

AARP_FAV_SB 349

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Position: FAV

**Bill 349 – Property Tax – Exemption for Disabled Veterans – Percentage of
Disability
Budget and Taxation Committee
February 12, 2020**

Good Afternoon Chairwoman King and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee. I Tammy Bresnahan Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland and a service-disabled combat Veteran. I am here today to support SB 357 – Property Tax – Exemption for Disabled Veterans – Percentage of Disability.

Sb 349 expands eligibility for a property tax exemption for the dwelling house of a disabled veteran to include veterans with at least a certain percentage of service connected disability; providing for the application of this Act; and generally relating to a property tax exemption for the dwelling house of a disabled veteran.

Specifically, this legislation changes the property tax exemption threshold from a 100% permanent, service-connected disability rating to an 80% permanent, service-connected disability rating.

An 80% permanent disability rating reflects a severe disability, where the life and livelihood of the Veteran will be significantly impacted. Such a Veteran is far less likely to be able gain and maintain employment and is far more likely to require the assistance of a caregiver. Since the caregiver is often the Veteran's spouse, the spouse is also disadvantaged in maintaining meaningful employment. The cumulative effect exacerbates the challenge of owning and remaining in a home.

AARP believes we must honor the service and acknowledge the sacrifice of our severely disabled Veterans. Senate Bill 349 does so, by providing greater economic viability for a severely disabled Veteran and the Veterans caregiver by ensuring their ability to afford and remain in their home.

We respectfully request a favorable report for Senate Bill 357. For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan, Director of Advocacy at tbresnahan@arp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.

SB349FAVGUIBAO

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THE AMERICAN LEGION
Department of Maryland
Legislative Commission

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STATEMENT IN SUPPORT FOR SB 0349
PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION – DISABLED VETERANS

Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chairman Rosapeppe and distinguished members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

The American Legion Department of Maryland strongly supports any fiscal legislation which awards a financial incentive to veterans and especially those who have been seriously injured in the line of duty on behalf of our nation.

Senate Bill 349 will allow these service members, especially those with a disability rating of 50 percent or greater, to enjoy a greater amount of disposable income, further improving their lives and those of their families.

The American Legion, serving over 48,000 active duty, service veterans and their families throughout Maryland respectfully request a favorable report on SB 349, a most valuable measure. We very much appreciate Senator Salling for his steadfast support of veteran's needs as well as the bipartisan support of the other sponsors. Thank you, and

Yours, respectfully

Patrick Guibao

Patrick J. Guibao
Chairman
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Department of Maryland
Legislative Commission

SB349_MMC_Support_SmithBT

Uploaded by: smith, brian

Position: FAV



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

SENATE BILL 349 – SUPPORT

Property Tax Exemption – Disabled Veterans Senate Budget and Taxation Committee February 12, 2020

Good afternoon Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee. My name is Brian Smith. I am a retired Navy Officer and a Veteran volunteer with the Maryland Military Coalition.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a **nonprofit, all volunteer, Veterans advocacy group** representing the interests of Maryland Veterans, Service members, and their Families. Our alliance consists of sixteen organizations, listed on the following page, with over 100,000 members. We represent about one-fourth of Maryland's Veterans, Service members, and their Families.

The Maryland Military Coalition **supports Senate Bill 349.**

As you know this bill expands the eligibility threshold for a property tax exemption for the dwelling house of a severely disabled veteran from a 100% permanent, service-connected disability rating to an 80% permanent, service-connected disability rating.

An 80% permanent disability rating reflects a severe disability, where the life and livelihood of the Veteran will be significantly impacted. Such a Veteran is far less likely to be able gain and maintain employment and is far more likely to require the assistance of a caregiver.

Since the caregiver is often the Veteran's spouse, the spouse is similarly disadvantaged in maintaining meaningful employment. The cumulative effect exacerbates the challenge of owning and remaining in a home.

In one of my final Navy assignments, I had the honor of leading a medical holding unit, assisting over 180 wounded, ill, and injured Sailors through the Military-Veterans Affairs disability rating process and their transition back to civilian life. I noted a distinct demarcation in the overall health and well-being of Sailors that were rated at 50% or higher, with those rated 80% or higher being dramatically worse.

Their cumulative, permanent medical conditions would dramatically, often devastatingly, impact the rest of their lives. They are amongst our most deserving, yet most vulnerable citizens.

The Maryland Military Coalition believes we must honor the service and acknowledge the sacrifice of our severely disabled Veterans. **Senate Bill 349** does so, by providing greater economic viability for a severely disabled Veteran and the Veterans' family caregivers by ensuring their ability to afford and remain in their home.

We respectfully request a favorable report for Senate Bill 349.

For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact me at
BTSmith1184@outlook.com or by calling 703.623.3678

Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition

James P. Monahan
Air Force Sergeants Association

Stacy P. May
American Military Society

Lynn A. Nash
Commissioned Officers Association of the
US Public Health Service

Wilbert B. Forbes
Disabled American Veterans

Sheldon Goldberg
Distinguished Flying Cross Association

Pleasala J. Collins
Fleet Reserve Association

Evan A. Buttrick
Jewish War Veterans of the USA

Steve L. Bloodgood
Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'
Association

Harvey Kaplan
Military Officers Association of America

Charles Egbert
Military Order of the Purple Heart

Mervyn Rice
National Association for Black Veterans

Michael P. Hays
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

Christian Andreasen
NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

Catherine L. McGraw
Society of Military Widows

Arthur L. Cooper
The Retired Enlisted Association

Thomas C. Williams
Veterans of Foreign Wars

MACo_UNF_SB349

Uploaded by: Sanderson, Michael

Position: UNF



Senate Bill 349

Property Tax Exemption - Disabled Veterans

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: February 12, 2020

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 349. This bill would significantly expand an existing property tax exemption for disabled veterans and surviving spouses.

MACo is concerned with the carryover county fiscal effects of this legislation and would prefer approaches that provide local autonomy to determine the best way to provide tax incentives, rather than those that mandate reductions in local revenue sources.

Under current law, for a property tax exemption to be granted to a disabled veteran or surviving spouse, the disabled veteran must have a 100% service-connected disability. However, if the exemption was expanded to include veterans with at least an 80% service-connected disability, counties could lose up to \$8 million of their most reliable revenue source by fiscal 2021, according to the bill's fiscal note. This is county revenue sorely needed to fund education, public safety, infrastructure, and other essential services.

In general, MACo stands for local self-determination. Counties, led by their elected leaders who are directly accountable within the community, are in the best position to make decisions on local affairs – ranging from land use to budget priorities.

Counties welcome the chance to work with state policymakers to develop flexible and optional tools to create broad or targeted tax incentives, but resist state-mandated changes that preclude local input.

For these reasons, MACo urges the Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB 349.