



## MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

### HOUSE BILL 114 - SUPPORT

**Agriculture – Animal Shelters – Waiver of Adoption Fee  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
February 12, 2020**

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 House Bill 114.**

As you know, this bill directs county or municipality animal control facilities to waive dog or cat adoption fees for Veterans, First Responders, and organizations that train and provide service animals to persons with disabilities. While this will slightly impact revenues for these facilities, it **can directly and dramatically assist in saving the lives of both our Veterans and the animals!**

**Simply put, Vets save Pets, and Pets save Vets!** This legislation is a win-win-win, it helps save animals from shelters, it helps our disabled Veterans and First Responders cope with life's challenges, and it helps free up space in our shelters to allow them to rescue more animals.

As the wonderful nonprofit, "Pets For Vets" notes:

Many brave troops return home with scars – both seen and unseen – that make it difficult to transition back to civilian life. At the same time, millions of wonderful companion animals wait in shelters for a forever home.

When a Veteran is matched with the right pet, both lives change for the better. The Veteran saves and welcomes the pet into a loving home. The pet provides the Veteran with unconditional love and support, easing stress, depression, loneliness and anxiety. **Together, they share a bond that provides them both with a whole new "leash" on life.**

As a disabled, combat Veteran, I can attest to the incalculable value that Tommy, my rescue Beagle, has added to my life, as I faced the mental and physical challenges resulting from my service.

The Maryland Military Coalition believes that our Veterans and First Responders are living testaments to the ideals of honor, service, and sacrifice. They deserve to enjoy the freedoms that they purchased for all of us through their selfless sacrifice on our behalf.

Consequently, we must support measures that help our them live their lives with dignity and fulfillment. It is important to have programs and services that support their ability to lead productive, independent lives. **This bill provides just such a program!**

**We respectfully request a favorable report for House Bill 114.**

For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact me at  
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**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