

DAWN D. GILE  
Legislative District 33  
Anne Arundel County

Finance Committee

Chair

Anne Arundel County  
Senate Delegation



Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Suite 3 East  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3568 · 301-858-3568  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3568  
Dawn.Gile@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of SB0411 - Department of Veterans Affairs - Renaming and Deputy Secretary of Military Family Policy and Programs**

Mr. Chair, Madame Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

Over the last several months, I worked with Secretary Anthony Woods to discuss ways that the Department of Veterans Affairs could better serve veterans and military families, and I am so grateful for his leadership and commitment to enhancing support for our military families, who also play an integral role in our Nation's defense. SB0411, developed in conjunction with Secretary Woods, would rename the Department of Veteran Affairs to the Department of Veterans and Military Families. This small measure clarifies its mission to support both veterans and their families. Additionally, the bill mandates the appointment of a Deputy Secretary of Military Family Policy and Programs.

As a military family advocate and a proud military spouse, this bill holds personal significance for me. Despite some increasingly more support structures in our state for military families, there is significant opportunity for improvement. SB0411 represents a tangible step towards acknowledging and addressing the diverse needs of all members within the military community.

This proposed change not only signifies a commitment to inclusivity but also serves as a beacon for military families, signaling that the Department is dedicated to providing comprehensive support. By renaming the Department of Veteran Affairs to the Department of Veterans and Military Families, we affirm our recognition of the vital role played by military families in our nation's defense.

Moreover, the creation of a Deputy Secretary of Military Family Policy and Programs underscores our commitment to expanding resources and programming tailored specifically for military families. It presents an opportunity to bridge existing gaps and bolster the support network available to those who have served and sacrificed for our country.

While the prospect of additional funding for this position is acknowledged, it is imperative that we prioritize the allocation of resources to ensure the successful implementation of these vital initiatives. The potential impact of this bill on the lives of military families cannot be overstated.

In conclusion, SB0411 represents a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to better serve and support the military families who selflessly stand alongside their loved ones in service to our nation.