



MARYLAND

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

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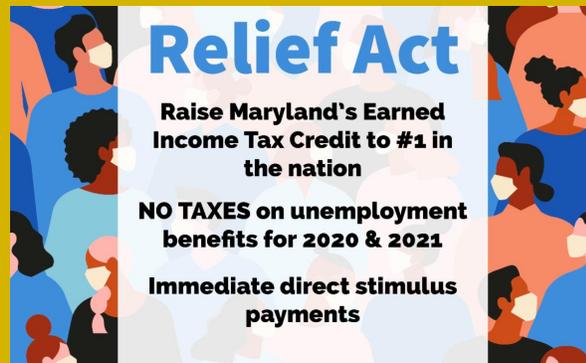
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2021 COVID-19 RELIEF Act

Last week, the House of Delegates took a historic step with the bipartisan passage of the Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families (RELIEF) Act, which provides over \$1.5 billion in pandemic relief. The RELIEF Act will

infuse the State's economy with \$509.0 million in spending and provide over \$1.0 billion in tax relief and credits



- **Maryland now has the highest state in the nation for its earned income tax credit**, which puts cash in the pockets of low income Maryland taxpayers. Specifically, the credit is raised

to 45% of the federal credit amount – which will, on average, provide families with children up to \$730 more for a total of nearly \$1,700.

- **Maryland also raises its earned income tax credit for individuals with no children** from nearly \$100 to \$530.
- **Unemployment insurance payments will be exempt from the State income tax**, keeping over \$225.0 million in the pockets of unemployed Marylanders.
- Marylanders who qualified for the earned income tax credit in 2019 will be provided with stimulus payments of up to \$500, putting over \$175.0 million immediately in the hands low-income individuals and families.
- **Allows small businesses to keep sales tax collections of up to \$9,000 over three months**
- **Helps up to 100,000 small businesses & nonprofits to defer paying unemployment insurance taxes until the first three months of 2022 to help cash flow (they employ 1/4 of MD workforce)**
 - Layoffs will not impact an employer's experience rating for FY20 and FY21
 - MD will take a low interest loan from the federal government to replace payments to the UI Trust Fund
- **Forgives MD taxes on COVID loans and grants**
- **Minority and Small Business Loans (MSBDFA)** : Converts up to \$50,000 in Equity Participation Program loans to grants

RELIEF ACT OF 2021

RECOVERY FOR THE ECONOMY, LIVELIHOODS, INDUSTRY, ENTREPRENEURS, AND FAMILIES

\$1 BILLION

ECONOMIC STIMULUS AND TAX
RELIEF PACKAGE TO SUPPORT
MARYLANDERS AND SMALL
BUSINESSES

DIRECT STIMULUS

FOR LOW-TO-MODERATE INCOME MARYLANDERS

UP TO

\$750

FOR FAMILIES

\$450

FOR INDIVIDUALS

**TAX RELIEF FOR
SMALL BUSINESSES**

- » UP TO \$12K IN SALES TAX CREDITS
- » PROTECTION FROM SUDDEN
INCREASES IN UNEMPLOYMENT
TAXES THROUGH 2021



**REPEALS INCOME TAXES
ON MARYLANDERS'
UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS**

ONCE SIGNED, THIS EMERGENCY LEGISLATION CAN TAKE EFFECT IMMEDIATELY.
THIS IS GOVERNOR HOGAN'S TOP LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY FOR 2021.

Blueprint for Maryland's Future: Veto Override



With nearly a full year of in-person learning lost, education needs to be fully funded to help students overcome the learning challenges that are a direct result of pandemic school closures.

The Governor's proposed budget fully funds the Blueprint and school construction; the General Assembly has now successfully secured over \$7 billion for school construction, education programs, additional resources and more support for teachers and students.

House leaders will be working on supplemental legislation to help with the impact of COVID on our students, including funding to remediate learning loss, provide more mental health support and formative assessments to identify student needs for next school year.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is a policy blueprint based on the recommendations of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission) that will transform the State's early childhood, primary and secondary education system into a world-class system. The Blueprint is built on the principle that every child deserves the best education regardless of their zip code. Every child deserves a great school, so they have a chance to compete for the jobs of the future.

The Blueprint will include investments aimed at increasing teacher salaries to keep great teachers in the classroom, providing new career and tech education options for students, and providing additional support for kids who need it. The Blueprint isn't just good for public schools, it's a vital investment in Maryland's economic future. It will help attract new businesses and entrepreneurs as our state adapts to an economy increasingly rooted in technological innovation. The Blueprint relies on strong accountability measures to ensure that new funding is spent how it should be, including the new Office of the Inspector General for Education.

Black History Month: The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls

This month, explore black culture and identity by grabbing a ticket to the 2021 Mainstage Series performance of *The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls*. A beautifully funny and complex series of monologues, *The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls* portrays the complicated relationship Black women have with their hair and highlights the difficulties of Black womanhood. Virtually playing March 18th - April 11th 2021, this show is one you're likely not going to want to miss. You can purchase tickets for its March showings [here](#).

Journalist, screenwriter, Emmy nominated producer, and playwright Keli Goff brings this timely world premiere to Baltimore Center Stage. In the tradition of *The Vagina Monologues* and *For Colored Girls...*, *The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls* is a collection of monologues and scenes exploring the complex relationship women have with their hair. From afros to braids, weddings and funerals, falling in love, to grieving a loss, these stories serve as a powerful reminder that for Black women in particular, hair is both deeply personal *and* political. Perfect for the virtual stage, these intimate stories will take audiences on an unparalleled journey into the world of Black womanhood.

As some may know, last year the Maryland General Assembly passed [HB 1444](#), sponsored by Delegate Stephanie Smith which outlawed

the practice of discrimination based on hair style, texture, or appearance.

Office of People's Counsel Alert! RELIEF Act, utility assistance, and insurance



RELIEF Act: The [RELIEF Act](#), signed into law Monday by Governor Larry Hogan, passed several benefits for MD residents. Listed below are only some of the benefits in the RELIEF Act. You can also [check out this video](#)

[from the Comptroller's Office](#) for more information.

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- Taxpayers who claimed the Earned Income Tax Credit in Tax Year 2019 and reside in or have permanent residence in Maryland as of February 12 are eligible for one-time stimulus payments of \$300 or \$500. Taxpayers can visit the [Comptroller's website](#) to see if they qualify and check the status of their payments. They can also call 1-833-345-0787 or email ReliefAct@marylandtaxes.gov for more assistance. No application is necessary. For more information check out these [FAQ's](#).
- Marylanders awaiting unemployment insurance adjudication will be sent \$1,000 grants. Check out these [FAQ's](#) for more information.
- State income taxes on Unemployment Insurance income received during 2020 and 2021 will be waived for single filers who report under \$75,000 in income and joint filers who report under \$100,000. Taxpayers who have already filed their 2020 State tax returns can file an amended return for a full refund of Maryland state income taxes.

Energy Assistance Toolkit: The [Office of People's Counsel](#) has created an [energy assistance toolkit](#) to help Maryland households facing utility turn-off notices keep their power on. This toolkit includes videos, application forms, and resource guides. [Check out this video](#) to learn how to fill out the Office of Home Energy Programs application.

Utility Bill Help: [Maryland Volunteer Lawyer Services](#), [Probono Resource Center of MD](#) and [Office of People's Counsel](#) have come together to provide remote Utility Clinics.

Baltimore City residents can receive

NEED HELP WITH YOUR WATER, GAS, OR ELECTRIC BILL?

Is your utility bill higher than usual? Do you need legal advice for overdue bills?

Free remote legal consultations available to Baltimore City residents.

443 - 703 - 3052

Please call the Pro Bono Resource Center to make an appointment.

Maryland
PRO BONO
RESOURCE CENTER
In partnership with MSBA



Maryland
MARYLAND OFFICE OF
PEOPLE'S COUNSEL



free legal advice from volunteer attorneys and from OPC staff regarding their water, gas, and/or electric bills. Attorneys will advise on issues such as unusually high or delinquent bills, bill disputes, shutoffs, and questions about financial assistance that may be available. Everything is done via phone, email, text, and mail. See the attached flyer for more information about how to connect clients to this free service. Please feel free to distribute.

Are you a homeowner?

Lower your property tax bill by applying for the Homeowners' Tax Credit (for those with incomes up to \$60k) and the Homestead Tax Credit. Call Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition's tax credit hotline at 443-961-6220 or visit www.marylandtaxcredit.com.

Families with Children Experiencing Homelessness: For children who are experiencing homelessness there may be extra supports available through their school system. Homelessness can be defined as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (ex: being doubled up, transient, living in motels/hotels/emergency shelters). Encourage families to reach out to their local Homeless Education Coordinator/Liaison who may be able to offer support. The attachment has listings for the state.

Health Insurance: The Maryland Health Connection has extended the emergency special enrollment period for uninsured Marylanders. You can enroll in a private health insurance plan now through Saturday, May 15, 2021.

Coverage start dates follow:

- Enroll by February 15, coverage starts February 1
- Enroll February 16–March 15, coverage starts March 1
- Enroll March 16–April 15, coverage starts April 1
- Enroll April 16–May 15, coverage starts May 1

ask MIA
Maryland Insurance Administration

Date and Time:
Thursday, February 25th,
11am-2pm

Zoom Meeting ID:
<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1617148335>

Hello My Name Is
MIA
(Maryland Insurance Administration)

Join the Maryland Insurance Administration for an “open house” to discuss your insurance issues and questions. Stop by virtually and chat with us one-on-one. We're here to help!

Maryland
INSURANCE ADMINISTRATION

Visit the [Maryland Health Connection online](#) or download the free “Enroll MHC” mobile app. When enrolling, consumers should request or select “Coronavirus Emergency Special Enrollment Period.” Help is available by calling 855-642-8572 weekdays from 8AM-6PM.

For more information and resources

[visit this website.](#)

Rainwater Collection and Compost Bin Sale

The County's compost bin and rain barrel sale will return this year; however, there will be significant changes from previous years' events.

The sale will be held online, with pre-orders accepted from Monday, February 1, through Wednesday, March 31. Visit the County's [Enviro World sale page](#) after February 1 to place an order.

Compost bins, valued at \$100, will be available for sale at \$45 each. Rain barrels, valued at \$120, will be available for sale at \$55 each. There is a \$15 flat rate delivery charge per order, and both prices include tax. These are the lowest prices you will find in Maryland for these items this year. This sale is not limited to residents of Baltimore County.

All orders will be delivered to customers between March 15 and April 30, 2021. The delivery agents will follow physical distancing protocols and orders will be delivered to the driveway or front door area of an address.

Find more [information about home composting](#) from Baltimore County.

Committee Assignments and Caucus Memberships

- Deputy Majority Whip
- Appropriations Committee
- Oversight Subcommittee on Personnel - Chair
- Joint Committee on the Management of Public Funds - House Chair
- Joint Committee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Biotechnology - House Chair
- Capital Budget Subcommittee
- Health and Social Services Subcommittee
- Baltimore County Delegation - Chair
- Veterans Caucus - Vice Chair

[Check out my page on the Maryland General Assembly's Website](#)