



Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of the Secretary

LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
LT. GOVERNOR

GEORGE W. OWINGS III
SECRETARY

February 14, 2022

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair
Members of the Committee
Appropriations Committee
121 House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairwoman McIntosh and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs opposes HB 579 – Military Veterans Trust Fund – CAM for Veterans Grant Program – Established (David Perez Military Heroes Act (End 22 a Day)).

There are several reasons:

- This legislation would take the funding currently used to assist veterans experiencing financial difficulties and use it for a completely different purpose.
- The funding would put the monies into the hands of the individual instead of the corporation responsible for the debt making misuse and abuse a distinct possibility.
- CAM, or Complementary and Alternative Medicine, are not recognized by the US Department of Veterans Affairs as suitable treatments for the PTSD or depression.
- Lastly, I knew David Perez and he stopped by for a visit shortly before the unfortunate incident. He is but one of the 66 veterans who took their lives in 2019; the other 65 would not be recognized in such a manner nor the 104 over the previous 5 years.

While suicide among the veteran population, or any population, is a truly sad thing, this bill would not do what it hopes as the individual may or may not achieve their desired results as a result of the CAM. In addition, it would take monies away from a program designed to help veterans experiencing financial difficulties.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "GWO", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

George W. Owings III
Secretary

GWO:kss