



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

March 6, 2024

Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: **Request for FAVORABLE Report** – HB1026 – Armed Forces – Support of Military Families and Addition of Space Force

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and distinguished members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC) and as its Legislative Director, I write to recommend a FAVORABLE report by the Committee on *HB1026 – Armed Forces – Support of Military Families and Addition of Space Force* sponsored by Delegate Edith Patterson. This legislation adds the Space Force to certain provisions of Maryland's code related to the armed forces and includes the military spouse under the rights and protections provided in the federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.).

Adding the Space Force to Maryland's code aligns it with 10 U.S. Code § 101 (4) – Definitions, which states that the "term 'armed forces' means the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, **Space Force**, and Coast Guard." By including "military spouse" in Article – Public Safety, Section 13-704.1 aligns the Maryland Code with federal law and supports the Moore-Miller Administration's Year of the Military Families.

The Maryland Military Coalition **supports HB1026** and asks the Health and Government Operations Committee for a **FAVORABLE report**. These changes will update the Maryland Code.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups, representing over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers, and survivors.

We want to thank Delegate Edith Patterson for her continuing commitment to the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,

David L. Dragics
COL USA (Ret)
Legislative Director

Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition

James P. Monahan
Air Force Sergeants Association

Step P. May
American Military Society

Elwood R. Raphael Gray
American Minority Veterans Research Project

W. A. A.
Association of the United States Navy

Lynda A. Gask
Commissioned Officers Association of the
US Public Health Service

Wilbur B. Fisher
Disabled American Veterans

Seldon H. Freedberg
Distinguished Flying Cross Association

Phyllis J. Collins
Fleet Reserve Association

Seldon H. Freedberg
Jewish War Veterans of the USA

Steve L. Blockstein
Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'
Association

Emmett R. Robert
Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Robert J. Winton
Military Officers Association of America

Charles E. Spahr
Military Order of the Purple Heart

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Montford Point Marines of America

M. L. Messer
National Association for Black Veterans

Michael P. Hays
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

Christian Andreasen
NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

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