

## ***Maryland Taxpayers Association, Inc.***

"Building an Opportunity Society for Every Marylander"

**Special New Year's Day Newsletter - - - January 1, 2003**

TAXPAYERS TO EHRLICH: FIGHT NEW TAXES, SPEED REGULATORY REFORM.  
MTA WORKS WITH LEGISLATORS TO ADVANCE CONSUMER-CHOICE SOLUTIONS  
IN MARYLAND HEALTH CARE AND MARYLAND PUBLIC EDUCATION.

Maryland Taxpayers Association chief [Dee Hodges](#) said today in Baltimore that her state-wide grass-roots watchdog group has "two crucial goals in this historic year for Maryland government."

"First, we must help the incoming Ehrlich-Steele Administration hold the line against any Maryland tax increases. Second, we must widen and strengthen MTA partnerships with delegates and state senators to advance consumer-choice, free-market solutions in Maryland health care and education and in a variety of other important areas."

MTA president Hodges together with Board member and attorney [Eugenia Ordynsky](#) established the Maryland Taxpayers Association *Candidates Committee* in October. The *Candidates Committee*, an affiliated political action committee, endorsed [Bob Ehrlich](#) for governor.

To counter the growing Annapolis Establishment drumbeat for more and higher taxes, Hodges called a [Baltimore press conference November 8](#) right after the election. There, long-time MTA Board member and national regulatory expert [Ed Hudgins](#) spelled out the [\\$17.5 billion state and local regulatory load](#) on the Maryland economy. Hudgins explained to attending Baltimore *Sun* and *Fox* reporters that [regulations are a "stealth tax."](#) [*Highlighting added.*]

At the November 8 gathering in the historic Engineers Club, [Richard Falknor](#) restated MTA's support for "transformational changes" in the way Maryland state and local government does business ranging from Maryland civil-service and pension reform to public-private partnerships in building the state infrastructure.

Citizens Against Government Waste's [David Williams](#) joined MTA at the Baltimore presentation promising a "Piglet Book" soon to identify significant pork and porkers in Annapolis.

Through the balance of November and December, MTA has stayed in informal touch with the Ehrlich-Steele transition suggesting ways and means of furthering free-market low-tax solutions to seemingly "intractable" state problems, and pointing to expert sources of policy help.

MTA is also working with like-minded General Assembly members as they move toward the introduction of a comprehensive consumer-choice health-reform package for Maryland.

For over two years, MTA has chaired a Maryland center-right coalitions meeting which meets on frequent Thursdays in Annapolis. Its co-chairs, Richard Falknor and Dee Hodges, pattern the meeting after the nationally recognized *Wednesday Meetings* Grover Norquist pioneered and today chairs in Washington, D. C. under the auspices of [Americans for Tax Reform.](#)

At the Maryland coalitions' Thursday, December 19 meeting, for example, former MTA and current [Maryland Tax Education Foundation](#) board member [Jeff Hooke](#) explained to legislators how to get "a fair deal" for Maryland *if* the General Assembly or a statewide vote approves slots.

MTA's leadership has informally explained to the Ehrlich-Steele transition that these Maryland center-right "Thursday Meetings" are a helpful way to get grass-roots support for the incoming administration's initiatives that coalition participants find congenial. The meetings can also be a means to hear the concerns of the Maryland center-right on administration positions and appointments that coalition participants may find troubling. (This is, of course, how the Bush Administration typically relates to parallel groups in Washington, D. C.)

As promised, MTA kept the tax-vote records of significant members of the General Assembly in the public eye. In 2002, MTA's leadership selected the voting records of three egregious taxers, Speaker Casper Taylor, Senator Robert Neall, and Delegate Sue Hecht, for public scrutiny.

On the other hand, MTA honored nine Marylanders as Taxpayer Advocates including one freshman delegate-elect, Herb McMillan, for his previous work on the Annapolis City Council.

MTA, as part of its regional outreach to Virginia taxpayer groups, also supported the work of the Virginia Club for Growth in its successful effort to halt the proposed sales tax hike in Northern Virginia. The resounding defeat of this proposed tax increase just across the Potomac gives our own Maryland pro-growth low-tax movement real lift-off in 2003.

A central activity of MTA is promoting the Maryland Taxpayer Protection Pledge. When a candidate for Maryland public office signs the Pledge, he or she publicly undertakes to "*oppose and vote against any and all efforts to increase taxes.*"

Of the 35 incumbent (or soon-to-be-incumbent) Pledge signers (out of the 141 delegates and 47 state senators constituting the General Assembly), 30 are Republicans and five are Democrats.

Your personal visit or telephone call to your delegate and state senator can do much to raise their awareness of the importance of the Pledge. If they are signers, you should thank them for doing so. If they are not signers, you should ask them to become signers. Face-to-face conversation or telephoning beats arms-length writing or emailing hands down.

Think of the Pledge as a device to compel elected officials to rethink the core functions of government and how best to use today's revenues to do those essential tasks. MTA 's website has on its home page information that can help you flesh out your case as well as a list of Maryland current Pledge signers and a pledge form.

Webmaster Susan Freis is continually enhancing MTA's website where readers can get breaking Maryland-related news and commentary from a free-market perspective. The website is a growing storehouse of relevant research material such as MTA special reports.

Effective Maryland taxpayer advocates find the website an essential tool.

And don't overlook our new support team - - - Secretary Diane Mahoney and Treasurer Bob DeLisle - - - backed by the tempered judgment of veteran Bob Jones. They 'work the gears' which makes all of MTA's policy achievements possible!

<p><b>The Maryland Taxpayers Association <a href="http://www.mdtaxes.org/">http://www.mdtaxes.org/</a> is the Free State's non-profit, non-partisan, state-wide, grass-roots voice for Maryland taxpayers. MTA asks Maryland elected officials for their pledge not to raise taxes, and acts to make Maryland government more efficient.</b></p>
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