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To: Budget and Tax Committee

From: The Maryland Society of Accounting and Tax Professionals, Inc.

Re: SB0660 By: The President (By Request – Office of the Comptroller

Contact Person: Giavante Hawkins, Executive Director

Position: SUPPORT

Office of the Comptroller- Establish a Taxpayer Advocate Division

The MD Society of Accounting and Tax Professionals has 2,000 CPAs and Professional Tax members, representing over 700,000 Maryland residents. The MD Society of Accounting and Tax Professionals supports bill SB0660.

The members of the MD Society of Accounting and Tax Professionals have heard many clients express how an advocate office would benefit them when they needed an advocate most. Many Maryland residents presume their accountant or tax professional will help them navigate tax issues. A Taxpayer Advocate Office would be a valuable resource for Maryland's taxpayers.

We need to protect taxpayers' rights and help ensure that taxpayers are treated fairly and that their rights are not violated; Comptroller Lierman envisions a customer service approach to tax administration which the establishment of a Taxpayer Advocate Office could enhance. This office could serve as a point of contact for taxpayers with issues with their tax affairs, providing guidance and assistance to help them navigate complex tax rules and procedures. In contrast, the Comptroller's office can increase transparency and improve tax administration by identifying problems and implementing changes that benefit taxpayers.

Overall, a taxpayer advocate office is important within the state because it serves as a voice for taxpayers, helps protect their rights, and improves tax administration. By providing assistance, resolving disputes, and increasing transparency, a taxpayer advocate office can help ensure that taxpayers are treated fairly, their voices are heard and their rights are protected.

Therefore, we urge a FAVORABLE report on SB0660.