

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2020 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 657 (Senator Kramer)  
 Budget and Taxation

**Income Tax - Personal Exemption - Disabled Individuals**

This bill expands the existing personal exemption under the State income tax for individuals who are blind by extending eligibility to individuals who have a permanent physical disability. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020, and applies to tax year 2020 and beyond.**

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund revenues decrease by \$3.4 million in FY 2021 due to additional exemptions claimed against the personal income tax. Future year estimates reflect projected number of exemptions claimed. Expenditures are not affected.

(\$ in millions)	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
GF Revenue	(\$3.4)	(\$3.5)	(\$3.5)	(\$3.6)	(\$3.7)
Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$3.4)	(\$3.5)	(\$3.5)	(\$3.6)	(\$3.7)

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** Local income tax revenues decrease by \$2.1 million in FY 2021 and by \$2.3 million in FY 2025. Local expenditures are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

**Analysis**

**Current Law:** For State income tax purposes an individual other than a fiduciary is entitled to claim a personal exemption for the taxpayer, the taxpayer’s spouse, and eligible dependents. Nonresidents and part-time residents are required to prorate exemptions based

on the percentage of income subject to Maryland tax. These exemptions are reduced once the taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income exceeds \$100,000 (\$150,000 if filing Married Filing Jointly, Head of Household, or Qualifying Widow(er) with Dependent Child).

Individuals who are blind may claim an additional personal exemption of \$1,000. In addition, individuals who are age 65 years or older can also claim an additional personal exemption of \$1,000. These exemptions are not subject to the income phase-out applicable to the regular personal exemption. In recent tax years, the total number of individuals claiming the additional exemption for individuals who are blind has ranged from 7,200 to 8,000.

**Background:** The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that in calendar 2017 about 586,300 Maryland adults had a disability, about 12.9% of the total adult population. These physical and mental disabilities classifications included hearing, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, and independent living. Although the unemployment rate of individuals with disabilities has recently decreased it remains significantly higher than that of individuals without disabilities. About 39% of Maryland adult individuals with disabilities are employed (compared to 78% for individuals without disabilities) while a little more than one-half are not in the labor force (compared to 16% for individuals without disabilities). The median earnings of individuals with disabilities was about 30% lower than individuals without disabilities.

**State Revenues:** The bill expands the existing personal exemption for blind individuals by extending eligibility to individuals who have a permanent physical disability beginning in tax year 2020. As a result, general fund revenues will decrease by \$3.4 million in fiscal 2021. **Exhibit 1** shows the projected State and local revenue loss resulting from the bill.

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**Exhibit 1**  
**Projected State and Local Revenue Loss**  
**(\$ in Millions)**

	<u><b>FY 2021</b></u>	<u><b>FY 2022</b></u>	<u><b>FY 2023</b></u>	<u><b>FY 2024</b></u>	<u><b>FY 2025</b></u>
State	(\$3.4)	(\$3.5)	(\$3.5)	(\$3.6)	(\$3.7)
Local	(2.1)	(2.2)	(2.2)	(2.3)	(2.3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(\$5.6)</b>	<b>(\$5.7)</b>	<b>(\$5.8)</b>	<b>(\$5.9)</b>	<b>(\$6.0)</b>

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This estimate is based on the estimated number of individuals who have a permanent disability and could qualify for the expanded personal exemption under the bill. This number is reduced based on the estimated percentage of all individuals who are blind and claim the additional exemption, adjusted for differences in labor force participation and employment.

**Local Revenues:** Local income tax revenues decrease as a result of additional personal exemption amounts claimed. Local revenues will decrease by \$2.1 million in fiscal 2021 and by \$2.3 million in fiscal 2025, as shown in Exhibit 1.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** SB 412 of 2019 received a hearing in the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, but no further action was taken. Its cross file, HB 580, received a hearing in the House Ways and Means Committee, but no further action was taken.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 806 (Delegate Valentino-Smith, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

**Information Source(s):** Comptroller's Office; U.S. Census Bureau; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 19, 2020  
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