

01FEB2024

To: Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee  
From: LCDR Joseph Dolan, USN IRR  
Subj: HB 77 Written Testimony

Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee,

My name is Joseph Dolan and I am a resident of Anne Arundel County. I am writing to seek support for House Bill 77. I am in favor of this bill and it would have a meaningful financial impact on me and my family. This law would change the laws for parking in Maryland for combat-decorated veterans. As a specific example, I'd like to reference the State of Texas. Current legislation in Texas allows veterans with specific military decorations to get specialty license plates which allow them to park in public for free anywhere in Texas. I have included a link to that legislation here: <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/TN/htm/TN.681.htm>

Clearly, Maryland is home to multiple bases and military stations such as Fort Meade, Andrews AFB, the U.S. Naval Academy, Pax River NAS, Aberdeen Proving Ground, etc. Service members and veterans who have served and continue to serve at these locations are important members of our economy and our community. Many of them have made significant sacrifices and I think it would be right for Maryland to support them with this simple but important benefit.

I went to the U.S. Naval Academy and was on active duty for 10 years as a pilot and have been in the Navy Reserves for 7 more years. As a member of the Reserves, I work with the admissions department at the U.S. Naval Academy. For my full-time job, I am an airline pilot and work out of BWI. Like many of my co-workers, I flew combat missions in OIF and OEF during my tenure and I have been awarded an Air Medal for that service. The parking at BWI is both expensive and time-consuming, often requiring more than 30 minutes from the remote employee lots to the terminal. This issue is even worse after midnight when shuttle service is reduced. If I choose to circumvent the shuttles, I can park in the hourly garage for a fee. For hourly parking at BWI, if I park for only 12 days per month, that costs \$264 per month. Just to park. Conversely, I personally know many pilots at the same airline who are based in both Houston, TX and Dallas, TX who have identical military decorations (specifically, the Air Medal) who are allowed to park at their respective airport hourly parking lots for free. Texas has stood up and thanked their decorated veterans with parking legislation and I think Maryland can and should too.

I also recognize that this legislation, like most others, would be assigned a financial cost to weigh and debate. My plea on that topic would be: when combat-decorated veterans were asked to accomplish a task, they didn't balk at the potential costs. I don't think Maryland should either.

The Maryland MVA already offers the ability to purchase plates with the relevant military awards and decorations but the tags are not associated with a corresponding benefit of free parking.

I have worked closely with Delegate Munoz's and Sen. Simonaire's offices to forward this initiative and I thank them for their continued efforts.

Please see the submitted documents with the Transportation Code of Texas for comparison. Additionally, I have also included a letter of support from people that I know and/or work with who have also expressed support for this legislation and/or would directly benefit from it.

In conclusion, I strongly support this legislation in order to thank and support Maryland's combat veterans. I appreciate your time and consideration and I look forward to moving forward with this issue.

Thank you very much,

Joseph K. Dolan  
LCDR USN, IRR