



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

House Bill 842

Property Tax Exemption - Property Acquired by Surviving Spouse of Service Member - Repeal of Time Limitation

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Ways and Means Committee

WITH AMENDMENTS

Date: February 24, 2026

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 842 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill eliminates the current two-year eligibility requirement tied to a property tax exemption for specified surviving spouses.

MACo supports providing meaningful relief to eligible residents, and many counties already offer locally adopted property tax relief in addition to State-mandated exemptions. However, MACo requests amendments to avoid creating a significant unfunded mandate on county governments.

Property taxes are the primary source of revenue for county governments. They fund core services such as education, public safety, infrastructure, and public health. Counties face sustained budget pressure, including rising service demands, inflationary costs, and continued cost shifts and unfunded mandates.

When the General Assembly enacts or expands mandatory property tax exemptions, counties absorb the fiscal impact directly. Expanding eligibility without local discretion reduces a critical local revenue source and limits counties' ability to balance service delivery with fiscal responsibility.

As such, MACo requests amendments to make the repeal of the two-year requirement authorizing rather than mandatory. Counties should have full flexibility, by local law, to repeal, retain, or modify the requirement based on local fiscal capacity and community priorities.

This approach preserves local decision-making while still allowing jurisdictions to extend additional flexibility where appropriate. For these reasons, MACo respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 842.