



THE AMERICAN LEGION
Department of Maryland
Legislative Commission

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STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 164 VETERANS – BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES – MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

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

The Maryland Military Coalition a consortium of 16 active and uniform service and veteran support groups believe the purpose outlined in Senate Bill 605 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 164 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 164. We deeply commend Senator Simonaire for his fervent and continuous compassion to our veteran community.

Yours, respectfully

[Patrick Guibao](#)

Patrick J. Guibao
Chairman
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