

TESTIMONY

March 5, 2025

Committee: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Bill: SB 911 – Property Tax - Exemption for Blind Individuals - Alteration

Position: Oppose

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League opposes Senate Bill 911, which would substantially increase the property tax exemption for blind individuals from \$15,000 to \$40,000.

The League's position is solely related to the fiscal impact of the proposed legislation. Based on SDAT's reports, expanding this would exempt an additional ~\$50,000,000 in property value for the 1,429 households that currently receive the credit. That appears to be only a tiny fraction of the 116,000 blind Marylanders. If more Marylanders use the credit at \$40k, local revenues could take a substantial hit.

As it stands, municipalities are overdependent on property taxes to provide essential services for their residents. Over half of municipal general fund revenues are derived from property taxes, and for some, property taxes account for over 65% of total revenues. Looking at average municipal expenditures, it's clear that current revenues go almost exclusively to fund critical services, and there is little funding left over for other important place-making initiatives like community development, economic development, and housing. This means local governments would likely need to raise property taxes on the general public to provide this tax exemption expansion while maintaining services.

This year, the League adopted a priority to find ways to diversify their revenue streams, in part, to allow for revenue flexibility and to be able to take on new modern challenges without further burdening residents with property taxes.

For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal League respectfully requests an **unfavorable** report on Senate Bill 911. For more information, please contact Justin Fiore, Deputy Director of Advocacy and Public Affairs, at justinf@mdmunicipal.org. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

The Maryland Municipal League uses its collective voice to advocate, empower and protect the interests of our 161 local governments members and elevates local leadership, delivers impactful solutions for our communities, and builds an inclusive culture for the 2 million Marylanders we serve.