



## House Bill 653

*Income Tax - Subtraction Modification for Public Safety Retirement Income - Amount*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: February 19, 2026

From: Kevin Kinnally

### Tax Incentives and Local Government Autonomy

Counties enter this Session facing heightened economic uncertainty, rising costs, and growing concern about federal funding instability that directly affects local budgets and service delivery. At the same time, counties continue to absorb new or expanded responsibilities without reliable, ongoing funding, making local revenue stability more critical than ever.

Counties are eager and committed partners in promoting economic growth and creating opportunity – and prefer local autonomy in determining the best way locally. **The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) opposes state-mandated reductions in local revenue sources, but welcomes flexible, optional tools to serve and respond to local needs and community priorities.**

The General Assembly routinely considers broad or targeted tax incentives to stimulate economic growth, encourage beneficial activities, or attract and retain residents. These proposals sometimes focus exclusively on the State's tax structure, but often extend to local revenues as well.

In general, MACo stands for local self-determination. Counties, led by locally elected leaders directly accountable within the communities they serve, are best positioned to govern local affairs – ranging from land use to fiscal matters. MACo steadfastly guards local autonomy and consistently opposes one-size-fits-all policies that override local decision-making.

**State tax incentives should be enacted as "local option" offerings to allow counties maximum flexibility in tailoring local policies to meet local needs and priorities.** The State and its local governments already work together here, where the State routinely grants a state-level property tax credit, enabling county governments to enact their own local-option property tax credits.

MACo urges the Committee to primarily consider state income tax credits as the best means to incorporate local tax relief into a broader policy. MACo and county governments stand ready to work with state policymakers to craft flexible, optional tools to deliver broad or targeted tax incentives, but resist state-mandated changes that preclude local input.