders – Funding.

During the 2021 Legislative Session, a special fund was created to provide supplemental grant funding for Maryland Carey Law, Baltimore Law, and the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS) to operate tax clinics for low-income state residents. While tax clinics already existed at all three entities, they were funded by the IRS, and the grants allowed us to assist Marylanders with their Maryland tax issues in only limited circumstances. The passage of SB 312 and HB 346 in 2023 which received overwhelming support from the Legislature, enabled the clinics to establish resources and outreach efforts to provide support for state-related tax issues for Marylanders.

Maryland Carey Law has provided substantial assistance to Marylanders through its Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic. This year alone, we:

- ✓ conducted 13 outreach activities (in person and virtual)
- ✓ helped a dozen Maryland taxpayers resolve their Maryland tax issues by:
  - securing refunds (2 taxpayers);
  - assisting with state audits of tax returns (9 taxpayers); and
  - assisting with a Maryland Tax Court case (1 taxpayer).

We also helped nearly five dozen Marylanders (59 taxpayers) in the repayment of their outstanding state tax debt by setting up payment plans, filing Offers-in-Compromise, and requesting hardship status.

And these numbers are just for 2023. Since its inception, Maryland Carey Law has provided even greater benefit to the citizens of this great state. In total, since its inception, the Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic has:

- ✓ conducted 32 outreach activities (in person and virtual)
- ✓ helped nearly four dozen Maryland taxpayers resolve their Maryland tax problems by:
  - securing refunds (9 taxpayers)
  - assisting with state audits of tax returns (35 taxpayers)
  - assisting with innocent spouse claim (2 taxpayers); and
  - assisting with a Maryland Tax Court case (1 taxpayer).

Since inception, we have also helped some five dozen Maryland residents (60 taxpayers) to repay their outstanding MD taxes by setting up payment plans, filing Offers-in-Compromise, and requesting hardship status.

The clients we have served hail from all over the state. The counties of residence included in our client profiles include Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne, St. Mary's, and Talbot.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that our clinic's impact is not just significant, but also expeditious. Most of our cases are closed within a year or less.

We are excited to further our work and to continue to support Marylanders in resolving state related tax issues which proves beneficial not only to our citizens but to the state as well. SB1142 ensures that hard-working Marylanders with tax disputes get the representation they deserve. I strongly urge the Committee to provide a favorable report on SB1142.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Renée Hutchinson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Maryland Catholic Conference\_FAV\_SB1142.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jenny Kraska

Position: FAV



**March 12, 2024**

**SB 1142**

**Tax Clinics for Low-Income Marylanders - Funding**

**Senate Budget & Taxation Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 1142 would allow for the distribution of abandoned property funds to the Tax Clinics for Low-Income Marylanders Fund. It is important to address economic disparities and support initiatives that uplift the marginalized and vulnerable in our community.

The Catholic Church's social teachings underscore the importance of justice, solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor. By allocating funds to the Tax Clinics for Low-Income Marylanders Fund, we contribute to the welfare of those struggling with financial hardships, recognizing the dignity of each person and their right to economic well-being.

Tax clinics play a vital role in ensuring that individuals with limited financial means have access to essential services and resources. By allocating funds to these clinics, we extend a lifeline to low-income Marylanders, helping them navigate complex tax systems and securing the financial support they need.

This legislation will take meaningful steps toward fostering a society that values the well-being of all its members, particularly those facing economic challenges. The MCC appreciates your consideration and respectfully urges a favorable report for Senate Bill 1142.

**SB1142\_Zucker\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Senator Craig Zucker

Position: FAV

**CRAIG J. ZUCKER**  
*Legislative District 14*  
Montgomery County



James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 122  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3625 · 301-858-3625  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3625  
Fax 410-841-3618 · 301-858-3618  
Craig.Zucker@senate.state.md.us

Budget and Taxation Committee  
Chair, Capital Budget Subcommittee

Chair, Senate Democratic Caucus

**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Craig J. Zucker**  
**Senate Bill 1142 - Tax Clinics for Low-Income Marylanders - Funding**  
**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**  
**March 12, 2024**  
**1:00pm**  
**Position: SUPPORT**

Good afternoon, Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chairman Rosapepe, and distinguished members of the committee. It is my pleasure to testify today **in support** of **Senate Bill 1142 - Tax Clinics for Low-Income Marylanders - Funding**.

Senate Bill 1142 reinstates the Tax Clinics for Low-Income Marylanders Fund, which was mistakenly erased from the code.

By passing Senate Bill 1142, we will reinstate this program, which assists low-income residents with their state taxes in court.

For these reasons, **I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 1142**. I appreciate your consideration.

**SB1142 - MSBA Support Letter (2024.03.11).pdf**

Uploaded by: Shaoli Katana

Position: FAV





**MSBA Main Office**  
520 West Fayette Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410-685-7878 | msba.org

**Annapolis Office**  
200 Duke of Gloucester Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
410-269-6464 | msba.org

To: Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
From: Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA)  
Subject: SB1142 - Tax Clinics for Low-Income Marylanders - Funding  
Date: March 11, 2024  
Position: **Favorable**

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The Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) **supports Senate Bill 1142 - Tax Clinics for Low-Income Marylanders – Funding**, requiring the Comptroller to distribute \$250,000 of certain abandoned property funds to the Tax Clinics for Low-Income Marylanders Fund, which provides grants to the University of Maryland School of Law, the University of Baltimore School of Law, and the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service to operate tax clinics for low-income Maryland residents.

MSBA represents more attorneys and judges than any other organization across the state in all practice areas. Through its advocacy committees and various practice-specific sections, MSBA monitors and takes positions on legislation that protects the legal profession, preserves the integrity of the judicial system, and ensures access to justice for Marylanders.

MSBA supports access to justice and reaching the state’s most vulnerable population. Attorneys make an enormous difference in tax cases, as many *pro se* litigants are unaware of their rights, appropriate defenses, and the judicial process. With the expertise of the many Maryland-barred attorneys and organizations providing pro bono work and legal aid services, as well as the excellent clinical work of area law students, the state has an efficient and cost-effective solution to help Marylanders in need. The funding in SB 1142 will also provide a benefit to the state through resolution of controversies and repayment of outstanding taxes.

For these reasons, MSBA strongly supports SB 1142 and urges a **favorable report**.

Contact: Shaoli Katana, Advocacy Director ([shaoli@msba.org](mailto:shaoli@msba.org), 410-387-5606)