

Statement of Jayson L. Spiegel
In Support of HB 0755
Natural Resources – Complimentary Angler’s License – Disabled Veterans
February 17, 2021

My name is Jayson Spiegel. I am a Gaithersburg resident and retired after 28 years commissioned service in the Army and Army Reserve. I am a former Executive Director of the Reserve Officers Association of America and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. In addition, I am the Principal Advisor for Legislative Affairs, and Principal Advisor for Communications for the Maryland Democratic Party Veterans Council. I also chair the Legislative and Policy Committee of the Veterans Democratic Club of Charles County and Vicinity.

I am speaking in my personal capacity.

As one of the many Marylanders who is “hooked on fishing,” I urge the Committee to approve HB 0755. The bill authorizes the Department of Natural Resources to issue a lifetime complimentary fishing license to a Maryland resident who has an 80% service connected disability as opposed to a 100% disability.

The reduction in disability percentage from 100% to 80% will allow more severely disabled Maryland veterans to enjoy the sport of fishing and removes a financial obstacle at a time of economic hardship for many Marylanders.

The reduction in disability percentage is consistent with HB 0591 and SB 0258 which would change the definition of a disabled veteran entitled to property tax exemption from 100% to 80%.

I want to thank Delegate Thiam for your leadership on this important issue. I urge the Committee to favorably report HB 0755 and the House of Delegates to pass the bill.

Thank you.