



THE AMERICAN LEGION
Department of Maryland
Legislative Commission

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STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 0324 VETERANS – BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES – MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Madam Chairwoman Kelley, Vice Chairman Feldman and distinguished members of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee...

The American Legion Department of Maryland now in its second century of representing military veterans and their families strongly believe the purpose outlined in Senate Bill 324 is a far-reaching approach to resolving the drug crises many returning servicemen and women suffer through daily and is considered by U. S. Health officials to be a leading factor in the 22 deaths by suicide average among veterans in the nation daily.

SB 324 is a monumental approach to aid veterans enduring the malignant effects of opioids and other addictive drugs. The collaboration between various Federal and State agencies will be vital of bringing direct assistance to the veteran and the care giver family member as well.

This bill also provides an in-depth approach to treatment including assessments, individual and family therapy, detoxification services and medical assisted treatment. It should be envisioned that in some cases hospitalization will be necessary but with the participation of the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs this factor should be easily remedied.

The lives at stake could be saved and the families who endure this crises could be made whole again through the success full passage of SB 324. The American Legion representing over 45,000 veterans throughout the State of Maryland fervently prays the Senate Finance Committee will issue a favorable report.

Yours, respectfully

Patrick Guibao

Patrick J. Guibao
Chairman
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