

News Release

MEDIA CONTACTS: [SUSAN O'BRIEN](#): MOBILE - 443-875-8540
[ALAN BRODY](#): MOBILE - 443-924-1473

Comptroller Franchot Issues Statement On Amended RELIEF Act

More needs to be done to help struggling Marylanders

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (January 29, 2021) - Comptroller Franchot today issued a statement in response to Maryland Senate's amendments to Governor Larry Hogan's RELIEF Act of 2021:

"Having read through the Senate's amendments to Governor Hogan's stimulus package, I commend Senate President Ferguson and senators for proposing additional much needed aid, including grants to nonprofits, the arts, first responders, our school systems, and small businesses. Without a doubt, these funds will help critical organizations and communities that have also been impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic.

"But as you know, over the past several months, I've been strongly advocating for the State to provide direct and immediate \$2,000 stimulus payments to low-income Maryland households that are suffering the most from the public health and economic consequences of this pandemic.

"That's why I was disappointed that I did not see, in the Senate's proposed \$520 million addition to the Governor's \$1.1 billion package, an amendment to increase, not even by a penny, the Governor's proposed individual stimulus payments.

"As it stands, the stimulus proposal included in this bill is tone deaf and insufficient to our community's needs. To think that \$300 or \$150 will make a dent in the thousands of dollars of debt that low-wage earners and their families have accrued is just not reflective of the economic and financial nightmare that millions of Marylanders are currently living through.

"Marylanders have been disappointed by their state government's response to the

unemployment crisis, COVID testing, and the botched vaccine distribution. We can't let them down by passing a relief package that doesn't do enough to help our friends and neighbors who are suffering the most.

"The wealthiest state in the wealthiest country in the history of the world can and must do better than sending out pennies on the dollars that they've paid in taxes, and approving a handful of tax credits for small businesses that will do nothing to impact their immediate well-being. They needed immediate relief months ago. This is long overdue. We can and should put \$2,000 in the pockets of low-income families and direct more grants to hard-hit small businesses.

"This is the fiscally, economically, and morally responsible thing to do. The Governor failed to do so on his own, and therefore the legislature must rise to the occasion and meet this challenge with a bold, immediate response."

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MEDIA CONTACTS: Susan O'Brien - sobrien@marylandtaxes.gov
443-875-8540 (mobile)

Alan Brody - abrody@marylandtaxes.gov
443-924-1473 (mobile)

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