



# CITY OF CUMBERLAND MARYLAND

February 6, 2024

Re: HB451 - Tax Assistance for Low-Income Marylanders - Funding

Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I write this letter to you with great enthusiasm and strong support for HB451, related to Tax Assistance for Low-Income Marylanders – Funding. As the Mayor of the City of Cumberland and a concerned citizen in Allegany County, I believe that this legislation is crucial for providing essential support to low-income individuals and ensuring their access to necessary tax assistance.

Our community has long struggled economically, with 21.8% of persons in poverty in the City of Cumberland and 18.1% of persons in poverty in Allegany County, according to the United States Census Bureau. I am strongly in favor of programs designed to support those struggling in our community.

This Bill has 3 main components that are meant to assist low-income households:

1. The annual appropriation for Low Income Tax Clinics will increase from \$250,000 to \$500,000. The clinics are operated by the University of Baltimore, Maryland Volunteer Law Services, and the University of Maryland School of Law.
2. The annual appropriation for the CASH Campaign will increase from \$500,000 to \$650,000 for operations of tax clinics for low-income Marylanders.
3. A \$150,000 grant program is established and administered through the CASH Campaign to be used for mobile or on-demand tax clinics that serve rural populations, seniors, or under-resourced communities, including new Americans.

I strongly support this bill and I hope that it will earn your support as well. This bill offers crucial financial support for tax clinics meant to serve low-income Marylanders. This ensures all Marylanders will have the necessary resources to navigate our complex tax system. This also means that Marylanders will have support in ensuring they access the vital tax credits they qualify for meant to uplift individuals and families.

In addition, I am very supportive of the innovative approach to incentivizing providing services to Marylanders that may not have access otherwise to these types of tax services – such as seniors and rural Marylanders. The grant program, to be administered through the CASH Campaign, provides grants for on-demand or mobile

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RAYMOND M. MORRIS

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tax clinics. Importantly, this legislation promotes accessibility and inclusivity by addressing the unique challenges of low-income individuals while also supporting initiatives on-demand and mobile tax assistance programs. In essence, this bill focuses on providing tax assistance to low-income Marylanders, which helps create a fair and supportive environment to address tax-related needs for Maryland taxpayers.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB451.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Raymond M. Morriss". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Raymond Morriss, Mayor  
City of Cumberland