

Mary Underwood  
15707 Bond Mill Road  
Laurel, MD 20707

January 23, 2020

The Delegate Carol L. Krimm  
6 Bladen Street, Room 422  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Delegate Krimm:

My name is Mary Underwood and I reside at 15707 Bond Mill Road in Laurel, Maryland. I am a Past Exalted Ruler (Past President) from the Laurel Elks Lodge and currently a Maryland State Trustee for the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America (B.P.O.). I became an Elk member over 6 years ago. I joined the Elks because they are an organization that assist Veterans, communities, children and several charities throughout the state of Maryland. When I first became a member, I saw how the Elks take care of the local Veterans by providing them with needed toiletries, inviting them to our Lodge for lunch and providing entertainment for them while attending lunches. The Veterans always enjoy coming to our Lodge for visits.

We have several members who are Veterans themselves and just this past year, one of our members received an award as he is the last surviving Veteran from the Korean War. IF it weren't for organizations such as the Elks, Veterans would be struggling more than they do today. The Elks now sponsors several programs such as Welcome Home Vets and Army of Hope. These programs assist Veterans that are ready to get off the street and back into a home. We help them find affordable housing for themselves and their families and provide as much as we can to get them set up in their new homes. We have even had a few of the Veterans invite us to their house for Thanksgiving Dinner because they wanted to share their gratefulness with us. We have provided housewares, clothing and furniture to these Veterans to help them get back on their feet. We even help them move into their new homes.

Recently, I became involved with a program that helps young males that are coming out of rehab for their addiction and ready to get back into society free and clear of drugs and alcohol. Our Laurel Lodge has pretty much "adopted" these young men and have provided them with housewares, resume writing skills, bikes to get to and from work, beds, linens, etc. We have even provided them with computers so they can continue their progress through their programs. I personally have met these young men along with the Director of the facility where they temporarily reside. They have become family not only to me, but to several other members within the Elks organization throughout Maryland.

I am writing you to ask that you help fraternal organizations like the B.P.O. Elks gain access to funds through Instant Ticket Lottery Machines in the form of support for "Slots" for Homeless Veterans Act (SB 59/2020). By approving this Bill, funds from these machines will assist Elks lodges throughout Maryland with programs such as the Army of Hope and Welcome Home Vets. We as Elks give to charity on a regular basis and funds are becoming depleted. Funds are needed not only for our Lodges to remain open but to also keep our avenues of charity open. Without our Veterans, we wouldn't be in existence. Without the Elks, the Veterans will remain homeless, in facilities with little care and our younger

generations will be forever struggling with the drug epidemic that we are currently experiencing not just in our area in Laurel, but throughout the great State of Maryland.

The funds from these machines will continue the B.P.O. Elks Lodges throughout Maryland to provide lunches, toiletries, household items, training and homes for the homeless Veterans. The funds will also support other charities that we as Elks believe to be of sound and true organizations. To see our State of Maryland free of homeless Veterans and clean and sober citizens is one that we can only wish for. Helping one person at a time is how Elks believe we can help our towns, our cities and our state. Elks care, Elks share.

I appreciate your help and ask that you please send me a response letting me know that you support the Bill that would strengthen our community and assist homeless Veterans.

Thank you for your time and considering my request.

Sincerely,

Mary Underwood  
PER  
Laurel Elks Lodge, North Central District  
State Trustee