

## Senate OKs withholding refunds for open warrants

The Senate unanimously passed bills Thursday allowing Baltimore City and Washington County to adopt a program launched in Anne Arundel County under which state income tax refunds can be withheld from people with open warrants.

The legislation builds on an initiative launched by Anne Arundel Sheriff Ron Bateman under which 446 letters were sent out to people who had outstanding warrants warning that the comptroller's office would not send them their tax refunds until they turned themselves in. According to the sheriff's office, more than three-quarters of those who received such letters did so.

Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake sought the legislation for Baltimore, where there are more than 25,000 outstanding warrants.

Identical legislation passed the House with large margins. One chamber still must go through the formality of passing the other's to send the measure to Gov. Martin O'Malley. Legislation authorizing all counties to set up such programs has passed the Senate and is pending in a House committee.

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